



# Boulder County Small Acreage Management Newsletter

Summer 2012

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

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### **From the SAM Coordinator**

It definitely feels more like July and August with the 100 degree days. Let's hope that we get some precipitation soon. Please keep those involved in the many fires burning in the state in your thoughts and prayers and assist where you can. If you are wondering how you can prepare yourself and your property for a wildfire please check out the Fall 2010 edition of this new, sletter for emergency preparedness information.

<http://www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/sam/pdf/SAM%20newsletter%20Fall%202010.pdf>

Don't forget that wildfires are just as dangerous and damaging in the grasslands as they are in the forests. Heartstrong fire March 2012 burned 24,000 acres 2 homes lost, damage to irrigation systems and an unknown number of livestock killed or injured, Last Chance fire June 2012 burned 45,000 acres, 4 homes lost.

Now is the time to be very careful with your grazing management. With the lack of precipitation, grasses need all the care that they can get so that they will survive into next year. If you have access to any irrigation water, use it.

Thank you,  
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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](mailto: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 214 subscribers to the listserv

## Weather Outlook

The NOAA forecasts for the next 30 and 90 days are showing that the most of the state will have higher than normal temperatures. The western 2/3 of the state will be well above normal temperatures. The state as a whole will have an equal chance of being drier or wetter than normal.

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/90day/>

## Coming events and workshops

Upcoming events that may be of interest are the Pollinator workshop, the Boulder County Fair and Rodeo and the 2012 Grass Tour.

The Pollinator workshop is collaboration between the local NRCS Office and CSU Extension. You will learn what native pollinators there are, what their habitat is and how to attract them. There is no charge for the workshop. It will be held in Barn A, Thursday, June 28, 2012 at 6:00 pm. Contact me to sign up for the workshop

The Boulder County Fair and Rodeo runs from August 1 through August 5, 2012. There will be a chuck wagon breakfast on Saturday, July, 28 in downtown Longmont with the Fair Parade to follow at 9 am. There are many events that will occur pre and during fair so check out the schedule at

<http://www.bouldercountyfair.org/>

Come check out all the 4-H and FFA projects and support the kids. Also check out the other exhibits that showcase the best craftsmanship in many different areas.

The 2012 Grass Tour is put together by Pawnee Buttes Seed and CSU Extension. The tour is a great opportunity to learn more about grass seed, Revegetation and establishment and maintenance of grass pastures. You can find a brochure and registration at

<http://www.pawneebutteseed.com/>

I hope that you will take advantage of these great events.

## Rabies is on the Rise – Implications for Livestock = Dr. Nick Streigel, DVM

The incidence of rabies in skunks is on the rise in Colorado! The best source for the statistics of rabies surveillance in Colorado is the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) rabies webpage which can be accessed at

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis/rabies/>. The referenced webpage has many helpful resources for veterinarians, public health personnel, educators, and the public. Two important points are the following:

- Skunks are a major vector to transfer rabies to domestic animals and people
- Local veterinarians are a valuable resource to help decide the best course of action to protect livestock from rabies.

One very revealing statistic can be found comparing the number of rabies-positive skunks diagnosed from 2011 to the first five months of 2012. Last year in 2011, there were 23 rabies-positive skunks diagnosed in Colorado; as of May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 there have been 36 rabies-positive skunks diagnosed. Many of those rabid skunks have been diagnosed in counties close to the Front Range. Rabies-positive skunks are important as skunks are the most common species involved in the transmission of rabies virus to livestock. In addition, they are a major vector of transmission of rabies virus to other species such as cats and dogs too. Rabies is transmitted from infected animals to other species through a bite or by the introduction of virus-laden saliva into a fresh wound, cut or mucous membrane. A rabies-infected animal can expose owners, veterinary personnel, and many other people to rabies. There is no treatment for rabies once an animal becomes infected so veterinary medical and public health efforts have traditionally been focused on prevention. Veterinarians and public health

professionals have always recommended vaccination of dogs and cats to prevent infection and to reduce the incidence of rabies in humans in whom it is also a fatal disease. When questions arise about rabies in horses, cattle, and other livestock; the answers are not black and white but it depends largely on the details of that particular case.

The clinical signs in livestock are highly variable but can include some or all of the following:

- Depression with loss of appetite
- A low-grade fever
- Lameness and / or incoordination
- Neurological symptoms, including convulsions
- Increased sensitivity to being touched
- Abdominal pain or colic (straining to urinate or defecate)
- Swallowing problems and drooling
- Odd behavioral changes, nervousness, irritability
- Vocalizations
- Possible aggressiveness

8 Rabies or suspicion of rabies is a reportable disease in Colorado. Even if rabies has not been diagnosed, practicing veterinarians need to call their local/regional public health agency or the Colorado Department of Public Health (CDPHE). In addition, rabies is considered a reportable disease by the State Veterinarian's Office at 303-239-4161; call us if you have a case that shows clinical signs suggestive of rabies. If it is after-hours, the State Veterinarian's Office phone message will indicate which staff veterinarian is on call.

