



Jack Arterburn

- 27-years-old
- Chadron, Nebraska
- Beef Systems Educator for the Northern Nebraska Panhandle, including Sioux, Sheridan, Dawes and Box Butte Counties

Education: Masters from University of Nebraska in Natural Resource Sciences (Applied Ecology); Bachelors from University of Nebraska in Fisheries and Wildlife (Habitat Management); Minors from University of Nebraska in Grassland Ecology and Management, and Grazing Livestock Systems.

Background: Jack grew up in Sidney, Neb., but with few ties to agriculture. His only tie was visiting his family's farming operation in Chase County. His interest in agriculture started with a love of the outdoors, wildlife, and fishing. His first job in agriculture was working for a farmer near Wahoo. In college, he worked for the University of Nebraska cow/calf unit in Mead, where he gained valuable hands-on experience about the cow/calf industry.

Family: His wife, Emily, and two sons, Cogan, 3, and Lincoln, 8 months.

Industry Involvement: Member of the advisory board for the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition, the advisory board for the Northern Panhandle Cattlemen Affiliate, and a council member of the Society of Range Management.

Best advice he ever received: "Many people told me how important the value of character is when dealing with people. I think it is important to have strong character and integrity."

Mentors: Colleague Aaron Berger has been Jack's biggest mentor along with Ron Bolze at Chadron State College.

Rancher RESOURCE

By Gayle Smith

Jack Arterburn grew up around hunting, fishing and wildlife. In fact, his first exposure to agriculture was occasional visits to his family's farm in Chase County. "I enjoyed going there and seeing what my grandfather and uncles do. Hunting is what started my interest in the outdoors," he says.

At the University of Nebraska, Arterburn focused on degrees in his favorite activities of fishing and wildlife, but he also became interested in range management. "I found that I was more interested in working with the land, rather than animals," he explains.

He gained more experience working at the cow/calf unit at the University of Nebraska-Mead. "I really learned a lot there," he explains. "It was a very real hands-on experience of the day-to-day activities that happen in a cow-calf operation," he says.

Arterburn is now a beef systems educator for the Northern Panhandle. He lives in Chadron, but has an office in Rushville. This position came across his desk as a graduate student at UNL. "I let it go the first time. But, my advisor recommended that I consider it. I didn't even know what extension work was at the time, so I decided to look into it. What I saw was an opportunity where I could share the knowledge and passion I have with others, and continue to learn. I have found you need to be knowledgeable to educate ranchers, and be willing to learn from them, too," he says.

Being a part of the "beef team" in the "beef state" is an honor itself, Arterburn says. "I think it is very humbling to be a part of what we have in Nebraska, and I have learned a lot from it," he explains. "Coming from a range background, my concerns on the beef issue team are related to range and forage," he adds.

Research & Education

As a beef systems educator, Arterburn says his key goals are helping ranchers improve profitability through grazing management, while reducing costs. "I spend a lot of time helping ranchers look at their unit cost of production," he explains.

"We also do a lot of research on annual forages," he continues, while admitting more

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research needs to be done in that area. "I think annual forages have a lot to contribute to the overall grazing system. It is a good way to improve soil health."

"In the last year, the on-farm research I conducted was related to cool-season grass pasture management," Arterburn continues. "I am also working on putting a project together for cheatgrass management. We also hold ranching for profitability meetings each year, and there's a stockmanship clinic and sheep production program scheduled this fall," he adds.

Arterburn regularly sees several of the more progressive ranchers in his area, but he thinks there are more out there who could benefit from his programs. "I think a lot of them don't know about extension, or the programs we offer," he says.

Education is one of the things Arterburn enjoys the most about his job. "Having the ability to get out of the office and work one-on-one with the farmers and ranchers is important to me. I like to learn about their operations, and where I might be needed for some educational resources. I try to develop programs that I feel are needed in our area, and will help the ranchers," he explains.

In fact, it is one of his main goals. "I try and meet with as many ranchers as I can, find out what their needs are, and where I can help. I want to be that resource," Arterburn states.