



Boulder County Small Acreage Management Newsletter

Spring 2015

<http://www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/acreage.shtml>

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From the SAM Coordinator

Happy almost Spring!

I don't know about you but I received a little over 2" of moisture out of the storm on 4/17. A very much appreciated boost in moisture.

While it is tempting to allow livestock to be grazing this time of year, you need to allow your pasture grasses time to grow and get leaf surface area developed prior to grazing. Resist the urge and keep the livestock in your drylot. Grazing now will ultimately weaken your grasses.

Thank you,
Sharon Bokan
Small Acreage Coordinator
sbokan@bouldercounty.org

SAM Newsletters Online

View previous newsletters via the SAM link above.

SAM Email Listserv

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time and are not subscribed to the boco_small_acreage@colostate.edu listserv, you may request subscription on the SAM website (linked in header above). This quarterly e-newsletter and other timely info will be distributed via this email listserv.

Subscribers may use the listserv also as a SAM info gathering mechanism. For example, you may inquire about who is available in the area supply hay, to perform swathing/baling, etc. The listserv is not a marketplace, however. Because it is hosted on the CSU server, **NO COMMERCIAL EMAILS ARE ALLOWED. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO SELL ANYTHING VIA THE LISTSERV – THANKS.** Use the newsletter ad section for these purposes.

Currently, there are 212 subscribers to the listserv



Weather Outlook

The NOAA forecasts for the next 30 and 90 days are showing that the state will be normal in temperature. The mountains and western part of the state may see higher than normal precipitation.

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/seasonal.php?lead=1



Coming events and workshops

Upcoming events that may be of interest.

There will be a **Small Acreage workshop** on May 16, 2015 at The Ranch in Loveland. Sessions will include soils, pasture management, cover crops and more to register go to

<https://small-acreage-workshop.eventbrite.com>

If you hold a **Private Pesticide Applicators** license and need to get your Continuing Education Credits, we will have a 4 hour workshop where you can get all the credits for your license. It will be held Monday, May 4, 2015 from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Natural Resources Building at 9595 Nelson Rd. Longmont. Cost is \$40, pre-registration required. Contacts: Sharon Bokan, 303-678-6176, sbokan@bouldercounty.org or Nancy McIntyre, 303-776-4034 X3, nmcintyre@bouldercounty.org

I will be planning other workshops this year and will advertise them in future newsletters. I hope that you will take advantage of these events.



David Cappaert, Michigan State University

Celebrate National Pollinator Week June 15 – 21, 2015

If you ate today or put on clothes, you can thank a pollinator. Worldwide, approximately 1000 plants that provide food, beverages, spices, medicines and fibers require pollination.

Overall, 75% of all flowering plant species require pollination. All of this pollination is not accomplished by only the managed honey bee, but by over 200,000 animal species.

When we think of pollinators, we typically think about the managed honey bee and maybe the lumbering bumble bee we see visiting our flower beds. However, honey bees are only a very small part of the whole pollination system. Many other insects such as butterflies, moths, flies, native bees and beetles provide the vast majority of pollination along with animals, such as bats and birds.

While managed honey bees are considered social insects because they live in colonies and hives, many native bees do not live in colonies, but are solitary. They may nest in wood, masonry or in the ground. So when we want to preserve habitat, we need to think beyond flower beds and alfalfa fields and look to large open spaces, fence post and dead trees.

So what can you do to protect pollinators? Like most living things they need food, water and shelter. The first step is to provide forage by planting native and flowering plants. Leave areas uncultivated or old wood snags in the

landscape to provide nesting sites, build nesting structures. Use pesticides wisely and always read and follow the label.



Spring Grazing

The grasses are greening up and it's very tempting to allow your livestock out to graze. However, for the health of you grass, your animals should not yet be out grazing.

The grasses are still using stored energy in last year's stubble and the root system to grow leaves and new roots. Grazing now forces the grasses to use more of the stored energy potentially weakening the plants. Waiting until the grasses have 6 – 8" of growth and 5 leaves will preserve more of that energy and keep your grasses healthier. By the time the grasses are this tall they have enough leaf surface area to be photosynthesizing sufficiently to sustain the plants functions as well as store energy for future use.

