

Winter 2023

Livestock, Range, & Watershed

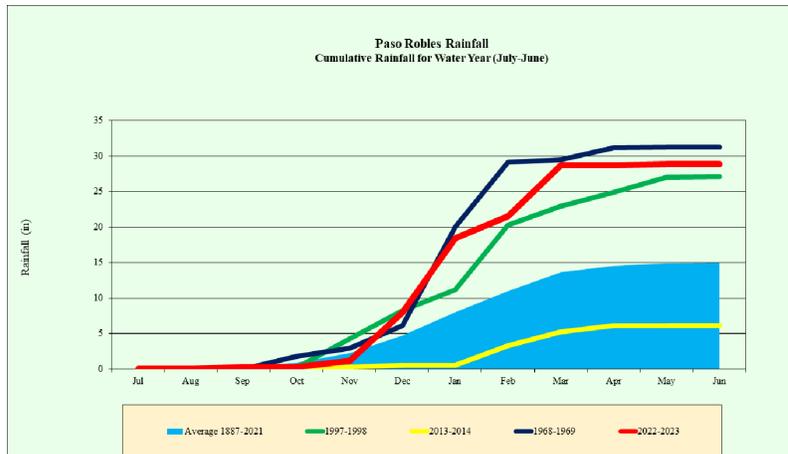
San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Monterey Counties

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Hoping for Another Wet Rainfall Season



We had a very wet rainfall season last year, mirroring closely with the 1968-1969, and 1997-1998 rainfall seasons, see above chart of City of Paso Robles Rainfall.

Along with high forage production, it was also a great year for flowers, see above photo.

Even though there was significant flooding issues caused by last year's heavy rainfall, we still need another wet year this season to help with ground water recharge, stream flow, reservoir filling, and improved soil moisture.

The California Rancher Sustainability Assessment

New online resource offers free self-assessment and resource library.

By Rebecca Ozeran, UCCE Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor, Fresno and Madera Counties

In November 2023, the California Cattlemen’s Magazine published a short article announcing the California Rancher Sustainability Assessment, or CRSA. You can read [that article](#), and the rest of the issue, [here](#).

In this article, we will discuss one CRSA topic: Generational Succession.

Although succession planning may feel like a low priority compared to the day-to-day needs of your ranch, having a plan in place is critical to ensure that your wishes are followed once you’re no longer running the ranch. The long evenings of winter might offer a good time to have these important conversations with your family, employees, and anyone else who has an interest in the future of your ranch.

Sneak peek of some questions in the Generational Succession module:

- Do you have a written plan to protect your family ranch when the current owner passes on?
- Has the family discussed and agreed upon the important aspects that the current owner(s) want to preserve? (Along with healthy land that can sustain a profitable operation, these may also include non-economic values such as family use of the ranch, conservation of wildlife habitat and open space, and demonstrating good stewardship to the public)
- Do the heirs have all the information and knowledge needed to take on ownership?



Leigh Rubin created delightful comic panels for each CRSA module. The Succession comic is a fun example.

What is succession planning?

From a business perspective, succession planning is the process of identifying key roles in an organization and preparing people to take on those roles over time. On a family ranch, the process considers the property or ranch business as well as the family members or existing employees who are involved. Often, a ranch includes a home and significant land area, as well as a legacy of stewardship that the owner would like to see continue.

What kinds of things need to be included in a succession plan?

A succession plan typically includes descriptions of the assets being managed - in this case, the ranch and all related components - as well as a plan for what should be done with those assets once the current owner is no longer around. This could include **how** you want the ranch managed, and **who** you want to manage or own it. Part of succession planning includes making an estate plan to ensure financial plans are legally documented.

Who can help with the legal and financial aspects?

Chances are good that you already have an accountant that helps with ranch income and taxes. They will be an important person to involve in your planning process. You may also need an attorney, a financial planner or life insurance expert, an appraiser, and possibly someone who can help facilitate family meetings.

