

AGM Weekly Update

Greeting AGMers,

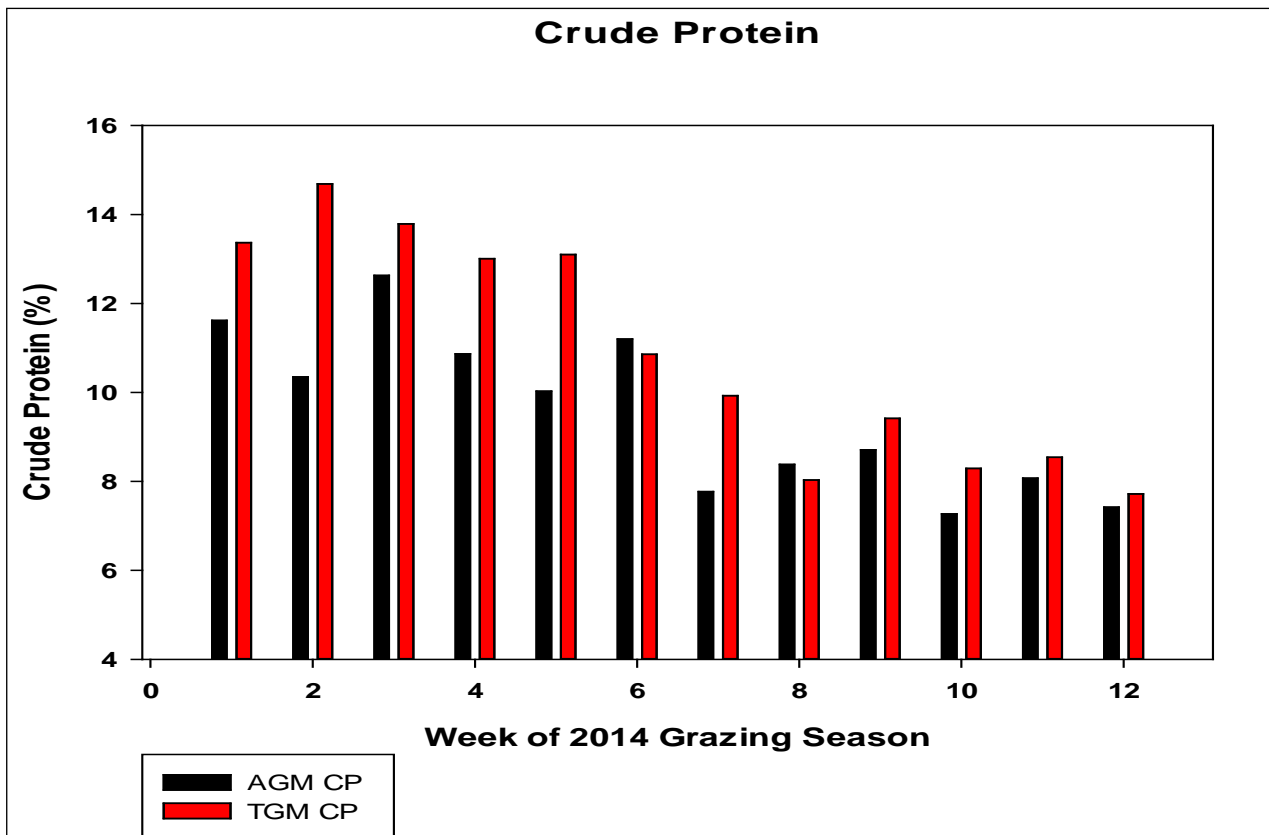
With the Salt Flat pasture being our longest and most problem free stop in the grazing sequence, you might think the crew would get a little complacent. NEVER!!! In preparation for the move to the Crossroads pasture, we've dug up and replace a leaky hydrant and added two more stock tanks to ensure adequate water. One last check of the fences and we'll be set to move the herd on Monday, but not before we run the herd through the scales to bring you all some valuable mid-season gains.

We also bid a very fond farewell to most of our summer field crew members from Cheyenne and Fort Collins. In all my years of field work, never have I seen a group so efficient and cooperative.

Highlights of Happenings:

- For the second week in a row we have **no mix-ups or sick critters** in the AGM herd.
- Before the **move to the Crossroads pasture on Monday**, we will be weighing and closely examining the herd at the HQ scale to get you all some more mid-season gains and double checking for any illness.
- **Excluding needle-and-thread grass**, which the herd seems to be avoiding all together, **the VOR for the week was 5.43**. These readings consist of mostly blue grama and there is no shortage of it even with the herd grazing it for over 20 days now.
- August is off to a dry start with only **0.07 inches of rain so far**, however, there are dark clouds on the horizon today.

In the latest rounds of fecal analysis, **crude protein continues to decline across the board and the TGM herd continues to edge out the AGM herd** (See chart below). We'll see if these trends continue as the herd moves to the Crossroads pasture next week.



The progression of fecal crude protein throughout the grazing season so far...

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.



The CPER crew finishing repairs and installation of two new water tanks in the Crossroads pasture.



Attempted escape: If you've ever wondered how gates get rubbed open...



Any guesses as to what the heck these are in the water tank? I think they could be babies of the creatures from the movie Tremors. Jeff's bringing his cannon to work just in case.

Caption contest:



- My summer crew said a pillow from Chna was comfortable....I am not so sure.
- That cloud looks like a *Sphaeralcea coccinea* and that one looks like a *Psoralea tenuiflora* and ooo, ooo! That one looks like a *Iva axillaris*!
- I can't believe no one clipped quadrat 7. I'm staying right here until it's done.
- Only the first casualty of clipping this season.
- I've heard of people jumping flames, but let's see if the flames will jump me.

Other Notables:

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- Forb of the week: Dotted Gayfeather (*Liatrix punctata*) is showing its soft purple flowers at the CPER this week. Interesting to note that this species is preferred by most grazing ungulates in its early growth stages and is extremely tolerant to drought due to a taproot that has been measured up to 15ft. below the surface!

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

Nick Dufek