



Current Report

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SWAP: An Expanded Pasture Producer/Cattleman Referral System

Damona G. Doye
Extension Economist

A. L. Hutson
Area Agricultural Economics Specialist

Historically, Oklahoma's wheat pasture market has been somewhat inefficient. Because of location differences, buyers and sellers of wheat pasture have not always been able to find each other. Consequently, a very valuable resource, wheat pasture, may have been underutilized. But, producers need to generate maximum income from all resources to survive in today's economic climate.

At the suggestion of county Extension agents, a referral service, the "Stocker Wheat Availability Program" (SWAP) was developed in 1987 to assist Oklahoma wheat producers and cattlemen seeking to rent out or lease wheat pasture. In 1987, requests for lists of available wheat pasture were received from all parts of the state plus Colorado, Kansas, Texas, Alabama, and Georgia. At the suggestion of 1987 SWAP users, SWAP has been expanded in 1988 to include listings of all types of available pasture and cattlemen seeking pasture. SWAP is a joint effort of the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma Wheat Commission, and Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association.¹

SWAP is an information service to help match pasture producers with individuals seeking to lease pasture, thus helping both farmers and ranchers. It is a market enhancement program, not a market creating one. SWAP does not generate either a supply or demand for pasture but does make existing supply and demand known to interested parties. With SWAP, farms with available pasture reach more potential purchasers of pasture. Renters of pasture more quickly locate suitable acreages of pasture and lease terms. For both lessees and lessors, the costs and time required to find trading partners should be reduced.

¹ SWAP was organized by Gerrit Cuperus, Damona Doye, Gerald Horn, A. L. Hutson, Chris Rink, Lonnie Sellers, and Clem Ward.

How SWAP Works

SWAP is simply a referral system where sellers of pasture list type and acres of available pasture and cattlemen list type and acres of pasture sought or number of cattle to be placed. SWAP users complete information profiles which are then listed on an electronic bulletin board statewide. Information profiles for both pasture producers and cattlemen may be obtained at OSU County Extension Centers, from the Oklahoma Wheat Commission or from the state SWAP List Coordinator, 501 Life Sciences West, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 74078-0505. Completed information profiles must be returned either to the County Extension Center or the SWAP List Coordinator. The information profile may be uploaded to the electronic bulletin board at the County Extension Center (if facilities permit) or will be forwarded to Stillwater for entry.

Information in the profiles will be made available at the County Extension Center and other locations throughout the state via the electronic bulletin board and printed SWAP lists. Individuals seeking pasture or cattle can access up-to-date information through the electronic bulletin board in some County Extension Centers and can view the printed list of SWAP Pasture Producer and Cattlemen Profiles at these sites. Or, individuals may request periodic mailings of current SWAP Cattlemen or Pasture Producer Profiles. Agricultural businesses are encouraged to help advertise SWAP and to post the printed SWAP lists as a service to their customers.

For SWAP to be most efficient and useful, SWAP lists must be as current as possible. **Therefore, producers listing available pasture must immediately notify the SWAP List Coordinator in Stillwater or their County Extension Center when pasture has been leased.** If only part of the pasture has been leased, the information profile can be updated; if all pasture has been leased, the profile can be removed from the SWAP list.

By changing or removing profiles from the listing as the pasture is leased, individuals who no longer have pasture available will not be bothered by phone calls. Also, individuals seeking pasture will not be frustrated in their search because listed pasture is already leased.

SWAP profiles for wheat pasture will be updated August 15 to December 1 in the fall and January 1 to March 15 in the spring. Other pasture producer profiles and cattlemen profiles will be updated on an as-needed basis. New SWAP lists will be mailed approximately every two weeks during the wheat pasture growing season.

Using SWAP to List Available Pasture

Producers of pasture, either on a large or small scale, can benefit from advertising through SWAP. Wheat producers are encouraged to list expected pasture before it is actually available (or even planted) so that cattlemen can make plans and negotiate agreements to place cattle early in the fall. All contract terms are negotiated between lessor and lessee.

