

Boulder County Small Acreage Management Newsletter



Winter 2018

<http://boulder.extension.colostate.edu/natural-resources/>

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From the SAM Coordinator

Doesn't seem much like winter yet with our lack of snow. Hopefully, we will get more in the February to April timeframe like the Farmer's Almanac is predicting. It's always a good idea to plan for less precipitation than for more. That way you know that your grass will stay healthy.

Winter is a good time to evaluate what worked and didn't work on your property. Take the time to review what you did and how successful it was and make plans for this growing season.

Thank you,
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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 Small Acreage listserv, you may request subscription by contacting the Small Acreage Coordinator sbokan@bouldercounty.org. 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.



Weather Outlook

The NOAA forecasts for the next 30 and 90 days are showing that most of the state will be above normal in temperature and below average in precipitation.

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

According to “The Old Farmer’s 2018 Almanac”, the central high plains look to be warmer than normal with increased precipitation in March and April.

<https://www.almanac.com/weather/longrange/region/us/12>



Coming events and workshops

The National Western Stock Show will take place January 6 - 21, 2018 at the Stock Show Complex in Denver. In addition to all the rodeos, events and livestock judging, the Stock Show is a great place to connect with livestock producers. If you are thinking about getting some livestock, you can talk to producers and attend seminars to learn more.

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

The Colorado Farm Show will occur January 23 – 25, 2018 at Island Grove Park in Greeley. There are 4 buildings of equipment and supplies at the show. The Farm Show also has 3 days of

workshops ranging from marketing to climate to beef quality and fitting a saddle to your horse.

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



I am in the process of planning other workshops and will advertise them in future newsletters or e-mails. I hope that you will take advantage of the events.

Soil Revolution: Digging Deeper Recap By Sylvia Hickenlooper, Soil Conservationist Natural Resources Conservation Service

Hold a conference focusing on soil health and they will come and this was evident at the 2nd annual Soil Revolution: Digging Deeper conference that was held on December 14th in Longmont. Participants packed the room to eagerly learn more about the practices used to implement soil health; often becoming standing room only.

One of the many highlight from the day’s event was the keynote speaker Brendon Rockey of Rockey Farms in Center, Colorado. Brendon is a third generation biotic specialty potato farmer teaching producers across the nation how to end their chemical dependencies. He advocates biological inputs, companion crops, livestock, green manure and nectar rich flowers in place of synthetic inputs. His own farm speaks volumes that what he is doing works as he is able to sustain yields, improved water efficiency, and a farm that works as a functioning ecosystems

encouraging beneficial insects, soil microbes and carbon cycling. Brendon was awarded recipient of the Soil Health Champion through the National Association of Conservation Districts. Brendon preaches that the fundamentals of soil health are the same regardless of the size of the operation. He also said that many will become too old to farm, but we will still be a hungry nation and we need younger people to know how to sustainably farm. As a result of this passion he works directly with Future Farmers of America organizations to help set the framework for their success in future years. The soil stability contest, also known as slake test, was another highlight from the event. Event organizers were amazed by the overwhelming response from participants who brought in their soil to see how well it held-up against the competition. There were over 41 samples that were tested. The test is relatively simple. A soil clod from the top soil layer is collected and air dried. The sample is then immersed in water and observed how well it holds up with the initial immersion and then after some disturbance. Slaking of the soil occurs when the aggregates are not resilient enough to endure the stresses that are exerted by the rapid immersion and thus uptake of the water. Excessive slaking of the soil is an indicator of poor soil structure. Through the competition, participants used this as a learning opportunity to explore how their soil performed and potential principals that could be implemented to improve the overall soil health. The entire event was a remarkable collaboration of soil enthusiasts, farmers, and advocates that came together for the day to dive into the principals of soil health and that building soil is imperative if we want to sustain farming operations for many years to come. Boulder County Parks and Open Space Agriculture, City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks, Colorado State University Extension, Longmont Conservation District, and United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources

Conservation Services joined forces to organize the event for the public.

Seedling Tree Sale

By Elizabeth Northrup, Longmont and Boulder Valley Conservation Districts



The Longmont and Boulder Valley Conservation Districts are offering seedling trees for windbreaks, snow fences, erosion control, and wildlife habitat. The program is not meant to compete with local nurseries, but was established to provide low cost seedlings to landowners for conservation practices. The Colorado State Forest Service Nursery grows the plants at their facility in Fort Collins and sets the rules for the sale of the plants.

The order form for the seedling tree program is available on our website at www.longmontcd.org under the Programs tab, or you can contact the Conservation District office at (720) 378-5521 to request a paper order form. Payment in the form of cash or check must accompany the order form to reserve your trees. We will be taking orders until March 29, 2018. You will be able to pick up your seedlings at the Exhibit Building on the Boulder County Fairgrounds on Friday, April 13, 2018 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm or on Saturday, April 14, 2018 from 8:00 am to 11:00 am.

The available seedlings are sold in a variety of sizes and containers. The bare root seedlings are sold in lots of 25 for \$30.00. The large tube species are sold in lots of 30 for \$90.00. These species include Colorado blue

spruce, Ponderosa Pine, and Douglas fir amongst many others. Extra-large potted trees are sold individually at a cost of \$12.00 each.