So to keep your grasses healthy long term, resist the urge for a little while longer to let your animals out to graze. Failing to practice grazing management will over time weaken your grasses and allow invasive weeds a foothold.



Spring Weed Management

If you don't have a plan to manage your weeds, you need to be developing one. Winter annual weeds are either close to or are beginning to bloom. Summer annual weeds kochia and Russian thistle are in the seedling stage right now while others such as puncturevine have yet to germinate. Winter annual weeds such as the mustards (blue mustard, flixweed, tumble mustard); Cheatgrass (downy or Japanese brome), redstem filaree and wild lettuce are the weeds that are out now. You need to be either planning on mowing, hand pulling or spraying them. For herbicide recommendations, we need to positively identify the plant first then make the recommendation. You can either bring in a sample or send a photo in to the office for identification.

Kochia produces many seedlings but very few survive to produce seeds. Kochia and Russian thistle seedlings are easily disrupted right now or you can wait a little while and pull fewer larger plants.

You can also be taking care of the biennial rosettes of musk and scotch thistle, diffuse and spotted knapweed, teasel, mullein and other biennials. You can be undercutting them and flipping them over or spraying them. Bindweed and other perennials such as Canada thistle are just beginning to emerge.

As stated above, the first step in weed management is to positively identify the plant. For annuals and biennials and simple perennials, keeping them from producing seed is the key management technique.

In Search of Animal Answers: Who You Going Call?????

Dr. Ragan Adams, DVM, CSU Vet. Teaching Hospital

The Internet supplies us with an endless supply of information. Personally, the magnitude can bury me. My eyes blur. My shoulders shrug. I whimper, "Can I just get a simple answer for my specific question ". That's when I start looking for a person to talk to.

When it comes to questions about animal health and management, I would recommend a veterinarian and an extension educator (agent). That is my prejudice because I am lucky enough to be both. What fuels my bias?

Veterinarians complete 4 years of education following college to get their degree. In order to practice in your community they must also pass national and state testing procedures. Their answers will be grounded in science and amplified by their evidence-based practice experience. Although that is a lot of training, it is insufficient to make experts in all things known about all animals. So most veterinarians are not hesitant to plead ignorant about a species of animal that they are unfamiliar. Veterinarians are the best source of information about your animal's health. They will answer general questions but are most valuable when a specific animal has a specific malady. Veterinarians are trained to examine the individual animal and prescribe appropriate treatment for that animal. Legally, there must be an established client-patient-doctor relationship for prescriptions to be written or drugs given. That relationship means the doctor has to have examined the animal not just talked on the phone!

Extension agents are "educators" and they do a wonderful job explaining concepts of husbandry as well as helping making decisions as how to care for animals in the best way, given a

particular situation. Extension agents share scientifically based information and usually have a wide base of knowledge, knowing more about water, soil, plants as well as basic animal management.

As a veterinarian and an extension specialist, I divide my calls into three general categories that influence my answers:

Is this call about an animal with a life-threatening problem? If so, I encourage the caller to hang up and take the animal to a veterinarian for an examination. A horse that is experiencing colic, a goat torn up in a dog fight, a dog having trouble breathing should be seen by a veterinarian promptly.

Is this call about a longer standing problem that may affect the general well-being of the animal but is not immediately life threatening? These questions often revolve around body condition, poor production, change in energy level or appetite. With can have a general discussion over the phone and then I encourage the caller to have the veterinarian examine the individual(s) to define more precisely the problem. The three of us can then discuss the problem and the suitable options. A good example would be a skinny horse. Is the poor body condition due to inadequate nutrition or a chronic disease? Is it due to poisonous plant in the pasture or bad teeth? The combined expertise of the local extension agent and your veterinarian will make the best team of sleuths.

