



# Boulder County Small Acreage Management Newsletter

Spring 2016

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

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### From the SAM Coordinator

I hope that you have been enjoying all the precipitation that we have been receiving. I know we will this summer when we have water to irrigate. It is nice to see the sun and the warmth. However, the sun and the warmth will mean plant growth, good in the case of crops but bad in the case of weeds. Just be prepared and have a plan to deal with your weeds. We can also hope for a cool spring to allow the snow melt to occur slowly and not cause any flooding.

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

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 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 state may see higher than normal precipitation.

[http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long\\_range/seasonal.php?lead=1](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/seasonal.php?lead=1)

## Coming events and workshops

On Monday, May 23, we will be hosting a workshop for Realtors® and property appraisers at the Southwest Weld County Service Center. The all-day class will provide 7 CEC's. To register, please go to

<https://2016ruralproperties.eventbrite.com>

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

## New Programs to Help Reduce Energy Usage

By Sylvia Hickenlooper, Soil Conservationist, USDA NRCS

The Colorado Energy Office (CEO) and the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) are working together with the US Department of Agriculture to offer several innovative assistance programs designed to reduce energy use in Colorado's agriculture sector.

Irrigated crop producers and dairies in Colorado can take advantage of the benefits provided by the Colorado Dairy and Irrigation Efficiency Program. The Program's **free services** include:

- Expert assistance and energy audits to identify energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities
- Technical assistance to help producers select and implement cost-effective projects and practices
- Assistance with accessing financial incentives to help cover the costs of

energy-saving equipment installations and upgrades, including Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and other State and local incentives.

These free program benefits translate into practical and proven ways for producers to save 10-30 percent on energy bills.

For more information and to submit an application for the Colorado Dairy and Irrigation Efficiency Program, please visit the Colorado Energy Office's website:

[www.colorado.gov/energyoffice/agriculture-energy-efficiency](http://www.colorado.gov/energyoffice/agriculture-energy-efficiency) or contact the Programs Manager: [Michael.A.Turner@state.co.us](mailto:Michael.A.Turner@state.co.us).

Another innovative program is the RCPP Pressurized Irrigation Small Hydropower Partnership Project, which provides financial and technical assistance to help farmers upgrade their irrigation systems to save water and energy. This project promotes the conversion of flood-irrigated fields to sprinkler irrigation with integrated hydropower to promote water and energy conservation while preserving the irrigator's full water rights. The Project will install 30 hydromechanical or hydroelectric power systems across Colorado over the next three years. The Project provides financial assistance through the EQIP program and CDA's ACRE<sup>3</sup> program, and provides assistance to apply for additional funding from REAP.

For more information and to submit an application for the RCPP Pressurized Irrigation Small Hydropower Partnership Project, please visit the Colorado Department of Agriculture's ACRE<sup>3</sup> energy website:

[www.colorado.gov/agconservation/agriculturalhydro](http://www.colorado.gov/agconservation/agriculturalhydro) or contact the ACRE<sup>3</sup> program Energy Specialist: [Sam.Anderson@state.co.us](mailto:Sam.Anderson@state.co.us).



## **A New Way to Contact a SAM or WM Volunteer and other changes**

We have a new way for clients to contact both the Small Acreage Management Volunteers and the Wildlife Master Volunteers. We have set-up an e-mail address for both of these volunteer groups. Of course, you can continue to contact them by calling our main office at 303-678-6238.

To contact a Small Acreage Management Volunteer e-mail

[smallacreage@bouldercounty.org](mailto:smallacreage@bouldercounty.org)

To contact a Wildlife Master Volunteer e-mail

[wildlifemaster@bouldercounty.org](mailto:wildlifemaster@bouldercounty.org)

The Boulder County Extension website will be changing soon. Changes will allow the site to be more easily used with mobile devices. So if you experience some difficulty accessing the site, we're probably working on it.

## **Reseeding, What to Expect**

By Deniece Hopkins, SAM Volunteer

Thinking about reseeding your dryland pasture? Have visions of your horse frolicking in a beautiful lush green pasture just like that one on the front cover of the recent horse magazine?

We can all dream but that doesn't change the reality of the Colorado climate and conditions that exist here. Unfortunately, these limitations

are beyond our control and we have to learn to work within them for the benefit of our land.

Most pastures in this area are dryland however there are some irrigated pastures and they may take less time to renovate, but the care is similar.

Reseeding is not cheap and it's not a quick fix to an over grazed, or drought damaged pasture. Before spending money on this, you need to know what to expect and how to make your project successful. Do your homework, control your weeds, select your seed wisely and your contractor if you aren't going to do it yourself.

Now would also be the perfect time to study up on grazing management. Many people reseed only half of their pastureland at a time, so the animals can run on the other half. Learning to properly manage your grazing land now will save your newly reseeded pasture a lot of damage. You can ruin 3-5 years worth of reseeding work with a few months of bad grazing management. On the plus side, with a good grazing management plan, you may find that the other half of your pasture land won't need to be reseeded when the time comes.

