



Boulder County Small Acreage Management Newsletter

Winter 2011

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

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From the SAM Coordinator

As I write this we are enjoying a great sunny day after some icy weather earlier this week. It is unfortunate that we did not get any of the snow that was predicted for earlier this week. While the mountains are all getting good snows this year, we are dry in this area. Maybe we'll get a wet spring.

As you will read later in this issue, next week is National Ag Week. I hope that you will all help me in thanking everyone who is involved in the agriculture industry. They affect every day and every aspect of our lives. So whether you own 1 acre to thousands of acres and are producing a product on it – Thank you!

Sharon Bokan

Small Acreage Coordinator

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 216 subscribers to the listserv

Snow pack and water Outlook

From the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) as of March 1, 2011, the Colorado snow pack statewide is above average in most of the state. <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/CO/Snow/fcst/state/monthly/borco110.pdf>

The NOAA forecasts for the next 30 and 90 days are showing that the state will experience warmer than normal temperatures and lower than normal precipitation. This does not bode well for our snowpack. But as we all know Colorado weather can be very unpredictable and not follow the predictions.

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

In the Planning Stages

We have several workshops and other events in the planning stages.

Murdoch's in Longmont will be having a poultry event to coincide with the arrival of chicks. The event will be Sat. March 26 with various groups there to talk about caring for poultry and egg safety.

For those of you at higher altitudes, we will have a High Altitude Gardening workshop on Saturday, April 16, 2011 from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm at the Wild Bear Mountain Ecology Center in Nederland. For information and registration form call our office at 303-678-6238 or see:

<https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dENxdWQydIhCZVE2bDBBbW5HS3hfSkE6MA>

Over the course of the summer, we will have a series of webinars each one concentrating on a specific species of livestock. The webinars will cover basics about the species. On Saturday, October 15, there will be a Livestock on Small Acreage Workshop. We are currently lining up our speakers for the webinars and the workshop, location and cost. The first webinar will feature Dr. Temple Grandin talking about Handling Cattle and Other Livestock. It will be March 28

from 12:00 to 1:00 pm. On May 18 from 12:00 to 1:00 pm, Jason Ahola, CSU Associate Professor will talk about Small Scale Cattle Production. Contact Jennifer Cook to register for the webinars. Jennifer.cook@colostate.edu

We hope to do a Grazing Management workshop and Weed Management workshops this summer. As we get dates and details set, we will let you know.

For those of you in the foothills and mountains, we will be doing several Fire Preparedness, 15 months, 15 days, 15 hours, 15 minutes workshops. The workshops are designed to get you ready in case a fire occurs in your area. They will cover defensible spaces, building materials, and yearly tasks, preparing a family disaster and evacuation plan and what to take with you. We have a joint one planned for the higher elevations on April 30 from 1 to 4 pm at the Gilpin Community Center. We will have a second one at lower elevation but have not firmed up a date yet. We will get that out as soon as we get a date and location.

So stay tuned to the newsletter and e-mails for details on these events and others to come.

Seedling Tree Program

By Nancy McIntyre, District Manager

The Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts sponsor a seedling tree program each year. The objective of the program is to provide low cost seedlings to landowners who have two or more acres. The seedlings can be used to establish a windbreak, provide wildlife habitat, establish a visual screen, control erosion by both wind and water, or provide a noise barrier. They cannot be resold as a live plant.

The seedlings are grown by the Colorado State Forest Service at the Foothills Campus of Colorado State University. The bare root deciduous trees are 10" to 30" canes and include species such as chokecherry, lilac, native plum, wild roses, hackberry and bur oak. The bare root

conifers are 5" to 12" top height and include Austrian Pine, Colorado blue spruce, and Ponderosa Pine. The bare root seedlings sell for \$44 for 50 seedlings of the same species. The regular potted trees are 5" to 12" top height and come in 2" x 2" square pots and are sold for \$56 for 30 seedlings. These potted species include Austrian Pine, Rocky Mountain Juniper, Douglas fir, Colorado blue spruce and Ponderosa Pine. Smaller potted seedlings are also sold in a 1" round tube and are 3" to 6" in top height. These seedlings sell for \$36 per 30 seedlings and include many of the same species as the regular potted.

If you already know what you would like to plant, then please contact Nancy McIntyre at the Conservation District Office at (303) 776-4034 x3 for an order form. A description and picture of each of the seedlings is available at <http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/documents/08byrgd-www.pdf>. The last date to order seedlings is March 21, 2011. Seedlings will be available for pick up at the Exhibit Building on the Boulder County Fairgrounds on Friday, April 8 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm or on Saturday, April 9 from 8:00 am to 11:00 am.



Dave Powell, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

If you are interested in purchasing seedlings but don't know which would be best for your property, please call the office and let us know if you would be interested in a planning and planting workshop. Representatives from the State Forest Service, the State Forest Service Nursery, and the CSU Extension along with Natural Resources Conservation Service will be available to assist you with the planning, planting and care of your seedlings.