The steps a producer with pasture for lease should take are:

1. Obtain a SWAP Pasture Producer Profile from the OSU County Extension Center and fill it out completely. Figure 1 shows a completed sample SWAP Pasture Producer Profile. A detailed explanation of information required is given in the section "Understanding the SWAP Information Profiles". Since SWAP was originally designed to list wheat pasture, the information profile includes information important to stocker producers. If several types of pasture and several fields of each type are to be listed, a producer should complete a separate information profile for each pasture type.

2. Return the completed profile along with the one-time \$5.00 listing fee per producer per year to: SWAP List Coordinator, 501 Life Sciences West, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 74078-0505. Checks should be made payable to SWAP. The fee will be used to keep lists current and to publish an end-of-year SWAP directory. In County Extension Centers with access to the bulletin board, the completed profile may be entered directly on the electronic bulletin board and the listing fee forwarded to the SWAP List Coordinator.

3. A copy of the profile as it will appear on the electronic bulletin board and in printed listings will be mailed to you. Check to ensure that all information is correct. Notify the SWAP List Coordinator immediately if there are any corrections to be made.

4. You may view the listed information profiles either by accessing the electronic bulletin board or by viewing printed copies of the listed profiles. If you return a completed Pasture Producer Profile and the listing fee, you will automatically be mailed each new list of Cattlemen Profiles. Expect to receive calls from cattlemen seeking pasture in your area. If you are looking for cattle to place on your pasture, initiate calls to cattlemen listed through SWAP who are seeking pasture of the type and acreage which you have. All contract terms are negotiated between lessor and lessee.

5. **Contact the OSU County Extension Center or the SWAP List Coordinator (405-624-5531) as soon as a lease is signed to update or remove the listed information profile.** This will help ensure that SWAP listings are current and of maximum benefit to SWAP users. Listings are updated or removed at no charge.

Using SWAP to List Cattle to Be Placed

The steps a cattleman seeking pasture for lease should take are:

1. Obtain a SWAP Cattleman Profile from the OSU County Extension Center and fill it out completely. Figure 2 shows a completed sample SWAP Cattleman Profile. A detailed explanation of information required is given in the section "Understanding the SWAP Information Profiles."

2. Return the completed profile along with the one-time \$5.00 listing fee to: SWAP List Coordinator, 501 Life Sciences West, Oklahoma, 74078-0505. Checks should be made payable to SWAP. In County Extension Centers with access to the bulletin board, the completed profile may be entered directly on the electronic bulletin board and the listing fee forwarded to the SWAP List Coordinator.

3. A copy of the profile as it will appear on the electronic bulletin board and in printed listings will be mailed to you. Check to ensure that all information is correct. Notify the SWAP List Coordinator immediately if there are any corrections to be made.

4. You may view the listed information profiles either by accessing the electronic bulletin board or by viewing printed copies of the listed profiles. If you return a completed Cattleman Profile and the listing fee, you will automatically be mailed each new list of Pasture Producer Profiles. Initiate calls to pasture producers listed through SWAP who have pasture available that could meet your needs. You may also receive calls from pasture producers looking for cattle to place on their pasture. All contract terms are negotiated between lessor and lessee.

5. **Contact the OSU County Extension Center or the SWAP List Coordinator (405-624-5531) as soon as a lease is signed to update or remove the listed information profile.** This will help ensure that SWAP listings are current and of maximum benefit to SWAP users. Listings are updated or removed at no charge.

Understanding the SWAP Information Profiles

The information profile is designed to provide a brief, accurate, and meaningful description of conditions important to pasture producers and cattlemen in lease agreements. The numbers in the following discussion (1-18) refer to the numbers on the SWAP Pasture Producer profile (Figure 1).

(1) through (6) are mostly self-explanatory. The pasture producer should list his home address including zip code. The county listed should be the county in which pasture is located. If the producer has pasture in more than one county, more than one profile (one profile for total acreage in a given county) should be submitted.