The *2011 Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control* contains a section with recommendations on handling rabies issues in livestock. Here are some excerpts:

*Livestock, including species for which licensed vaccines are not available, that have frequent contact with humans (e.g., in petting zoos, fairs, and other public exhibitions) should be vaccinated against rabies. Consideration should*

*also be given to vaccinating livestock that are particularly valuable.*

*All species of livestock are susceptible to rabies; cattle and horses are the most frequently reported infected species. Any illness in an exposed animal should be reported immediately to the local health and agriculture officials. If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized and the head shipped for testing...*

*(1) Unvaccinated livestock should be euthanized immediately. If the animal is not euthanized, it should be observed and confined on a case-by-case basis for 6 months.*

*(2) Livestock exposed to a rabid animal and currently vaccinated with a vaccine approved by USDA for that species should be revaccinated immediately and observed for 45 days.*

*(3) Multiple rabid animals in a herd or herbivore-to-herbivore transmission are uncommon; therefore, restricting the rest of the herd if a single animal has been exposed to or infected by rabies is usually not necessary.*

*(4) Handling and consumption of tissues from exposed animals might carry a risk for rabies transmission. Risk factors depend in part on the site(s) of exposure, amount of virus present, severity of wounds, and whether sufficient contaminated tissue has been excised. If an exposed animal is to be custom or home-slaughtered for consumption, it should be done immediately after exposure, and all tissues should be cooked thoroughly. Persons handling exposed animals, carcasses, and tissues should use barrier precautions. Historically, federal guidelines for meat inspectors required*

*that any animal known to have been exposed to rabies within 8 months be rejected for slaughter. USDA Food and Inspection Service (FSIS) and state meat inspectors should be notified if such exposures occur in food animals before slaughter. Rabies virus is widely distributed in tissues of rabid animals. Tissues and products from a rabid animal should not be used for human or animal consumption or transplantation. Pasteurization and cooking will inactivate rabies virus (58); therefore, inadvertently drinking pasteurized milk or eating thoroughly cooked animal products does not constitute a rabies exposure.* 9 The Compendium also states “All horses should be vaccinated against rabies.” In addition, The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) has included rabies in their “core vaccinations” and defined a recommended vaccination schedule. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, core vaccinations are the immunizations “that protect from diseases that are endemic to a region, those with potential public health significance, required by law, virulent/ highly infectious, and/or those posing a risk of severe disease. Core vaccines have clearly demonstrated efficacy and safety, and thus exhibit a high enough level of patient benefit and low enough level of risk to justify their use in the majority of patients.”

Often there are questions concerning how the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) is involved with public health authorities when there is a rabies issue. Here is CDA’s protocol for response to possible exposure of livestock to suspect or confirmed rabid wildlife animals.

1. Confirmed rabid wild mammals:  
Where direct contact between the wild terrestrial mammal and livestock

is highly likely, CDA will handle the situation on a case-by-case basis but will visit the site for an assessment within a timely manner. Vaccination, quarantine, and/or euthanasia may be implemented based on the most recent NASPHV Rabies Compendium. CDA will notify CDPHE and/or local public health on action taken. (Public health officials will notify local animal control when necessary).

2. Suspect wild mammal (unavailable for testing): Where direct contact is highly likely, CDA or local public health will handle the situation on a case-by-case basis and may request the owner to have a veterinarian examine and vaccinate livestock mammals, at the expense of the owner, within a timely manner. A home quarantine or euthanasia may be required, based on most recent NASPHV Rabies Compendium. CDA will notify CDPHE and/or local public health. (Public health officials will notify local animal control when necessary).
3. Suspect or confirmed rabid wild mammal with low risk for direct contact with livestock: CDA will coordinate with state or local public health officials to make recommendations to the owner for the management of the situation in a timely fashion.

Ultimately, the vaccination decision belongs to livestock owners and they will have to weigh the incidence of terrestrial wildlife rabies in their geographical location, the risk of human exposure, the possible financial costs, the potential loss of their animals, and the cost of the vaccination procedure. Local veterinarians

can provide the trusted guidance in helping to make that decision.

## **Grazing Management during drought**

Sharon Bokan

Even in good years it can be challenging to keep your pasture in good condition. Most small acreage pastures in this area are overused. It is critical in drought years that you use good grazing management. If you don't, then plan on renovating or reseeding your pasture in the years to come. The best option is to not graze pastures at all during drought times to preserve your grass. You can still use them for exercise but don't plan on them for forage.

If grasses are not protected especially in drought years, they will die out and allow weeds to invade your pasture. Grasses normally replace 30% of their roots every year. This is a normal process like your skin dying off and being replaced. During dry years, grasses conserve energy resources and may not replace the roots that die. Without replacing these roots, the plants do not have sufficient roots to take up enough nutrients and water for normal growth. Thus you get less foliage which also retards root growth. By not overgrazing and leaving as much leaf growth as possible, the plant is able to photosynthesize and store energy to survive. Leaving foliage also cools the soil and helps keep soil moisture from evaporating.

Even in good years, most pastures should be considered only as an exercise areas not as major sources of forage. This is even more critical in drought years. Horses cannot be turned out in the morning and brought back in when you get home at night and expect to have any grass left. You will need to keep horses in your dry lot/sacrifice area and only turn them out for a minimal amount of time each day for exercise. Dividing a larger pasture into smaller grazing cells will help if used properly. Please see the reference below for rotational grazing recommendations.

Once we start getting moisture you will want to be patient and allow the grass time to recover from the drought. Just because you have new growth does not mean that the grass is recovered. Continue to practice good grazing management and be conservative to help build up the health of the grass. You want the grass plants to build up sufficient roots to survive future droughts.

In dry years plan on purchasing most of the forage that your animals will need.

References:

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06112.html>

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**Email Sharon Bokan for more details**

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