Winter Livestock Care

Sharon Bokan, Small Acreage Coordinator

Unlike humans, livestock do not have the option to go into a heated house and fix a cup of hot chocolate or coffee to warm up next to a crackling fire when temperatures drop below freezing. What can you do to make your livestock more comfortable in the winter?

Livestock species are designed to be able to live outside and survive most weather conditions. The Lowest Critical Environmental Temperature (LCT) is the temperature at which animals can maintain their main core body temperature without supplemental energy (feed). For most livestock if they are dry, the LCT is 20 to 32° F. However, if they get wet, it goes up to 60° F. Both of these temperatures are without a wind chill factor. Another way to think about this is for every 2° F drop in wind chill temperature, livestock energy (feed) requirements go up 1%. To help your livestock maintain good body condition in adverse weather, you need to do several things.

Monitor your livestock for excessive shivering, lethargy and weakness. As animals begin to experience hypothermia, they increase their metabolism to generate more heat. Blood flow to the extremities is reduced. Ears and teats may experience frostbite. Rapid warming of the teats is needed to minimize damage and monitoring for mastitis is required after calving. Some frostbit damage may not be reversible.

Be sure to provide them plenty of forage to meet their added calorie requirement. For horses, you can provide them a warm bran mash, moistened beet pulp or soaked pelleted feed to add water and provide some warm "comfort" food. You may need to not only increase the feed amount but also the "nutrient density" of it. The more nutritionally dense (packed with nutrients) grains may need to be added to the diet. Have your hay tested. Providing good to top quality hay is essential during the winter months.

Water is critical to all living beings. Livestock daily water requirements range from 3 gal/day for sheep to 14 gal/day or more for cattle. They cannot meet their requirements from either forage or consuming snow or ice. Consuming snow or ice can lower the body temperature making them more vulnerable to problems. They need fresh, unfrozen and if you can slightly warmed water. They tend to drink less when it is cold so they can become dehydrated. You can use tank heaters to help keep stock tanks clear of ice. However, you need to check the heaters to prevent fire and electrocution problems.



The young and the older animals are especially vulnerable during the cold. Providing them some extra bedding, protection and warm food and water is important. If you are lambing or calving during the cold, make sure that the mothers are in a well-protected building with plenty of bedding for warmth. Make sure that the young get dried off quickly.

They don't need a fully insulated, state of the art, heated barn. In many cases, a three sided structure, hill, clumps of trees or a solid fence provides enough protection from cold winter winds. Reducing exposure to wind is a must in the winter. During a snowstorm or cold spring rains, a structure that provides not only wind protection but a roof to keep them dry is needed. Remember that the LCT jumps drastically as they get wet. Protection desired will vary by species. Sheep don't mind getting wet but goats do so they will tend to seek shelter rather than graze in the open. Some species have thinner hides and hair and therefore get colder more easily. Dairy cattle will chill quicker than beef cattle since they tend to have less hair to insulate them. The coat condition is critical to providing insulation. The more hair the better as it allows for air space between the hairs to act as insulation. You need to be checking all of your

livestock going into the fall not only for general health and body condition but also for skin and hair health. When their hair is wet or muddy, the hair is matted down limiting the insulating air spaces available. Imagine if you had a nice down coat but in the last year you lost half of the down in it or it got wet. You'd cut the warmth of the jacket. If you provide bedding, it needs to be kept clean and dry. Wet bedding provides no insulation and is no better than lying on the ground.

Although we are headed toward the warm summer months, there is still the opportunity for cold, wet weather ahead. I also want to encourage you to monitor your animal's conditions headed

into next fall for optimum body condition and hair to be the healthiest next spring.

References:

<https://www.southernstates.com/sscinfo/news/2010/01/livestockcoldstress.aspx>
http://anr.ext.wvu.edu/livestock/cattle/cold_stress
http://www.clemson.edu/extension/ep/cold_livestock.html

Winter and Spring Grazing Considerations

Adrian Card, Ag and Natural Resources Agent

During the winter, when grasses are dormant, grazing of dead leaf matter will not harm grasses and provides some food source for livestock. Damage can occur during the winter from trampling of grass crowns (where the leaf blade joins the roots at the soil surface). Buds are formed each fall for next season's grass production, much like trees develop buds in the fall for next season's leaves. Damage to the buds will reduce the number of grass leaves produced in the subsequent growing season, thus reducing overall forage production.



A critical period to remove livestock from pastures is during late winter/early spring leaf growth. Certainly, livestock will strongly desire to eat this new, green growth, but this will stress the newly emerging grass plant.

