



## **Prestigious National Trophy Returns to USU**

Great news from the Society for Range Management annual conference in Louisville, Kentucky:

Our students have once again won the Rangeland Cup, a prestigious national trophy for an undergraduate competition. In this competition each team is presented with an academic challenge that they have to address with a poster and then defend verbally to a panel of anonymous judges who mingle with the crowd and ask questions on the spot from whomever is manning the poster at the time.

This year the challenge of the competition was as follows: What role does livestock grazing play in the long-term conservation of rangelands? What are the benefits and consequences of livestock grazing in this contemporary conservation-livestock production interface? Explain your answer using support from scientific literature. Design an educational program to inform those people who may not be familiar with rangeland ecology and management about your concept of the relationship between livestock grazing and rangeland conservation.

Our team this year was Casey Addy, Ashley Hansen, and Katie Santini (listed alphabetically), and the faculty mentor was Chris Call. Note that last year Katie Santini was also in the winning team (at Reno), and it is wonderful that our students are bringing this cup home again for the second time in a row.

Our Range Club had a strong contingent at Louisville and I was delighted to learn that USU received the highest number of job offers out of all other universities participating in the on-the-spot job interviews with federal agencies (mainly BLM and USFS) at the conference. Also, we fielded teams for the plant ID competition, the Undergraduate Range Management Exam (URME), and the public speaking contest. Although we just missed getting placed in any of those, our competitors did us proud.

Please join me in congratulating everyone in our Range Club for their outstanding performance at the SRM conference – they are shining ambassadors for our department, college and university!

Johan du Toit  
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