

# WEST FAMILY FARMS

ANDREW AND SARAH WEST

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# GRAZING PROPOSAL

In collaboration with Poudre Valley Community Farms and the City of Fort Collins, seeking to graze the 85 acres of Pryor Farms outside of Fort Collins, CO.



FEB 2024

## SUMMARY

West Family Farms aims to operate as a sustainable cattle breeding enterprise specializing in animal, plant, and soil health. Our mission is to raise high-quality yearling heifers utilizing rotational grazing methods that promote pasture health. We want to be a source of breeding heifers of the highest quality that highlight how proper grazing and management techniques benefit our ecological system. Our heifers combine excellent breeding with conservational grazing practices: meaning the best for the customer, the cattle, and the land.

## BACKGROUND/PREVIOUS LIVESTOCK EXPERIENCE

**Andrew West** spent four years working as a farm & ranch hand on a cow-calf ranch and feedlot both during his time at Colorado State University and after graduation. During this time, Andrew learned the principles of cow health and rangeland management. He developed new irrigation and livestock watering infrastructure on the 20,000 acre ranch. He learned the importance of proper land management, irrigation and water distribution, and good grazing practice.

Andrew works as a Civil Engineer where he designed and oversaw construction of livestock facilities, irrigation systems, and public infrastructure. His passion for agriculture has not diminished throughout his career as an engineer, and he hopes to combine his experience on the ranch and feedlot with his engineering expertise to run a well-managed cattle operation.

Andrew is passionate about restoring natural ecosystems and firmly believes that vibrant soil and plant health will result in a more economical and sustainable enterprise.

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**Sarah West** grew up raising sheep on her family farm in Eastern Washington State. On their 100-acre pasture, Sarah maintained fencing, assisted in toxic weed management, helped build and maintain new corrals and livestock shoots, developed relationships with customers and regional sheep producers, and promoted sales of fair lambs. Sarah's family also operates a 2,000 acre dryland wheat farm as their main source of income. Sarah assisted with equipment repairs and maintenance, operated tractors, combines, and other machinery, and learned to manage weeds and other pests.

Sarah has a bachelor's degree in strategic communication and a master's degree in agriculture, teacher development to support the agricultural industry through communication and education. She is passionate about a healthy, thriving livestock industry that highlights the best practices in agriculture and promotes a healthy ecosystem. She is excited about opportunities to provide a high-quality cattle product to producers while investing in soil and plant health.

## BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

West Family Farms will lease and manage grazing land, emphasizing conservational rotational grazing practices to optimize land use and improve animal, plant, and soil health. We will focus on ensuring the health and well-being of our animals through rotational grazing and other management decisions. We also aim to optimize the ecological benefits of our livestock, using the natural patterns of cattle movement and grazing to improve the soil and plant health of the property.

The RFP lists a stocking rate of 10 animal units over the course of 12 months, resulting in a total of 120 AUMs. We plan to utilize 120 AUMs over six months to capitalize on the growing season and to achieve a higher stocking density. This will allow us to properly disrupt the soil and plants to maximize ecological benefits and profitability. Using an animal equivalent unit of 0.7 AU's per yearling heifer found in the Animal Equivalents Guide from the NRCS National Range and Pasture Handbook, we plan to stock the Pryor Farm with approximately 30 head of bred yearling heifers from the months of June through November. The heifers will be sold in the late fall of 2024 and a new group will be introduced in the early spring of 2025.

## BUSINESS GOALS

Our overarching goals over the next three years include improving soil and plant health through rotational cattle grazing, raising and marketing high-quality bred heifers, and improving infrastructure at Pryor Farms.

