Dave Pratt transferred his passion for teaching and innovative research after 15 years at California Extension Service to the Ranch Management Consultants, which has taught over 150 Ranching for Profit schools across the states and Canada.

Pratt will be in Nebraska for four day-long workshops. Pratt will discuss characteristics of highly profitable ranch businesses. He will also help participants increase their profits and sustainability through business, finances, and people management strategies.

Strategies include trimming “deadwood” or money draining enterprises from your ranch. Working in the business versus working on the business is the difference between the CEO’s job ($100/hr.) and the hired man’s job ($10/hr.). Techniques to improve communication at home and in your business will help keep and train employee/family members.

Everyone keeps track of finances for the tax man, but what else can the numbers show you. Pratt states there are only three things a rancher can do to increase profit: 1. Decrease the overhead costs; 2. Improve the gross margin per unit; and 3. Increase the turnover (the number of units).

But only one of these three things is the most important. If high overheads are the problem, increases in production efficiency are likely to increase your work load but may not significantly increase profit. If gross margin is the problem, then decreasing overheads won’t have much effect and increasing turnover may actually help you go broke faster. It isn’t enough to know the numbers. We must now find out what the numbers mean.

While businesses of all stages are welcome to attend at Valentine, Pratt will focus on ranchers starting up. All the same principles apply, but all start-up businesses, including ranches, face additional challenges that Dave will address in this workshop. Communication may also be needed as the next generation transitions onto the ranch.

Want to know more about what Dave teaches? Visit Pratt’s website at www.ranchmanagement.com, to view articles or webinars.

Dates and locations for the workshops:

Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2-8 p.m., North Platte, WREC Synder Classroom. Rick Funston, UNL beef specialist, will also talk about heifer enterprises.

Thursday, Jan. 26, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Thedford, Thomas County Fairbuilding.

Friday, Jan. 27, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Broken Bow, Broken Bow Country Club.

Saturday, Jan. 28, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Valentine, Cedar Canyon. These business and people principles will relate to everyone, but focus will be toward ranchers starting out.

Registration is $50 per person ($75/couple) for the daylong workshop. To pre-register for a meal count, contact Randy Saner at 308-532-2683 for North Platte, Bethany Johnston at 308-645-2267 or 1-800-657-2113 for Thedford, Troy Walz at 308-872-6831 for Broken Bow, and Jay Jenkins at 402-376-1850 or 1-800-657-2188 for Valentine.