Quantities are limited on most species, so we strongly encourage you to check the CSU Nursery's inventory web page before placing your order to ensure your desired seedlings are in stock. The inventory webpage address is: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/seedling-tree-nursery/seedling-nursery-inventory/>. The Conservation Districts were able to secure select popular species before they sold out. These are still available for purchase through the Districts, even if they are listed as sold out online. You can call the Conservation District Office at (720) 378-5521 before ordering to see if your choice of seedling is available. Thank you for supporting our Tree Seedling Program. We look forward to hearing from you soon.



Winter Small Acreage Review

Winter is a good time to review your property and projects from the previous growing season. What worked well, what didn't and what do you still have to do on your list. Here are some thoughts to get you started on your review of last season and plans for 2018.

Grazing – Did you go into this winter with a 3 – 4" stubble on your most desirable forage grass? If you didn't, why not and what grazing practice

can you change to make sure you do next fall? Maybe you need to monitor your grazing more frequently or to identify your most desirable forage grass so you have something to monitor or maybe you just need to move your livestock more frequently. Take time to walk your pastures and see how well you did.

Reseeding – Are there bare areas that you need to get reseeded this winter? Should you use a cover crop in certain areas and do weed management before you reseed? To keep dust and mud down, do you want to seed an annual cover crop around water tanks and gates? Do you have other issues you need to resolve before reseeding such as compaction or saline/sodic soil?

Weeds – Were your efforts to manage your weeds effective? Do you have smaller populations of your weeds? Do you have new ones? Do you need to shift your efforts and priorities from certain weeds to other weeds? Did your improvement in grazing management help with your weed management? Do I need to reseed areas where I have gotten some weeds managed?

Water – Am you effectively using the water that you have or can you afford to upgrade your irrigation system? If you don't have water or would like to get more, can you get more shares in the ditch or can you lease water from a neighbor? Do you need to improve your ditch or replace it with pipe so that you are more efficient in getting the water to where you need it?

Soil – Do your grazing and weed management techniques help promote soil health? What techniques such as cover crops and interseeding other forage species can you use to help diversify your forage plants and improve soil health? Do you have a compacted layer that is affecting plant health and what methods can you use to break up that layer?

Livestock – How healthy are your livestock? Are they getting sufficient exercise to be healthy and not over weight? What else do you need to know to keep them healthy i.e. change their diet and nutrition? Do you have a biosecurity plan to keep diseases from coming onto my property? Are you vaccinating them as you should (rabies, West Nile Virus)? Do you have a veterinarian you can call in case something happens?

Pollinators and beneficial insects – Do you have areas that you can use to attract pollinators and other beneficial insects to your property? When you do weed management, are you using techniques that will protect desirable plants while eliminating undesirable plants (weeds)?

Plans and priorities – When you purchased your property, you had ideas and plans for what you wanted the property to look like and what you wanted to do with the property, where are you on those plans and do you need to modify any of them? What new plans or ideas do you now want to incorporate on the property?

If you need help developing a grazing management, biosecurity plan or weed management plan or want to talk about what's possible for your property, please contact the Extension office for assistance.



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 that information we 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 wellbeing.

A directory of county extension agents may be found on the internet at:

<http://extension.colostate.edu/staff-directory/>

Colorado licensed veterinarians can be found through the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association. (Phone 303.318.0447;

[http://colovma.site-](http://colovma.site-ym.com/search/custom.asp?id=2153)

[ym.com/search/custom.asp?id=2153](http://colovma.site-ym.com/search/custom.asp?id=2153))Both

types of professionals have valuable expertise for the animal owner.

Dealing with Drought

The last time I wrote an article for the SAM newsletter about dealing with drought (we were dry that winter too), we got dumped on in the spring. I wouldn't mind if this happened again but would prefer to be getting consistent precipitation. Hopefully, this article will get you thinking about altering your grazing plans based on the precipitation we get this year. I am truly hoping that we do start getting precipitation. However, if we don't get precipitation here are

strategies you can use to help your forage plants survive during a drought?

The first step is to alter your grazing management. Allowing the plants to keep as much vegetation is best. This not only allows them to keep critical energy reserves but it also keeps maximum roots to utilize any precipitation that falls and the leaves will shade the soil reducing the evaporation and also deflect the drops helping to keep the soil in place.

At a minimum, you need to maintain at least 4" of plant residue throughout the year, more is better during drought. If this means that you do not graze your plants during the growing season and only feed hay, then that is what you need to do. Ultimately, this will be better for your land than overgrazing and then spending several years and money reseeding the land or severely cutting back on grazing for multiple years to allow your grasses time to recover. When you reseed a pasture, it is best to not graze it until the grass is well established which may be as long as 5 years. At a bare minimum, you need at least 1 year and then several years of very limited grazing. So do everything you can to keep your grass healthy.

Look for other places for your livestock to graze. Do you have a neighbor that will allow you to do some limited grazing on their property? If you want to keep them as a neighbor, remember to treat their property with the same amount of respect that you use on your own and don't overgraze.

Are you willing to decrease the number of animals that you have either by moving them to another area or selling them? Fewer animals mean less pressure on your forage plants. This may be a tough decision but as a livestock owner, your main product is grass that your animals then convert to maintain their health. It is better to reduce animal numbers or feed hay

versus over grazing. Over grazing will cost you more time and money in the end over reseeding.

Here's to more precipitation in 2018!

Place your SAM related classified ad or print advertisement here!

Classified Advertising Rates are as follows:

General Public, Individual: \$5

General Public, Business/Show: \$10

Email Sharon Bokan for more details

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