

Teton Valley Farm and Ranch Tour – 08/01/2018

1. Teton River – Teton Water Users Association, aquifer recharge benefit for producers, no-till farming benefit for fishery
2. Piquet Ranch – no-till farming, cover crops and grazing management
3. Crowfoot J Ranch & Meats – direct market sales, grazing management
4. Teton Mountain Ranch – public and private land grazing, agri-tourism
5. Penfold Farms – precision agriculture technology (fertilizers, chemicals, water use)

1. It all starts with the river. Friends of the Teton River and Teton Water Users Association are trying to work collaboratively to find practices that will benefit both farmers/ ranchers and conservation. Collaboration is more than just relationship building, it's getting things done on the ground.

Regarding aquifer recharge, the amount of ground water that returns to the river is measured and, if water can be kept in the river longer, it keeps junior water rights holders in priority longer.

2. Piquet Ranch uses multi-species cover crop, rotated with alfalfa or a grass/grain in an effort to rebuild soil for cows. A moveable electric fence is used to rotate cattle through different grazing sections and water is brought to them. The cows eat some of the crop and flatten the rest which, with the addition of urine and manure, leads to better soil.
3. Crowfoot J Ranch & Meats operates on a 28-day rotation, spending one day at each cell. Black angus meat operation selling direct through local farmer's market can compete with food stores on prices, and with better meat. A conservation easement on the property helped keep the farm in business.
4. Teton Mountain Ranch has learned that diversification is key. The ranch ran sheep a few generations ago, but now run beef cattle in the National Forest with a permit as well as 9 other businesses, including running elk, an outfitting service, guest cabins, and gravel business. They also sell landscaping material made from woods chips that are processed by being used as bedding for cattle.
5. Penfold Farms uses precision technology like GPS and satellite imagery to make planting more efficient and effective and to monitor plant health and respond to potential issues more quickly. Always remember, however, that the best thing you can put in your field is your shadow.

The group also heard from Teton Regional Land Trust on the value of conservation easements as a tool to keep family farms in business, from Valley Advocates for Responsible Development on development and agriculture in Teton Valley, and from the University of Idaho Extension on the Teton Food and Farm Coalition.