- *Year 1 Goals:*
  - Perimeter fence revitalization and install high tensile electric fence for rotational grazing. See Conceptual Grazing Plan included in Appendix B.
  - Improve existing irrigation and develop a temporary water distribution system to supply livestock water throughout the farm
  - Grow bred yearling heifers, utilizing 120 AUMs over approximately six months and market heifers to local and regional cattle producers
  - Establish relationships with other Pryor Farms producers to best utilize land and resources
  - Work with PVCF and FCNAD to evaluate pasture and infrastructure progress over the course of the lease
- *Year 2 and 3 Goals:*
  - Use data from previous years to alter stocking rates and grazing strategy for best ecological health
  - Develop permanent and frost-free livestock watering system to allow flexibility and year-round grazing opportunities
  - Establish irrigation distribution system to increase acres under irrigation
  - Increase plant diversity to benefit livestock and soil microbial populations

## OPERATING COSTS

Table 1: Estimated Operating and Infrastructure Costs

Cost Category	Price	Unit	Qty	Extension	Notes
<b>Cattle</b>					
Transportation	\$ 10.00	EA	30	\$ 300.00	Estimate for 30 hd of heifers
Veterinary	\$ 600.00	LS	1	\$ 600.00	Estimate
Insurance	\$1,000.00	YR	1	\$ 1,000.00	Estimate
<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>\$ 900.00</b>	
<b>Land</b>					
Lease	\$ 20.00	AU	126	\$ 2,520.00	Animal Units Per Year
<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>\$ 2,520.00</b>	
<b>Supplemental Feed</b>					
Hay	\$ 300.00	TON	2	\$ 600.00	Emergency Hay
Mineral	\$ 0.25	HD/Day	183	\$ 1,372.50	Mineral/Protein Lick Tubs
<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>\$ 1,972.50</b>	
<b>Fence</b>					
High Tensile Fence	\$ 0.20	LF	12,000	\$ 2,400.00	
Temporary Fence	\$ 794.00	LS	1	\$ 794.00	
Electricity	\$ 0.27	KWH	250	\$ 67.50	Approx. 250 KWH per year
<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>\$ 3,261.50</b>	
<b>Water and Irrigation</b>					
Portable Water Tank	\$ 154.00	EA	1	\$ 154.00	
Distribution Pipe	\$ 1.36	LF	800	\$ 1,088.00	2-inch HDPE for livestock water
Solar Lift Pump	\$ 580.00	EA	1	\$ 580.00	Lift pump, solar array, battery, valve box
Irrigation Dam	\$ 10.00	EA	5	\$ 50.00	
<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>\$ 1,872.00</b>	
<b>Small Tools</b>					
Misc. Tools	\$ 500.00	LS	1	\$ 500.00	
<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>\$ 500.00</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>\$ 11,026.00</b>	

## MARKET & ANALYSIS

West Family Farms will market our bred yearling heifers to local and regional cattle producers. Our marketing strategy includes emphasizing rotational grazing that benefits both the cattle and the land as we have seen a growing demand for high-quality breeding stock in the cattle industry. We will collaborate with local agricultural organizations to promote conservation practices and share our story as a small, family-run cattle operation with a product that acknowledges the importance of both animal and soil health. We will promote sales of our bred heifers through local networks of cattle producers in our region.

- SWOT Analysis:
  - Strengths: Expertise in livestock grazing, experience in farming/livestock practices, commitment to sustainability
  - Weaknesses: High investment cost tying up capital, time commitment to current careers
  - Opportunities: Rising demand for sustainable practices, high demand for breeding stock, increasing bio-diversity of the land
  - Threats: Market fluctuations, established competitors, environmental variability

## **EXPECTED REVENUE**

Based on an expected purchasing cost of \$1,800 per head, an estimated operating cost of \$10,500 and an estimated sales price of \$2,800 per head, we estimate our expected revenue to be around \$15,000. See table 1 above for more details regarding operating costs.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED**

The infrastructure required for our business includes:

- Fencing materials
  - Wire, electrical stuff
  - 120-volt energizer
  - 12-gauge 180k psi high tensile wire
  - 4-6' fiberglass posts at 50' spacing
  - Polybraid and reel temporary fencing wire
  - Step-in fiberglass posts
  - Pigtales
- Irrigation supplies
  - Irrigation dams
  - Gated pipe
  - Potential for valve or check structure installation
- Livestock watering
  - Portable water tank
  - Above-ground HDPE distribution piping
  - Solar energized lift pump

## **CONCLUSION**

West Family Farms looks forward to the opportunity to combine our passions for cattle production, ecological health, innovative farming practices, and entrepreneurialism at Pryor Farms. We will strive to provide high-quality breeding stock while also investing in the soil and plant health through rotational grazing practices, improved irrigation strategies, and other management choices. We hope that our impact on Pryor Farms will be beneficial to other operations at PVCF and that we can provide a quality product to local and regional cattle producers. It is a privilege to be a part of the food system, to care for the land, and to raise livestock and it is a responsibility we take seriously.

