Working Wetlands
Feeding Cows and Waterfowl in Nebraska’s Rainwater Basin

Brian Shaw – Shaw Family Farms
Working Wetlands
Integration of Wetlands into Farm Operations
Producer’s Perspective

Today’s Talk – History and changes in our operation

• Producers perspective of the landscape
• Public lands grazing
• Transition of flood-prone cropland into irrigated pasture
• Changes in herd dynamics
• Approaches taken to maximize animal health
• Educating other producers
Nebraska’s Rainwater Basin
Rainwater Basin Wetlands are ephemeral, and pond water as a result of precipitation & surface runoff.
Working Wetlands
Integration of Wetlands into a Rainwater Basin Farm Operation

Public Lands Grazing
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Integration of Wetlands into Farm Operations

Flood-prone Cropland to Irrigated Pasture
Transition in herd dynamics

- Initially one herd
  - Spring calving
- Today three herds
  - Spring calving
  - Fall calving
  - Replacement heifers
Working Wetlands
Integration of Wetlands into the Farm Operation

- Managing, Learning, Demonstrating
  - Portable Tube, Chute, and Alley – oversee checkout
  - Mineral Supplements – managing insects, animal health
  - Providing information to area grazers
  - Communicating with Agency Managers – learning what they want, educating them on what we need