(7) and (8) are extremely important. Though some uncertainty is involved, especially with weather, the producer's experience should be helpful in knowing when pasture will likely be available given normal growing conditions. (8) is more predictable in some areas of the state than others. If wheat pasture is being listed and the normal pull off date for wheat to be harvested is March 1, this should be indicated. If one acreage requires pull off March 1 and another acreage may be grazed out, this should be noted in (18). In (9) the producer lists the pasture type (wheat, bermuda, native, rye, etc.) and the number of acres in a given field.

In (10), the pasture producer can indicate the type of cattle preferred. If a producer is willing to accept one or more types of cattle, check the appropriate types. In (11) the producer lists lease terms that will be considered. Four common terms are listed. Producers should check any appropriate terms and all four terms if lease terms are negotiable.

With the per pound of gain lease, cattle are weighed when placed on and when taken off pasture. The pasture owner is paid a predetermined amount for stocker weight gain. The lease should predetermine where and how the cattle will be weighed and how shrink and death loss will be handled. Generally, the pasture owner provides feed if necessary, at no additional charge, and takes care of the cattle under this arrangement.

The per head per month lease specifies a flat charge per head to be paid the pasture owner. This lease might be appropriate when either cows or cows with calves are placed on pasture.

With per hundredweight (cwt) per month leases, cattle are weighed when they are placed on pasture. Pasture rent is at a predetermined rate for each month stockers are on pasture. For example, rent for a 450 pound animal at \$2.00 per cwt would be \$9.00 per month. Again, weighing conditions and shrink and death loss arrangements should be discussed by lessors and lessees before a contract is signed. Generally, if cattle require additional feed or hay, the owner of the cattle pays for or provides the feed.

The per acre lease arrangement specifies a dollar amount to be paid for the pasture until a given date. The cattle owner may have complete flexibility as to how pasture is utilized.

With partnership or share leases, the pasture producer and stocker producer become co-owners in the business, sharing both risks and profits. Decision making and management may be shared by partners, according to their resources and abilities. **For more information on wheat pasture lease agreements, see OSU Facts No. 200.**

In (12) the pasture producer estimates stocking rates for the pasture. Here, the owner of wheat pasture may want to ensure some protection from overgrazing if the wheat is intended for harvest. If the pasture producer wants to limit the stocking rate to 200 pounds per acre, it

would take 2 acres per head for 300-400 pound cattle and 3 acres per head for 500-600 pound stockers.

Pasture fences are described in (13). The critical point is whether fence is permanent or electric. The condition of the permanent fence is specified as good, fair, or poor. If fencing conditions are different on each acreage, the pasture owner should describe the largest acreage in this section and fencing conditions on smaller acreages in (18).

In (14) the water source for the cattle is identified. Again, if the producer has several fields with different types of water sources, a note should be made in (18).

The producer indicates receiving program availability in (15). Receiving programs in addition to feeding and watering may include branding, vaccination, implanting, worming, and special treatment for sick calves. With a receiving program, the pasture owner has the facilities and management ability to receive purchased cattle and treat them for disease and parasites.

In (16) the pasture owner indicates willingness and ability to provide supplemental feeding. This information will allow the cattle owner to make contingent plans in case of a severe winter. Also, some cattle producers may desire supplemental feeding to increase the cattle's gain.

If the pasture owner is willing to do more than provide pasture, he/she indicates so in (17). Specific arrangements are negotiated between the lessee and lessor.

The comment section (18) can be used for any other information the producer feels is important, for example, willingness to check the weight of stockers periodically. The location of the nearest scales may be important, depending on the lease arrangement, and can be included here.

The SWAP Cattleman Profile (Figure 2) contains sections analogous to those in the Pasture Producer Profile. The cattleman lists preferences for type of pasture, area of state, and lease terms. The cattleman also states whether a receiving program, supplemental feeding, and additional care is mandatory, preferable or not necessary.

