

Boulder County Small Acreage Management Newsletter



Summer 2020

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

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From the SAM Coordinator

This week would normally be the start of the 151st Boulder County Fair and Rodeo. Most of the Fair has been cancelled but the 4-H events are still being held following Public Health guidelines. These events will not be open to the public. Please check out the Fair's website for virtual events and results. Even though the Fair is not happening normally this year, you can still support the 4-H and FFA members who work hard on their projects every year.

Stay safe and healthy.

Thank you,

Sharon Bokan

Small Acreage Coordinator

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SAM Newsletters Online

View previous newsletters via the SAM link above.

SAM Email Listserv

If you are reading 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 – THANK YOU!** I will remove you from the listserv if you use it in this manner. Use the newsletter ad section for these purposes.



Weather Outlook

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

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/tools2.php

If you have not checked out NOAA's website, they have a lot of good information beside their predictions. There are sections for children, their publications and preparing for various weather conditions. <https://www.weather.gov/>

Coming events and workshops

As of June 1, I was able to resume in person site visits using specific protocols including wearing face masks and physical distancing. It has been a busy summer, so I have not been able to plan any online training classes but hope to be able to offer some this fall.

Larimer County Extension is offering a virtual "Dry Pastures" workshop on August 12th starting at 7:00 pm. Professor Joe Brummer will be addressing issues experienced by dryland pasture owners. Register at <https://larimer.extension.colostate.edu/classes-and-workshops/ag-and-natural-resources/>

Extension Office Information

The Boulder County Extension Office is currently closed, and staff is working remotely. Boulder County is working on a phased opening plan for county offices. The re-opening will of course be dependent on infection rates staying low. If you need plants identified, you are welcome to send me photographs. When taking the photos try to provide some close ups of leaves, flowers or seed heads (even old seed heads from last year can help). Grasses are harder to identify via photo but if you can provide photos of last years seed heads that will help. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions and I will do my best to help you.



New Resources

If you would like to be a better informed voter this fall on ballot Initiative #107, Re-introduction of wolves, Colorado State University has published twelve fact sheets on many aspects of wolves from biology, livestock and wolves, disease, big game and hunting and human and pet safety. The sheets are a cooperative effort of the CSU Center for Human-Carnivore Coexistence, CSU Center for Collaborative Conservation and CSU Extension and have been reviewed by people on both sides of the issue and represent a balanced view. You can find the fact sheets posted on <https://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/centerforhumancarnivorecoexistence/people-predators/wolves-information-sheet/>



Grow & Give

Modern Victory Garden Project

The Colorado Master Gardener program has started a new program “Grow & Give, Modern Victory Garden Project”. If you have never raised a garden or you are new to Colorado, their website provides all the information you need to get started and be successful. They are encouraging gardeners to grow for their families but to give part of their bounty with others.

<https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/grow-give/>

Summer Small Acreage Tasks

Summer weed management

The summer weeds are growing. Weed management has been made harder by our lack of precipitation. Depending on how much rain you received in the last week, will determine how difficult. When we experience dry, hot spells like we have had, weeds can build up a thicker cuticle (skin) that makes it harder for herbicides to penetrate the leaves and be effective. Mixing the herbicide stronger is not the answer to this problem. Waiting until we

receive precipitation or using mechanical weed management techniques is better. Mixing the herbicide stronger not only wastes money but can have an adverse side effect of damaging or killing plants you didn't want to harm. Check the label on the herbicide as it may not allow spraying above 85°F to prevent volatilization and killing other plants. Herbicides such as 2,4-D ester readily volatilize and can move to non-target plants such as shrubs and trees. This can damage or kill them. A 2,4-D amine is safer to use as it does not volatilize as readily as the ester version but still should not be used above 85°F. As always reading and following the label is your best defense to using an herbicide properly.

Summer pasture management –

Livestock can be grazing pastures as long as you have 3 – 4” of stubble at all times. If your pastures are getting shorter than that it's time to remove the livestock and keep them in your drylot. The heat has caused the cool season grasses (most of our pasture grasses) to go into their summer dormancy. You won't see much growth at this time unless you can get irrigation to the plants.

Reseeding –

You need to wait to do any reseeding until after November 1.

Water –

If you have access to water, you need to be irrigating. We are several inches behind in precipitation so anything you can add to the soil will help keep your grass plants from being stressed.

Plans and priorities –

Take any extra time at home to do planning, cleaning and repairs. Are there areas of your property that you really want to get the weeds managed or maybe you'd like to convert them into a more natural area to provide pollinator habitat?

Dealing with pocket gophers

Sharon Bokan, Small Acreage Coordinator



You've seen the mounds of dirt or the winding sausage like dirt piles in your pastures and probably wondered what cause them. You've got pocket gophers. There are two different pocket gophers that inhabit Boulder County, the Northern pocket gopher, *Thomomys talpoides* and the Plains pocket gopher, *Geomys bursarius*. Pocket gophers are nocturnal rodents who can damage pastures especially alfalfa fields and gardens by eating plant roots.