How can the CRSA help?

The CRSA provides an opportunity to reflect on your current succession plans, while giving you quick feedback on how you are doing. After taking the 7-question self-assessment on Generational Succession, the CRSA will show you a score and recommendations for next steps. You can download your report for future reference. In your report, the CRSA will also link to specific resources that can help you move forward in the process.

Note: No one except you will see your results - unless you choose to show them to someone else. The CRSA site automatically anonymizes and calculates an average score based on all users' self-assessment scores.

We cannot see who has participated or how they ranked themselves.

We encourage all ranchers to use the CRSA! There are five modules, covering forage, soils, drought, wildlife, and generational succession. Visit the CRSA here: crsa.cnr.berkeley.edu/.

You can also access the resource library any time. It has materials for each module.

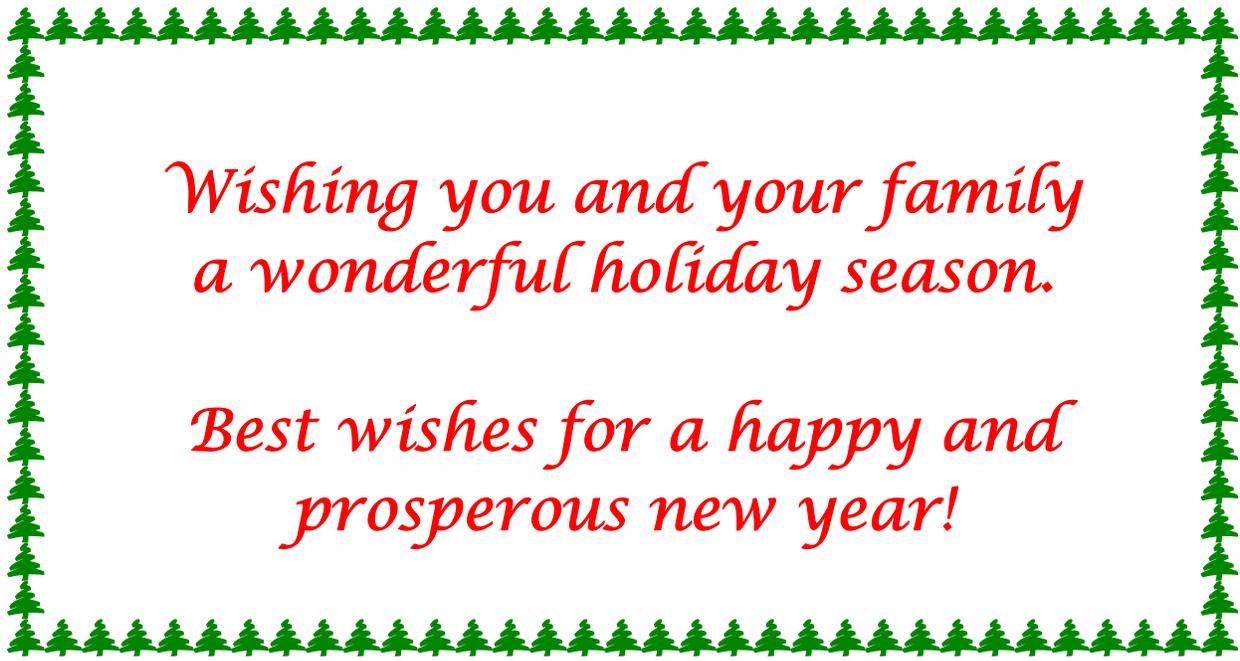
For example, the [Generational Succession library](#) is here.

CRSA development was funded by a UC ANR Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) grant, Project #20-6284.





The proceedings have taken longer than expected. There are a lot of papers, and it is a long procedure. We expect the proceedings to be completed in 2024.



*Wishing you and your family
a wonderful holiday season.*

*Best wishes for a happy and
prosperous new year!*

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