Thank you for this opportunity.

## **WEST FAMILY FARMS**

Andrew and Sarah West



# APPENDIX

A. Resumes

*See references on bottom of page 2*

B. Conceptual Grazing Plan



FEB 2024

# **APPENDIX A**

## **RESUMES**

## ANDREW WEST

As co-owner of West Family Farms, I am seeking leased grazing land at Pryor Farms to implement rotational cattle grazing of around 30 bred heifers. Our family aims to use grazing and management techniques to raise high-quality heifers while investing in and improving soil and plant health at Pryor Farms.

## EXPERIENCE

### Ditesco, LLC

**Aug. 2022 - Current**

Associate Engineer

- Work with local municipalities to design and manage heavy civil unfractured projects, including water transmission, water treatment, wastewater collection, and roadways

### AGPROfessionals

**July 2020 - July 2022**

Civil Engineer

- Work with local and regional farms, dairies, and feedlots to design new infrastructure and improve existing facilities
- Design on-farm irrigation distribution networks and groundwater augmentation system

### Roberts Cattle Company

**Feb. 2016 – Oct. 2019**

Ranch Hand

- Assist in management of approximately 20,000 acres and 300-400 cow-calf pairs
- Construction of 3 miles of new pressurized PVC irrigation pipeline
- Installation of over 5 miles of HDPE pipe and new livestock watering tanks
- New fence construction and existing fence maintenance
- Assist in production of 300-500 acres of irrigated grass hay
- Irrigation management including flood , center pivot and wheel line irrigation

### Mountain View Feeders

**March 2017 – Oct. 2019**

Feed Manager

- Assist in management of over 2,000 head of dairy heifers and yearling bulls in a feedlot setting
- Formulate daily feed rations and deliver feed to animals
- Identify and treat sick cattle
- Receive, ship, and process animals Beef Quality Assurance handling methods

## EDUCATION

### Colorado State University

**May 2017**

Bachelors of Science

Major: Civil Engineering

- Focus on Irrigation System Design, Hydraulics, & Water Distribution



## **SARAH WEST**

### **EXPERIENCE**

#### **Rocky Mountain Farmers Union**

**Aug. 2022 - Current**

Director of Communication Strategy

- Work with RMFU members to tell the story of agriculture – visit, learn about, and highlight stories that utilize conservational practices.

#### **CSU College of Agricultural Sciences**

**May 2020 - July 2022**

Graduate Assistant & Peer Educator

- Collaborate with supervisors and co-workers to develop and evaluate agricultural literacy – based curriculum for a range of audiences.
- Work with agricultural industry leaders to develop lessons that help youth learn about agriculture.

#### **E&S Appel Farm Inc.**

**June 2014 – Aug. 2021**

Farmhand

- Overhaul and operate equipment; R75 Gleaner Combine and Agco Allis 9815 Bankout Wagon
- Assist in management of 2,000 acres of Spring and Winter Wheat including harvesting, weeding, and other activities
- Assist in maintaining flock of 30 Suffolk sheep including lambing, vaccinations, marketing, and pasture care