Is the call about a general management issue or how to best use the resources on a particular property to care for the animals. In this case a visit to the property is the most appropriate and extension agents are willing and able to accommodate the caller. Veterinarians can also perform this service but may have a tighter schedule due to the demand for health related services.

With the domestication of animals we trade responsibility for their care in exchange for companionship and service. There are and will

always be questions about their health and well-being. A directory of county extension agents may be found on the internet at:

http://www.ext.colostate.edu/cedirectory/extension_region.cfr .

Colorado licensed veterinarians can be found through the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association. (Phone 303.318.0447; <http://www.colovma.org/>). Both types of professional have valuable expertise for the animal owner.



Terry Spivey, USDA Forest Service

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has been found in wild bird flyways to the east and west of Colorado but not yet in Colorado. So what can the average flock owner do to protect their flock?

To protect your own flock, keep your flock confined in a run that is not accessible to wild birds. I know people like to allow their flocks to free range but this is not a good practice from either a biosecurity or wildlife management stand point. Allowing wild bird's access to your birds is a perfect method to spread disease. Clean and disinfect all equipment on a routine basis and do not share equipment with other

flock owners. Practice an all-in, all out method and disinfect everything between flocks. Have specific clothing that you wear when tending your flock. If you visit a neighbors flock, change clothes and shower or at a very minimum clean and disinfect clothing before tending to your flock. Purchase birds from reputable sources.

So what are the signs and symptoms to be on the lookout for with HPAI? It is a virus that can spread by bird to bird contact, manure, crates, clothing shoes, hand and equipment. The signs are lack of energy and appetite, decreased egg production (beyond normal seasonal and age changes), thin shelled or mi-shaped eggs, swelling of head, eyelids, comb, wattles, purple discoloration of wattles, comb, legs, nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, lack of coordination, diarrhea, sudden death with no signs.

If you experience unexplained deaths, contact the CSU Vet. At 970-297-4008.

In the case of an outbreak in Colorado, we will need to locate all flocks. You can provide your flock location to Sharon Bokan, sbokan@bouldercounty.org or 303-678-6176. The information will not be released to anyone other than the Colorado Department of Agriculture and only in case of an outbreak. We need to be able to contact all flock owners as rapidly as possible in the event of an outbreak and the list will help make that possible.

Voles

Due to the snow cover we had last winter, this is the year of the vole damage. Voles are a cyclical problem. In years when we have snow cover for a longer time, we tend to see more damage. So take heart, the damage will not always be as bad as it is this year.

Voles are small mouse-like rodents. They look similar to a mouse but have stocky bodies, short

legs and a shorter tail. They nest underground under trees and shrubs.

The damage that a landowner might notice is dead trees, perennials or shrubs, “raceways” in turf grasses and pastures. Voles can also girdle the bark of young trees and shrubs, and damage roots. So if you have young trees dying or branches on shrubs that have died, check for girdling at the base or damaged roots. The grasses will recover from the damage.

What can a landowner do to minimize the damage in the future? Within a home landscape, owners need to identify their plants of highest value and protect them. They can either exclude the voles by the use of hardware cloth (with openings less than ¼”), the use of repellants or trapping. For turf grasses, mowing the grass shorter in the fall will not provide the voles a place to hide from their predators. They like to nest under junipers so limbing them up so that a fox, coyote or cat can get under them will also help. Toxicants and traps can be used but you need to be careful so that you do not trap or poison other animals. If you live on a small acreage, you could install perches for raptors to help lower your population.

For assistance, contact the Wildlife Masters by calling 303-678-6238 to leave a message in the voice mailbox.



Place your SAM related classified ad or print advertisement here!

Classified Advertising Rates are as follows:

SAM Volunteer: 20 cents/word
4-H Member/Leader: 20 cents/word
General Public, Individual: 25 cents/word
General Public, Business/Show: 30 cents/ word

Print Ad Rates are as follows:

Quarter Page Ad: \$50.00
Half Page Ad: \$80.00
Full Page Ad: \$100.00

Email Sharon Bokan for more details

sbokan@bouldercounty.org