As the grass plant comes out of dormancy it gets 100% of its energy from carbohydrates stored in its roots. Until it has enough leaf surface area to create sufficient carbohydrates from photosynthesis (4-5 leaves, about 6-8 inches tall) to replenish used root reserves, it cannot prepare itself to grow to its maximum potential for the growing season. It will continue to deplete its root reserves if you don't allow it time to produce enough carbs from photosynthesis. CONTAIN LIVESTOCK IN SACRIFICE AREAS/DRYLOTS DURING EARLY SPRING GREEN-UP AND DO NOT TURN OUT ON TO PASTURE UNTIL GRASSES ARE 6-8 INCHES TALL.



Celebrate National Ag Week and Day, Colorado Ag Day

March 13 – 19, March 15, 2011 and March 16, 2011

Do you ever stop to think about where the steak on your dinner plate or the vegetables for your salad came from and the people involved in getting them to the store? As you drive through McDonald's, do you think about the ranchers and farmers that produced the products that are now your Big Mac and fries? Unless you are a rancher or farmer or grow your own food, most people do not think about their food, fiber and renewable resource products. The United States has the most abundant and safest food supply in the world. We also spend the least amount of our income on purchasing our food. In 1940, one farmer only fed 19 other people. Today one American farmer/rancher now produces enough food for 155 other people. American farmers produce 18% of the world's food supply on only 10% of the world's land.

National Ag Week and Day was started to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by American Agriculture and those that produce it. It believes that every American should know how their food, fiber and renewable resource products are produced, value agriculture's place in a strong economy, appreciate agriculture's role in providing safe, abundant and affordable food, and recognize the career opportunities in agriculture, food, fiber and renewable resource industries. Agriculture affects every part of our daily life from food to housing to clothing and recreation. Americans need to recognize Agriculture's place and importance in their lives and in building a strong economy.

Within Colorado Agribusiness contributes more than \$20 billion to the state's economy annually and employs more than 108,000 people and utilizes 32 million acres in the state. Nine of the 10 most productive agriculture counties in Colorado are to the north and east of Boulder County. In fact the third most productive county in the nation is just to the east, Weld County.

Governor John Hickenlooper has proclaimed March 16 as "Colorado Ag Day". In a statement released from Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture, John Salazar, "Colorado's farmers and ranchers contribute greatly to our way of

life. Besides providing food and fiber, agriculture also protects our natural resources.” In honor of Colorado Ag Day, the Colorado Agriculture Council and other friends of agriculture will be donating food to the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Denver and Food Bank of the Rockies. The Food Bank of the Rockies donation includes 130,000 eggs (Colorado Egg Producers Association), pallet of sugar (Colorado Sugarbeet Growers) and 48,000 pounds of flour (Colorado Association of Wheat Growers). This food will provide 100,000 meals to struggling Colorado families.

Colorado agriculture is very diverse. Most people think of agriculture as cattle or corn, not anymore in Colorado. Colorado ranchers produce not only beef cattle but also dairy cattle, dairy and meat goats, sheep, hogs, eggs, llamas and alpacas for wool and recreation, horses and yaks just to name a few. To support the ranchers, both grass and alfalfa hays are produced either on farm or by other farmers. Wheat, oats and barley are grown for flour, cereal and the brewing industry. Dry beans, millet and sunflowers are grown for the food industry, bird seed and sunflowers can also be converted into biodiesel. Colorado also has a large potato industry in the San Luis Valley and in the Greeley area. Don't forget all the vegetables and fruits that are grown throughout the state. From berries, apples, peaches, cherries to cantaloupe and watermelon, Colorado grows juicy, sweet fruit. Looking for that great pumpkin for Halloween, check out the local growers. Watch for your local farmers markets to be opening soon for fresh vegetables. Sugar beets are converted into sugar, molasses and cattle feed. The nursery industry is supported by the farmers that grow trees, shrubs and other garden plants. The forest industry produces wood products for home and furniture building.

And of course, we must not forget corn. Corn is grown for animal feed, fuel, and sweet corn to eat. Imagine your summer barbeque without the steak, burgers, brats or corn on the cob and cool watermelon.

Boulder County ranks 29th out of the 64 Colorado counties producing approximately \$34 million in crop value. While the nursery, hay and cattle are the highest grossing products, there is a strong organic vegetable market in the county. Longmont and Boulder support Farmer's Markets in the growing season and many of the smaller communities also have Farmer's Markets.

Farmers and ranchers have to understand soils, plants, climate, Colorado water law, be accountants, veterinarians, marketing agents, mechanics and business owners just to name a few. You want to talk about multi-taskers; they have most of us beaten. They don't have 9 to 5 jobs. They may work any time of the day or night to get the crop planted, irrigated or harvested before the big storm comes in or to aid a cow or sheep give birth.

So the next time you take a bite of food, put on a wool sweater, open the door to your house or are frustrated by the slow moving tractor on the road, remember the farmer or rancher that is doing his best to provide you with best possible product. **Thank a farmer/rancher today!**

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Email Sharon Bokan for more details

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