

# Farm Management Education with American Indian Tribes

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# Federal Policy Eras

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- Trade & Intercourse Era: 1790 – 1830
- Removal Era: 1830 – 1850
- Reservation Era: 1850-1887
- Allotment & Assimilation Era: 1887 – 1934
- Indian New Deal Era: 1934 – 1945
- Termination Era: 1945 – 1965
- Self Determination Era: 1965 - Present

# American Indian Tribes Today

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- **Federal Policy: Self Determination Era 1965 - Present**
  - Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (1975) sought to reverse policies of Termination Era
  - Allowed tribes on reservations to oversee their social services
  - Allowed tribes to make decisions about reservation education, health...
  - Tribes have the ability to contract or compact programs

# American Indian Tribes Today

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- Land Tenure Issues
  - Trust Status
  - Allotments
  - Tribal Lands
- Jurisdictions over land use and land use decisions
  - BIA reduced funding and reduced realty officers
  - Can wait years for an appraisal for a sale and lease

# Nevada Tribes Today

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- New federal administration
  - Reduced funding already being seen
  - Federal employment freeze impacted some BIA realty positions
- Change: Are we headed to a new federal policy era?

# A Nevada Example

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- Small Nevada Federally Recognized Tribe
- Tribal Government was set up under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.
- Land purchased during Great Depression of 1,040.11 acres to create a federal reservation
- The land would be divided among 12 families to be assigned 30 acres parcels.
- Farming and ranching activities were to be “communal,” meaning there was a requirement to share equipment, bulls and other resources
- BIA Farmer in Charge dictated agricultural activities.

# A Nevada Example

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- **WESTERN REGION AMERICAN INDIAN USDA OUTREACH AND ASSISTANCE PROJECT**
  - **Funded by the USDA, Office of Advocacy and Outreach**
  - **Project includes Utah State, University of Arizona, and University of Nevada, Reno**
- **Formal request from this small tribe to analyze tribal farm operation and make recommendations to the tribal council**

# Initial Meeting

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- Had provided with pre-meeting checklist
- Participants were Tribal Chairman, financial director, farm manager, farm worker, Staci and myself
- Understanding of basic size and scope of farm
- Disentanglement of numerous operations



# From brains to paper

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- Investment summary
  - All current machinery and vehicles
  - What is it used for
  - Valuation
  - Approximate life

# Filling in the blanks

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- Establishing establishment costs
  - Many old stands - Allow for  $1/7$  of total to be replaced yearly
- Division and assignment of labor and associated costs
- Revenues –
  - January - \$200 ton
  - April - \$32 ton
  - Hay broker

# Profit killers

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- Hay broker
  - Cut and 3 year delay in returns
- Irrigation pumping costs
  - \$40,000 on 245 acres
- \$13,000 annually in tarping
- Annual losses of over \$104,000

# Suggested changes

- Hay yields are increased from 5 tons per acre to 6.5 due to regular replanting of one 35 acre stand every year. This should not only increase quantity, but quality, resulting in a higher sales price per ton.
- In this budget, hay is directed marketed, eliminating the marketing fee and revolving fund fee currently paid to the haygrowers association.
- Irrigation costs are estimated at 3/4 of current by repairing or replacing of the pump to increase efficiency.
- Tarping costs can be eliminated by direct sales or through construction of a storage facility.
- Replacement or sale of the following equipment would increase efficiency and reduce operating costs:
- Purchase of a new large tractor, large baler and harrowbed attachment for large bales. Large bales are needed for direct sales to dairy.
- Trade-in of 9100 tractor that only is used for leveling and Ford tractor.
- Trade-in of one of two current small balers.

# Success

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- Recommended changes would result in positive net projected returns
- USDA, NRCS EQIP program utilized to improve irrigation infrastructure
- Increase alfalfa production by planting new alfalfa stands
- Extension seen as resource to help with tribal council decision making
- A relationship of trust was formed and I was asked to assist with budgets for other enterprises
- Tribe contracted with the University for community economic development strategies (CEDS) planning.