There is a limit to what you can do to reduce damage. Exclusion only works in small raised beds. When you build the raised bed, place hardware cloth (heavy duty wire screen) in the bottom of the bed and up the sides. This prevents to gophers from digging up into the bed. Exclusion is impractical in a pasture setting. Plant selection along with trapping and poisoning are the options for larger areas. Alfalfa varieties with larger tap roots provide a better food option for the gopher than those varieties that have root systems with a more fibrous root system with many smaller roots. Talk to your seed dealer for varieties.



Pocket gophers cannot be relocated so the traps are the type that kills the animal. Locate the hole by removing the soil in the mound. You can then place the trap or poison in the tunnel. Please refer to fact sheet #6.515 for more information on dealing with pocket gophers. <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/natural-resources/managing-pocket-gophers-6-515/>



Veterinarians play critical role in livestock welfare

Backyard poultry and small-scale livestock agriculture are a growing trend in the U.S.

PUBLISHED ON JULY 13, 2020

FORT COLLINS, Colo. — Backyard poultry and small-scale livestock agriculture are a growing trend in the U.S., even in large cities such as Seattle, Portland, Denver and San Francisco.

Residents raising backyard poultry and livestock do so for a variety of reasons such as access to locally sourced food, companionship and sustainability. But how often do these owners seek veterinary care in these urban and peri-urban areas (UPAs)?

A Western Regional team of collaborators, including CSU and UC Davis researchers, conducted a survey of veterinary practitioners to better assess their engagement with owners of these animals. They received responses from 880 veterinarians in California, Colorado, Washington and Oregon. Most respondents reported working in companion animal only or companion animal predominant practices. Although most of the veterinarians perceived an increase in backyard poultry and livestock in their practice areas, few were actively treating such animals primarily because of a lack of facilities, interest or experience.

Their findings, published in the [July 15th issue of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association](#), indicate an increasing demand for veterinary services for poultry and livestock in peri-urban areas, and a need for ongoing continuing education of practitioners, as well as the animal owners.

“This segment of agriculture has been largely overlooked by the veterinary community in North America,” said Dr. Alda Pires, University of California cooperative extension specialist in the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and co-principal investigator in the study. “Due to the potential for public health issues and the spread of zoonotic disease, veterinary professionals need increased training and better awareness of the health and welfare of these animals.”

Dr. Ragan Adams, veterinary extension specialist at Colorado State University and a co-principal

investigator emphasized that the animal owners also need better awareness of the importance of regular veterinary care and a willingness to pay for that medical expertise.

“Many of these owners are unfamiliar with the responsibilities and challenges of owning poultry and/or livestock,” Adams said. “County Extension personnel can teach the new animal owners as they have taught youth in 4-H programs for more than 100 years. With enhanced knowledge about animal husbandry, the new owners will understand the importance of seeking veterinary services when their animals show signs of illness.”

Disease spread from these peri-urban areas can spell disaster for other animals. For example, the 2015 outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza, traced to backyard poultry flocks, had severe economic and trade consequences for the commercial poultry industry. Recent outbreaks of virulent Newcastle disease in California also posed significant threats to commercial poultry flocks and the agricultural economy.

“The health and welfare of animals in UPAs are of concern because their owners often lack the knowledge or expertise regarding safe handling and animal husbandry,” said Dr. Dale Moore, Washington State University Veterinary Medicine Extension specialist and co-investigator.

“[A previous survey](#) found that the owners want more access to livestock and poultry medicine. This follow-up survey highlights the need for veterinarians, along with extension specialists to work with small-scale poultry owners to improve biosecurity measures, better detect disease and mitigate potential future outbreaks.”

The original study ideas for these surveys came from Washington State University Veterinary Medicine Extension (Drs. Dale Moore and Amos Peterson) as part of Peterson's Master's Thesis project. The project was then extended to Veterinary Medicine Extension in California (Drs. Pires, Jerome Baron and Beatriz Martinez-Lopez), and at Colorado State University (Dr. Ragan Adams). Extension educators at Oregon State University and the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association helped with contacts in their states.

The increase in popularity of backyard and peri-urban agriculture provides both challenges and opportunities for veterinarians. Providing veterinary service to owners of backyard poultry and livestock, who often view their animals as pets rather than production animals, requires a different approach and some different skills than providing veterinary service to owners of conventional or commercial livestock operations.

Study authors suggest a new model of practice might be envisioned for urban and peri-urban poultry and livestock clientele to ensure the health and welfare of their animals, and to safeguard public health. Specific opportunities for the veterinary profession are to identify local or regional veterinary service needs for these owners, become equipped to address exotic or zoonotic disease detection and husbandry questions, and provide medical care as well as food safety advice.

— Trina Wood, UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine Communications via Colorado State University

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