SWAP Wheat and Cattle Reference Brochures

To assist farmers and ranchers in obtaining the latest OSU publications on pasture and cattle management, production, and marketing, special SWAP Wheat and Other Pasture and Cattle Reference brochures have been printed. These brochures highlight current OSU publications and allow producers to check which publications he or she would like to receive. Many of the publications are available through the OSU County Extension Center. If not all publications are available locally, the brochure/checklist can be returned to Central Mailing Services, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078-0550 for processing.

Summary

SWAP is designed to help pasture producers and cattlemen better utilize their resources. Its main purpose is to make timely information on available pasture accessible. An electronic bulletin board listing of pasture producer and cattlemen profiles and periodic mailings of printed profiles help advertise available pasture and cattle to be placed. The list is maintained and updated by the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service. Potential lessors and lessees contact each other and negotiate lease terms and agreements.

SWAP is a service to improve the efficiency of the pasture market by reducing the costs associated with searching for lease partners. The availability of accurate, complete, and up-to-date information is critical. For SWAP to be effective, pasture growers and cattlemen must report leases to the SWAP List Coordinator as soon as an agreement is finalized.

Pasture and stocker production, marketing, and management tips are available in OSU publications. Specially prepared SWAP Reference Brochures are available at the OSU County Extension Center. These brochures highlight current OSU publications and make it easy for you to request copies of these publications. Producers should ask for a brochure and identify which publications they would like to receive. Most publications are available at the County Extension Center; others may be obtained from Central Mailing Services at

Oklahoma State University. Contact the appropriate county agent for additional advice on agronomic, animal health and nutrition, or economic aspects of pasture and stocker production.

For more information about SWAP, contact:

A. L. Hutson
Room 113, Courthouse
Duncan, OK 74533
(405) 255-0510

Damona Doye
Oklahoma State University
529 Agricultural Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078-0505
(405) 624-6081

For assistance with 1) SWAP software to upload information, 2) changing or deleting your SWAP information profile or 3) adding or subtracting your name from the SWAP mailing list, contact:

Ann Hill
SWAP List Coordinator
Oklahoma State University
501 Life Sciences West
Stillwater, OK 74078-0505
(405) 624-5531

SWAP Cattleman Profile

Figure 2.

Please print or type.

Date 8-28-88

- (1) Name: Roger Rancher
- (2) Address: Rt. 1, Rosston, OK 73855
- (3) Phone: (405) 379-1884 (4) Time to call: 7-8 a.m. _____ p.m.
- (5) Kind of pasture sought (check any applicable types):
X Wheat _____ Native _____ Bermuda _____ Other (Specify: _____)
- (6) Approximate date pasture needed: 10-1-88 (7) Approximate pull off date: 3-15-89
- (8) Type of cattle to be placed:
X Stocker steers _____ Stocker heifers
_____ Cow/calf (fall calves) _____ Cow/calfs (spring calves)
- (9) Cattle to be placed or acreage needed: 300 Number of head _____ Acres
- (10) Probable weight of cattle upon arrival: 300-400 lbs.
- (11) Area of state in which pasture is sought: North Central
County preferred (if any): _____
- (12) Lease terms preferred (check any applicable terms):
_____ Per lb. of gain X Per head/month _____ Per cwt/month
_____ Per acre _____ Partnership (share)
- (13) Receiving program: _____ Mandatory X Preferable _____ Unnecessary
- (14) Supplemental feeding:
[1] Silage _____ Mandatory _____ Preferable X Unnecessary
[2] Hay _____ Mandatory X Preferable _____ Unnecessary
[3] Self-fed feed _____ Mandatory _____ Preferable X Unnecessary
[4] Limit-fed feed _____ Mandatory X Preferable _____ Unnecessary
- (15) Other required items:
_____ Animal care _____ Water X Fence repair
- (16) Comments:

THIS IS NOT A CONTRACT.

Final terms and agreement are solely the responsibility of lessor and lessee. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service assumes no liability or responsibility for information provided in the profile. This is a referral service designed to assist Oklahoma pasture and cattle producers.

Return form and \$5.00 check payable to SWAP for listing fee to:

SWAP List Coordinator
Oklahoma State University
501 Life Sciences West
Stillwater, OK 74078-0505



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