

To: MSU Agriculture Animal Care and Use Committee

From: Darrin Boss, Animal Scientist
Northern Agricultural Research Center
Updated 11/2009

Subject: Site Description

Northern Agricultural Research Center conducts research on two sites that are owned by Montana State University/Montana Agricultural Experiment Station.

1. LOCATION

Site 1: Main station located at Fort Assinniboine, five miles Southwest of Havre on Highway 87, Between mile marker 106 and 107.

Site 2: The Thackeray Ranch is located in the Bear's Paw Mountains and comprises approximately 4,000 acres of foothill rangeland. The ranch is located about 17 miles south of Havre, MT. To get to the Thackeray Ranch turn south from Highway 2 (First Street) in Havre between Duck Inn and Uncle Joe's. This road tees into Highway 2 on the east side of Havre near the Great Northern Inn. In about 3 miles, there is a Y in the road at Solomon Stockyards. Take the right fork of the Y (stay on the pavement). After the Y, the road is called Bull Hook Road. Follow Bull Hook road (main road) past the Molitor Ranch, Waid Ranch, Stallcup Ranch, Kallenberger Ranch, and Ted Solomon Ranch. Most of these ranches have signs by their driveways. After about 5 miles from the Solomon Ranch (last visible ranch from road), take the right fork in the road (no sign). Cross the cattle guard and go about 2 miles to a white house, red barn, corrals and several other buildings. This is the headquarters for the Thackeray Ranch.

2. BUILDINGS AND AREA

Site 1: Pastures and hay fields (3000 total acres) used for grazing vary from 5 acres to 640 acres. Water sources include flowing creek, springs, wells and reservoirs. Dry lots (10) range from 16' by 32' for 5 head to 5 acres. Barns were constructed in the 1930's and have been adapted to current use. One barn (Bull Barn) was build in 1890 and later converted from an ice house to barn with loft. Horse and calving barn has stalls (6) for cows during calving if necessary. Horse tie stalls (3) have room for five horses.

Site 2: Pastures vary in size from 20 to 1000 acres. Pastures being grazed now are over 200 acres in size. Corrals are used sorting and handling cattle. The main corral at headquarters has pens that vary from 20 by 20 feet to 200 by 100 feet. Cattle are RARELY kept in the corrals for more than 12 hours.

3. USE OF ANIMALS

Cattle.

Calves at the research center are in dry lot except for bulls in Upper Creek pasture with flowing creek in pasture. Bulls are used for breeding during spring. During winter feeding period and calving, all cows from ranch and research center will be fed hay or silage to meet NRC requirements for that class of animal until adequate green grass is available. Feedlot cattle are on various feeding trials to evaluate genetic, nutrition or implant strategies plus development of breeding stock. The number of cattle in dry lots range from five to 100 head depending on the project and time of year. All dry lots are watered with heated automatic waters hooked on to the research center water system and are checked daily. Cattle not in feedlot are checked at least four times per week and usually daily.

Horses.

Horses housed at the research center are used to work cattle in the research projects. Horses are either owned by the research center (2) or employees of the research center. Depending on use, horses are on pasture with or without supplemental feed depending on time of year or in corral near barn when in use on supplemental feed. Horses on pasture are checked at least three times per week.