

Cattle Producer's Handbook

Introduction Section

108

“Whole-Ranch” Planning and Management Western Integrated Ranch Education (W.I.R.E.)

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Ranch management has never been an easy proposition, but today it is more complex than ever. Today's ranch manager is deluged with changes in federal, state, and local laws and regulations, new and “improved” production technologies, new methods of communication, and bountiful information sources. Couple these challenges with the ongoing problems associated with labor and day-to-day management and there is little time left for planning and looking toward the future.

It is this environment of constant, often rapid changes that makes whole-ranch planning more essential now than it ever was to past generations of livestock producers. The manager must have a clear vision of where the operation needs to be in 5, 10, or 15 years.

Programs such as the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's IRM, Savory's Holistic Resource Management (HRM), and the Coordinated Resource Management program (CRMP) assist today's agricultural producer to better manage resources.

While all of these programs have their place in a cattle operation, none of them fully incorporate the issue of whole-ranch planning and management. One other program available to ranch and farm managers is a way to look at whole-ranch planning. “Western Integrated Ranch/Farm Education” (W.I.R.E.) is a program in Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and Saskatchewan, Canada.

The W.I.R.E. program teaches ranch managers a process of management that can be applied to any agricultural-based business. It will help managers achieve

goals that they set for their operation. The program also teaches ranchers how to look at their ranch operation as a whole, rather than as several separate enterprises. It provides managers with a step-by-step method of working through the massive amount of information that ag producers face daily, and gives them a way to once again gain control of their destiny.

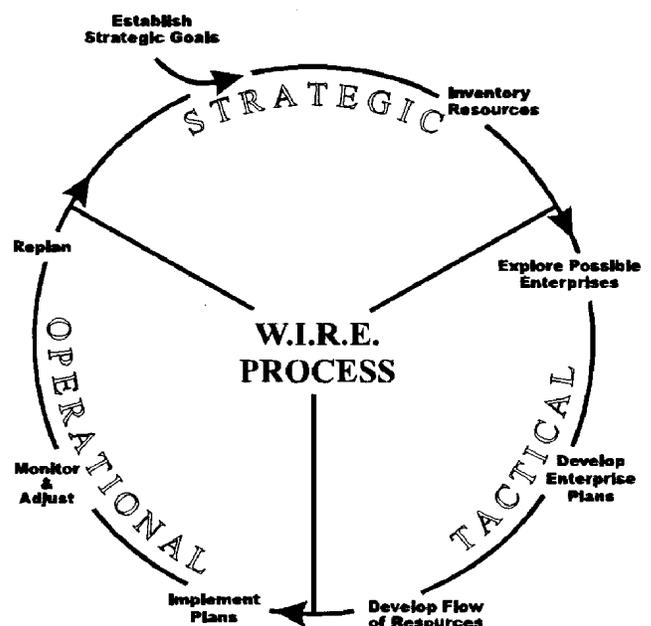


Fig. 1. The W.I.R.E. process.