

# AGM Weekly Update

Greeting AGMers,

The CPER, Cheyenne, and Fort Collins crews are in true mid-season form as cattle movements, doctoring, veg surveys, and clipping consume these blisteringly hot days. “Bring it on!” we say as peak biomass draws nigh. Speaking of peaking biomass, our VORs presented a bit of a challenge this week. Over half of the readings in the Salt Flat pasture were in a high density of six weeks fescue, a low quality forage. This may confuse the application of the VORs for the purposes of reporting available forage to you on a weekly basis. We are going to try a slight modification (see highlights) to the VOR protocol tomorrow to correct this bias and report back to you next week.

Highlights of Happenings:

- The AGM herd now occupies the Salt Flat pasture after the number-days-threshold in the Ridgeline pasture was met on Wednesday. The number-of-days threshold for the Salt Flat pasture is 25.
- CPER received only a trace amount of rain in the past week, but the blue grama is still fighting its way up through the six-weeks fescue to bring a second flush of green to the range.
- Two more foot-rot cases were doctored in the AGM herd and one previously treated steer was brought back to the headquarters corrals for retreatment and observation.
- We had only a few minor mix-ups to fix-up this week as one AGM steers joined his southern neighbors in 17N and one TGM steer from 5E jumped a fence to hang with the big herd for a time.
- The exit VOR for the Ridgeline pasture was 3.2cm, no change from the previous reading. The entry VOR for the Salt Flat pasture was 7.7cm which included a high number of six-weeks fescue readings. We are going to try and taking a few more reading tomorrow where we pull the six-weeks fescue that obstructs the view of blue grama to get a better picture of available forage.

For more detailed precipitation data and maps, see our website:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/docs.htm?docid=24218>. Remember to send your questions, concerns, and ideas my way and I do my best to have them addressed in next week's email.



VORs with Jack in a tall patch of needle-and-thread grass in the Salt Flat pasture.



A radio collared swift fox following me on my morning cattle check.



Steers observing Matt observing vegetation.

Other Notables:

Other Notables:

- Forb of the Week: Scarlet Gaura or Scarlet beeblossom (*Gaura coccinea*) is a common forb on the CPER but is often hard to identify due to short lived flower heads that can bloom, change color from white to scarlet, and fall off all within one day. Check out some more interesting features at: [http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=GAC05](http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=GAC05)

On behalf of the USDA-ARS-Rangeland Resources Research Unit, I thank you all for your continued participation in this project.

Nick Dufek