

AGM Meeting January 13, 2016
@ Shortgrass Research Center
9am-3pm

For handouts, notes visit: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/Research/docs.htm?docid=25733>

Note: Website address has changed!

Notes by: Maria Fernandez-Gimenez, Lauren Porensky, Elisa Dolan, Hailey Wilmer

Present:

Maria Fernandez-Gimenez-CSU

David Augustine- ARS

Matt Pollart- State Land Board

Jason Kern- Crow Valley Rancher

Steve Anderson- Crow Valley Rancher

Dana Bowman- Crow Valley Rancher

Andy Lawrence- Crow Valley Rancher

Gillian Bee- BCR

Angela Dwyer- BCR

Rachel Murph- NRCS

Kim Obele-USDA-FS

Elisa Dolan-CSU

Lauren Porensky-ARS

Justin Derner-ARS

Pam Freeman-ARS

Jeff Thomas-ARS

Jake Thomas-Crow Valley/ARS

Craig Lawrence-Crow Valley/ARS

Nick Dufek-ARS

Hailey Wilmer-CSU

Not Present: Ted Toombs, Terri Shultz

Overall Summary of decisions made:

- Sequence and triggers for 2016 and possible drought plan of action
 - need more analysis of drought scenarios
 - need to refine cattle behavior triggers
- Increase stocking rate by 5% for 2016
- Matt and Angela are in 1 year probationary period as new stakeholders

Meeting Notes

Meeting Starts: 9:15

Introductions- Maria

- Welcome and thank you for coming
- Today's decisions: sequence, triggers for grazing season, new stakeholders
- Welcome new stakeholder: Matt Pollart from State Land Board
- Elisa Dolan is an undergrad research assistant at CSU, helping to take notes
- Introductions of all present
- Gillian Bee is attending to hand reins over to Angela Dwyer for BCR
- Hailey: Please sign the informed consent form for human subjects research. Please contact us with any questions. You may withdraw consent at anytime.

Monitoring update-David A. (Please see monitoring PowerPoint handout on website for more details and data)

- Website: Easy way to find is to google "adaptive grazing management experiment" ...the website has been updated to reflect:
 - Current and past adaptive grazing management plans, a formal record of decisions and action by the group
 - Meeting notes
 - Handouts and monitoring data
 - Weekly updates from Nick are logged
- Please let us know if any meeting notes, AGM plans, etc. need to be corrected.

Action Item: Kim brought up need to take photo points at transects each year for comparable assessment of visual condition. This is already in the monitoring plan and needs to be done in the future.

- Video of grazing season: by Nick Dufek
- Soil moisture update
- NOAA long term forecast
- Vegetation goals and monitoring toward progress, composition and heterogeneity
- Livestock goals and monitoring toward goals
 - Steve provided additional analysis of livestock economic comparison of TGM/AGM
 - Discussion of these numbers
 - Rachel: Discussion of need to reconsider stocking rate increase from 2015 (5% increase possible at this point)
- Wildlife goals and monitoring toward goals
- Thank you to those who have attended meetings for past 3 years of project

Deciding triggers trigger/sequence decisions- David A and all

- Need to decide what triggers for pasture movement and what order to graze.
- Do we need a max days again? Do we need to raise the VOR thresholds? What about a drought year?

- Recognition that more progress made toward wildlife/veg goals in past 2 years than toward livestock goals. How to fix that?
- PowerPoint: Review of three pastures we grazed heavily in 2015, crude protein, digestible organic matter, biomass and cattle behavior timelines.
- Forage calculator: predicting number of days in each pasture based on sequence.
- Discussion by group of where cattle behavior indicating change, possible changes to cattle behavior checklist
- Stakeholders worked individually or in small groups to develop their own draft sequences.
- Group looked for commonalities/differences between sequences and triggers. Discussed implications in grazing calculator, discussed possible changes in drought.
- CPER Techs will work with Augustine to refine animal behavior triggers
- Group discussed date to change thresholds in drought
- Group discussed raising stocking rate by 5%, some concern that that would be too high in drought.

Decisions on Triggers/Sequence/Stocking Rate for 2016

Decision: Move to Headquarters pasture for last 10 days of growing season-complete consensus. Reason: to improve cattle condition before shipping.

Decision: increase 2016 to 235 head (increase of 5%), complete consensus after second vote. Reason: to increase profits; increase is possible based on current soil moisture from October rain and snow; positive spring precipitation forecast; high residual from 2015 growing season; associated forage calculator projections suggest we could sustain 235 on 8 pastures in all but drought scenario

Decision: Grazing sequence for 2016- Complete Consensus

Ridgeline
 Elm
 South
 Crossroads
 Hilltank
 Highway
 Snowfence
 Headquarters: 10 days at end
 Rest: Saltflat
 Rest: Nighthawk
 Triggers For Movement:
 Cattle behavior- to be refined
 VOR:
 Loamy 450 lbs/acre
 Mixed 500 lbs/acre

Sandy 550 lbs/acre

Dry year: If 75% of normal precipitation or less as of June 15, then thresholds will move to drought thresholds: Loamy: 300lbs/acre, Mixed: 400lbs/acre, Sandy: 450lbs/acre

Angela and Matt are now stakeholders. Their first year is probationary.

Things to be considered in future meetings:

Scenarios for drought in the grazing calculator

Max days threshold- still need to discuss in April

Running past years through grazing calculator to test it against what happened

April Meeting: (Date TBD)

- Will talk about learning and process of whole project, reflect on future roles of stakeholders and stakeholder leadership opportunities within the project
- Hailey will be trying to talk to stakeholders individually before April to get feedback on the process and also on key uncertainties in how the system works/what we need to learn.