

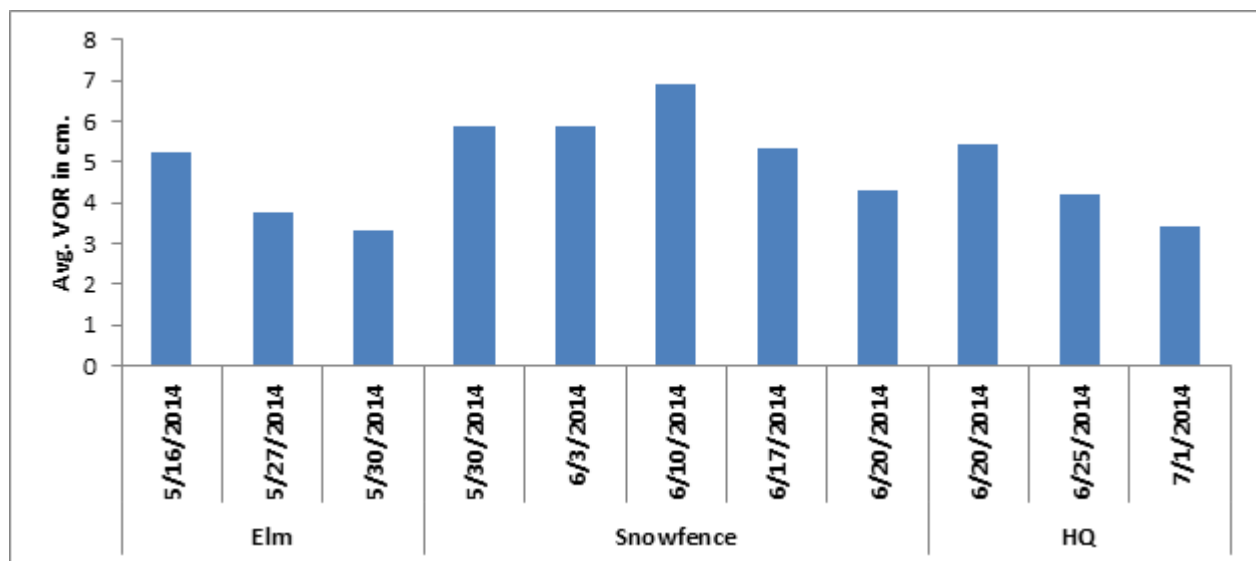
AGM Weekly Update

Good Day AGMers,

As we check the pastures for the coming holiday weekend, we are noticing that most of the steers are getting quite comfortable in their respective pastures. There is plenty of water, food, and tall grass to hide away in for a nap. Other than being castrated, it sounds like a pretty excellent life for the time being and who would want to seek greener pastures in that setting.

Highlights of Happenings:

- The AGM group is grazing happily in the Headquarters pasture and looks as though they will stay put until the number-of-days threshold (19 days) is met around the middle of next week. Next in the grazing sequence is the Ridgeline pasture. A solar pump was added to the water well there and we will be adding more back rubs and salt blocks soon.
- We had only one mix-up incident in the HQ pasture when a TGM steer that was being held at the CPER headquarter for medical attention escaped across the road to mingle with some old friends in the AGM herd. Our staff promptly sorted him out at the headquarters corrals. We also noticed one wheezing steer and are currently treating him with respiratory medication.
- CPER headquarters received only .06 inches of precipitation since our last communication. There's still lots of standing water throughout the range and the steers don't seem to mind it one bit.
- The AGM steers seem to be keeping up with the productivity of the warm season grasses in the Headquarters pasture. The low VOR average was down to 3.4 cm. This is a 0.8 cm reduction from last week's readings. The standing seed stalks of six-weeks fescue still tower over the warm-season blue grama, but in many of the plots we observed, the fescue was being uprooted and discarded by the cattle while they selected for blue grama. We did not notice many signs of grazing in areas of high western wheatgrass or needle-and-thread density.



Average VORs thus far...

For more detailed precipitation data and maps, see our website: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/docs.htm?docid=24218>. As always, please feel free to send any questions, suggestions, or concerns relating to the project my way and I will do my best to respond in next week's email.



The Cheyenne crew helping to distribute concrete for our new water tank in the Highway pasture.



Over a week after our heavy rains, water still stands on the western part of the unit.



A personal favorite, prairie spiderwort, emerges from a six-weeks fescue patch.

Other Notables:

Forb of the Week: Prairie spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis*) has been in bloom through the range. This gorgeous forb was commonly eaten by Native Americans in the area and is considered very important to native bee populations as well. Check it out at: http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=TROC

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

Nick Dufek