### **EDUCATION**

#### **Colorado State University**

**July 2022**

Master's Degree

Program: Master of Agriculture; Teacher Development

- Certificate in Extension Education

#### **Washington State University**

**May 2020**

Bachelor's Degree: Strategic Communication

Major: Public Relations

- Double Minors: Agricultural Systems and Agribusiness Economics

### **REFERENCES**

#### **Zach Thode**

Roberts Ranch

Rancher

P: (970) 744-1444

E: zthode@lehiwater.com

#### **LeeAnne Sanders**

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

Director of Communication

P: (720) 299-9265

E: leeanne.sanders@rmfu.org

# **APPENDIX B**

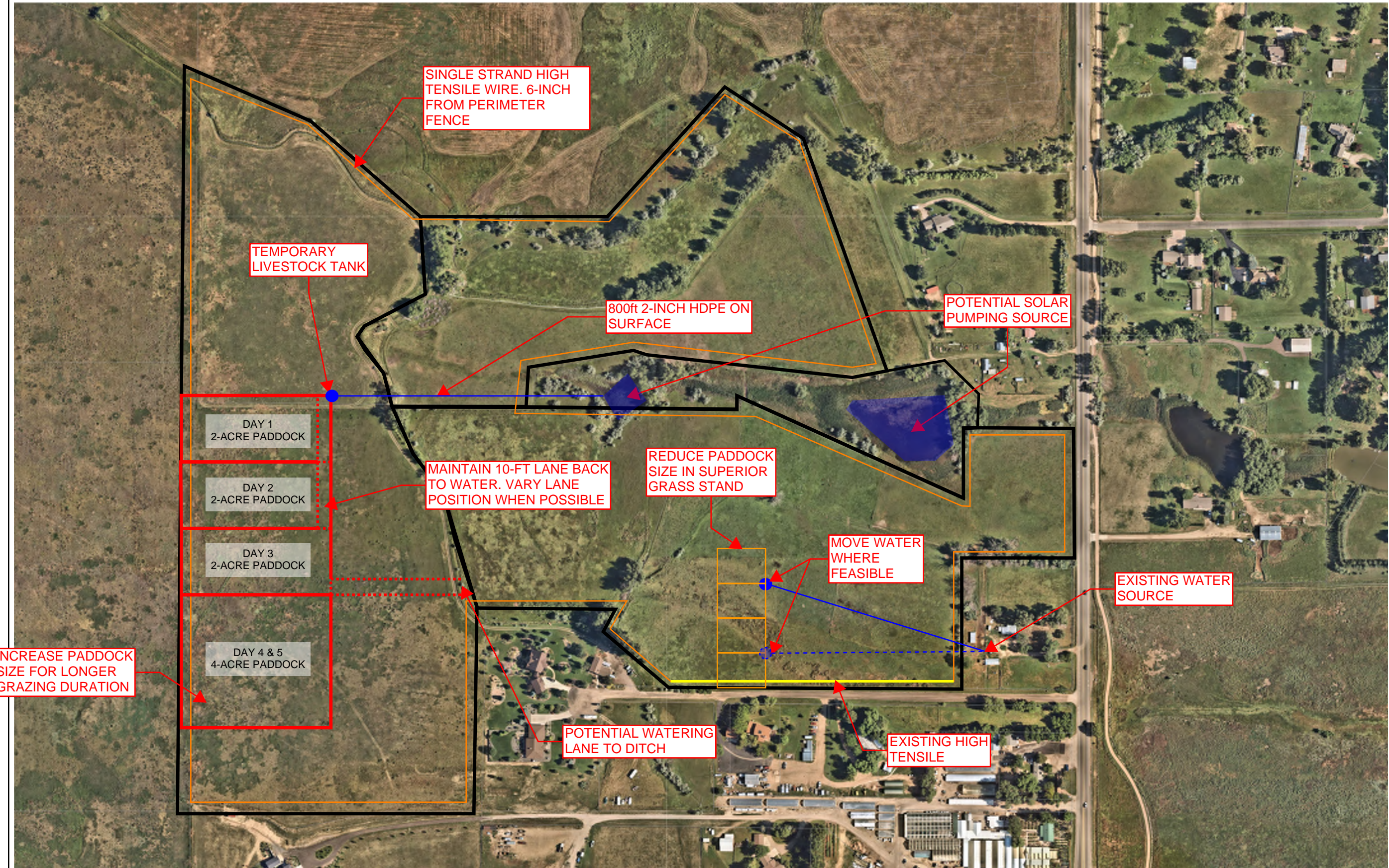
## **CONCEPTUAL GRAZING PLAN**



## Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area - Pryor Pastures - Conceptual Grazing Plan



**Legend**  
Parcels



1: 3,430



### Notes

This map is a user generated static output from the City of Fort Collins FCMaps Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

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City of Fort Collins - GIS