

# The International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026: Global Education at Home in SK

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The 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) was declared by the United Nations General Assembly and there are currently 104 countries supporting the declaration and 400 organizations participating in this global event. The Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK PCAP) and Partners have organized a Saskatchewan Working Group for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan supports the IYRP because it aligns closely with PCAP's goals to engage people of all ages in learning about native grasslands and the ecosystem services prairies provide.

As a non-profit, SK PCAP collaborates with non-profit organizations, students and researchers, landowners and managers, government and industry to conserve Saskatchewan's native prairies, regularly organizing and participating in events that connect and inspire those interested in protecting this threatened ecosystem.

With its global focus and diverse international participation, IYRP promotes collaboration amongst livestock grazers, policymakers and organizations dedicated to conserving landscapes, lifestyles, and people active in rangeland stewardship around the world.



Branding in Frenchman River Valley, SK, Krisjansons Wilder Ranch 2022

IYRP uses the word **rangelands** to describe the vast and vital ecosystems covering nearly half of Earth's land surface, including grasslands, savannas, shrublands, deserts, wetlands, and mountain ranges. Rangelands host unique and biologically diverse plant and animal communities, while supporting the livelihoods of pastoralists with time-honoured traditions and knowledge of grazing practices.

**Pastoralist** is an inclusive term referring to people who raise livestock as a primary livelihood, such as ranchers, shepherds, or herders in rangelands. Millions of pastoralists worldwide manage around a billion animals and play a vital role in food production as well as in preserving traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and identities linked to mobility and land stewardship.

Well-managed rangelands provide ecosystem services such as carbon storage, water regulation, maintenance of biodiversity, and regulation of climate fluctuations. Despite their importance, many rangelands are degraded or threatened by drought and flood, land-use changes, rural-to-urban migration, overgrazing, insecure tenure rights, and other complex issues. As a result, pastoral communities, the



International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026 has 12 monthly themes to highlight issues associated with pastoralism and rangelands across the globe.

ecosystem services they sustain, and traditional ranching communities are increasingly vulnerable.

The Saskatchewan IYRP Working Group, led by the SK Prairie Conservation Action Plan Partners, was formed to plan events and help other organizations plan activities around the IYRP 2026. The SK IYRP Working Group is planning a kick-off event in the new year, field tours, and workshops during the Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference in May, a book club, a Native Prairie Appreciation Week field tour in June 2026, as well as programs and events with libraries.

The SK IYRP Working Group has also set up a Trello Board, which is a workspace platform with IYRP resources and events. The Trello Board has content around IYRP to help inform event planning and social media content and will provide a hub of information for all things IYRP 2026 (link provided in reference section).

To celebrate IYRP, SK PCAP Education Coordinator Shirley Bartz will be discussing key IYRP topics with students participating in SK PCAP's Taking Action for Prairie (TAFP) and Adopt a Rancher (AAR) programs. All education program presentations in 2026 will begin by introducing IYRP and defining the terms *rangeland* and *pastoralist*.

Activities that will be integrated into SK PCAP's education programs include locating Saskatchewan's native grasslands within a global mosaic of rangelands. Saskatchewan's ranchers will be compared to pastoralists worldwide, focusing on similar lifestyles and land-based science.

With sixth grade students, discussions will examine rangelands as refuges for species at risk and the medicinal use of native plants for humans and livestock.

Grade-seven students will investigate food webs, nutrient cycles, and pastoral stewardship that supports food and economic security.

Grade-eight student discussions will explore how human practices affect land productivity and species distribution in wetlands.

With grade-10 students in the Adopt a Rancher program, the evolution of grazers on Saskatchewan Prairies will be compared to rangelands in other countries.

Other topics of discussion include how precipitation has shaped rangelands and how climate change is affecting these grassland ecosystems. Discussions will include challenges that pastoralists experience in Saskatchewan and globally, such as drought, floods, takeover by large-scale agriculture, and encroachment of industrial and urban growth.

In both SK PCAP education programs, we will talk about opportunities for kids their age to get involved in IYRP. By bringing the ranching way of life into a global context, students will feel a connection to

a larger, more vibrant community.

The 2026 International Year of Rangeland and Pastoralists has the potential to connect Saskatchewan ranchers, teachers, small agricultural businesses or grassroots organizers with a global community dedicated to livestock, rangeland conservation, and best management practices, offering opportunities to learn about international research and engage with others who share similar knowledge and lifestyles worldwide.

For more information:

- The IYRP website: [IYRP:info](https://www.iyrp.info)
- SK Working Group IYRP Trello Board <https://trello.com/b/EKfGmpt0/2026-international-year-or-rangelands-and-pastoralists-canadian-resources>
- Pastoralist Knowledge Hub: <https://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/en/>



Livestock transportation is regulated provincially through *The Animal Production Act* and *The Animal Production Regulations*.

## Travel Documentation Required for Livestock

Where inspection is not required, livestock manifests are required for most livestock transportation situations in Saskatchewan.

Scan the QR code or call Livestock Services of Saskatchewan at 306-546-5086 to learn more about livestock transportation document requirements or to get a livestock manifest.



[saskatchewan.ca/livestock](https://saskatchewan.ca/livestock)