Now let's assume you did all your homework, selected your seed according to your goal for your pasture and did what you could to control the weeds, now what?

Well, this is the part of reseeding I dislike the most. With years of experience in the area of pasture maintenance, I've found that seeding is by far my least favorite thing to do. We live in a world of immediate gratification, and I, like everybody else, want to see the fruits of my labor RIGHT NOW! Unfortunately, seeding is not an area where you can have such an attitude. Seeding is a long process that requires care and patience.

So what can you expect? While both pastures and lawns contain grass, a pasture is not a lawn. It will not grow lush and green in a few short months. Getting your pasture back into shape will most likely take 3-5 years with correct care.

Year one, you can expect to be very disappointed. You'll probably be very angry with your contractor. You will think that the seed you planted was 100% weed seed and that you threw all your money away. At this point many people get discouraged and let their horses back on the pasture and give up, or they call yet another contractor and reseed again. Don't do this! Any good contractor will have told you that it takes 3-5 years and a lot of care to get your pasture going good. This means, keeping the horses or other animals off the land for that amount of time, controlling the weeds and hoping for rain.

You need to understand, that the seed has certain requirements that have to be met in order to germinate. These include temperature and moisture levels. The good news is that with most cool season pasture grasses; the seed will remain viable for several years until these conditions are met. So again patience is required. Look closely and you will probably see little fine grass blades coming up here and there. That's what you should see the first year.

You won't want to spray for weeds during this first year, but do expect and budget for mowing it at least twice. **DO NOT LET THOSE WEEDS GO TO SEED.**



Year two: Here it is year two and you had a very hard time being patient last year. You are seeing a few more blades of grass but nothing like you expected. You are pretty sure you need to reseed again. There are tons of weeds still and all this is very frustrating. You've been good to keep the horses off the land all last year, but they are getting fussy and want to get to this pasture. However, you are determined not to waste all that money you spent and those people at the Extension Office assured you that this was normal, so again you try hard to be patient and see what happens. You still need to mow or spray for weeds, a couple of times this year. Be careful with the spray be sure to use something selective enough that you are sure it won't kill your tiny little new grasses.

Year Three: Wow, there really is grass out there. You can see the green now. It's looking pretty good and you are tempted to let the horses go out there. But again you were cautioned that horses and other animals love those tiny green sweet grasses and will pull them right up from the roots and ruin your newly seeded pasture in a very short time, so once again you exercise patience and keep them off and control any weeds that might be coming up.

Year 4 rolls around and that pasture is sure looking good. You might actually be able to let

the horses out a little but only after you've checked to make sure the grass doesn't pull up easily and that it's at least 6-8" tall. If it does pull up easily you know to leave them off for yet another year.

Year 5 is here and it looks great. It's not totally filled in like you expected but you've learned that that is normal and that this is Colorado not Kentucky so that's what pastures looks like. In time with very careful grazing management it will continue to look better and better as the years roll by.

Of course you know that you must continue to manage your pasture carefully if it's to stay nice and continue to improve over the years. You know that if you don't control the grazing, you could easily end up where you started in a very, very short time, just weeks in some cases. Good thing you had so much time to study up on how to manage your pasture.



Managing Small Acreage Pastures During and After Drought

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

[Weed Management for Small Rural Acreages, Fact Sheet 3.106](#), Colorado State University Extension.

## Spring Weed and Grazing Management

With all the moisture and now hopefully some sun and warmer temperatures, we will see a lot of growth in the weeds and grasses. Remember

to not let your livestock out grazing your pastures until the grass is at least 6 – 8" tall and to always maintain a 4" stubble. I know it's very tempting to allow your horses out onto all the new green grass but if you want to maintain the health of the grass you will hold off until the grass has enough growth to be producing more energy than it needs.

You also need to be working on managing your weeds. We are seeing the mustards and cheatgrass beginning to bloom. If you want to manage them, you have to keep them from producing seed. At a minimum with annuals you need to mow or cut them. Depending on what the weeds are, you can also spray them.

Contact our office for plant/weed identification and management strategies.





Chemical – spot spraying the rosettes with either an “organic” or “synthetic” herbicide



## Moth Mullein

Over the last two years since the 2013 flood, I have seen more moth mullein than previously. Moth mullein (*Verbascum blattaria*) like its relative common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) has seeds that can survive up to 100 years in the soil. Moth mullein is a biennial (2 year growth cycle) like common mullein. However, the rosettes of the moth mullein have bright green leaves and irregularly toothed that are not as hairy as common mullein. The flower spike on the moth mullein is more open than the common mullein. The moth mullein flowers are white or pale yellow with fine purple hairs in the flowers center. Management is the same as for common mullein.

Mechanical methods – hand pulling, under cutting the rosette, cutting off the flower head prior to seed production

Biological – none available

## Place your SAM related classified ad or print advertisement here!

### Classified Advertising Rates are as follows:

General Public, Individual: \$5 per year

General Public, Business/Show: \$10 per year

Email Sharon Bokan for more details  
[sbokan@bouldercounty.org](mailto:sbokan@bouldercounty.org)

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