

AGM Weekly Update

Good Day AGMers,

Summer is definitely upon us in northeast Colorado. High temperatures are driving cattle to water much more frequently and despite having extra tanks and an extra pump, the CPER staff has had to rely on the water trucks and holding tanks to keep up with demand in the Ridgeline pasture. On the bright side, our exit numbers for the VORs jumped considerably with our warm season grasses taking full advantage of the above average precipitation in June. We have lots of highlights this week including the latest fecal analysis results!

Highlights of Happenings:

- After meeting the number-of-days threshold in the Headquarters pasture, the AGM herd was pushed northeast to the Ridgeline pasture. With a solar pump and a windmill filling three water tanks and more forage than you can shake a Robel pole at, we hope the steers will be as content as they were on the Headquarters pasture. Ridgeline's number-of-days threshold is 14.
- Four more AGM steers were treated for foot-rot in the past week. This has been reoccurring problem on the CPER this year, likely due high levels of surface moisture. Fortunately, we carefully check the AGM cattle at least 3 times per week and all cases of foot-rot have been caught and treated early enough to prevent any long-term lameness. See link below.
- We have yet to receive any measurable precipitation in the month of July. It will be interesting to see how this affects our VORs in the upcoming pastures of the grazing sequence. Our total precipitation for June was 3.0 inches, which is 0.7 inches above average for June.
- The final VOR for the Headquarters pasture was 5.32 cm, which is a 1.9 cm increase from last week's reading. It would seem as though our warm season grass, blue grama, was given a chance to recover a bit as cattle moved away from the AGM plots to graze elsewhere in the pasture. The initial VOR for the Ridgeline pasture was 4.0 cm. See chart 1 below.

Results for Weeks 4, 5, and 6 of the fecal analysis show that increased digestible organic matter in the TGM steers remains consistent with past weeks, however, the move to the Headquarters pasture in week six has resulted in similar fecal crude protein in both the TGM and AGM steers. See charts 2 and 3 below. This may be, in part, due to the increase in warm season grass frequency and productivity in section 7 (including the HQ pasture), which was somewhat lacking in the previous pastures.

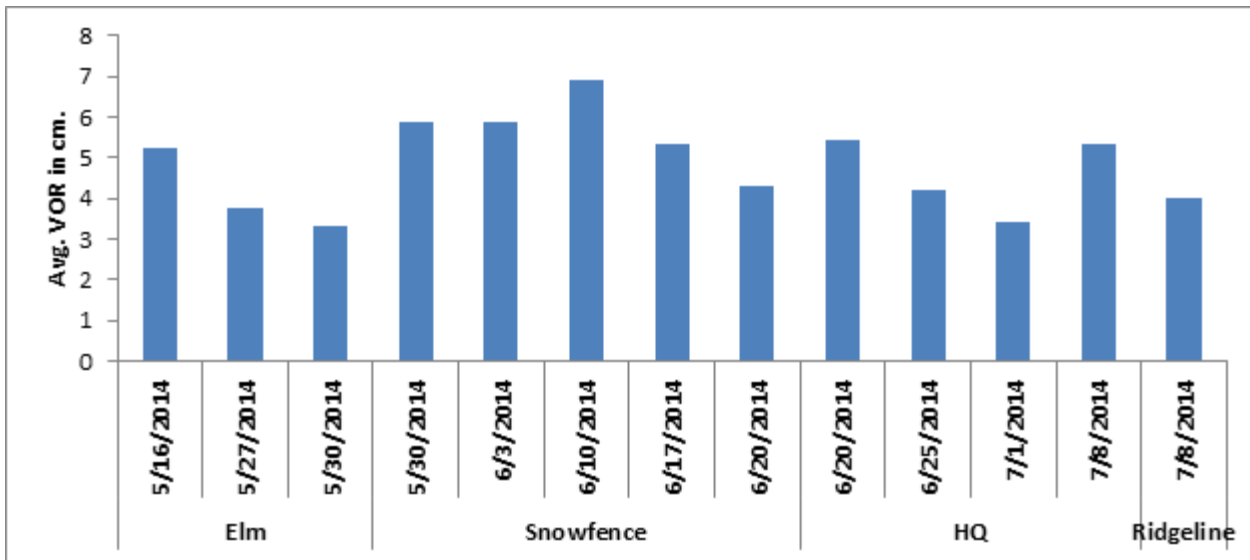
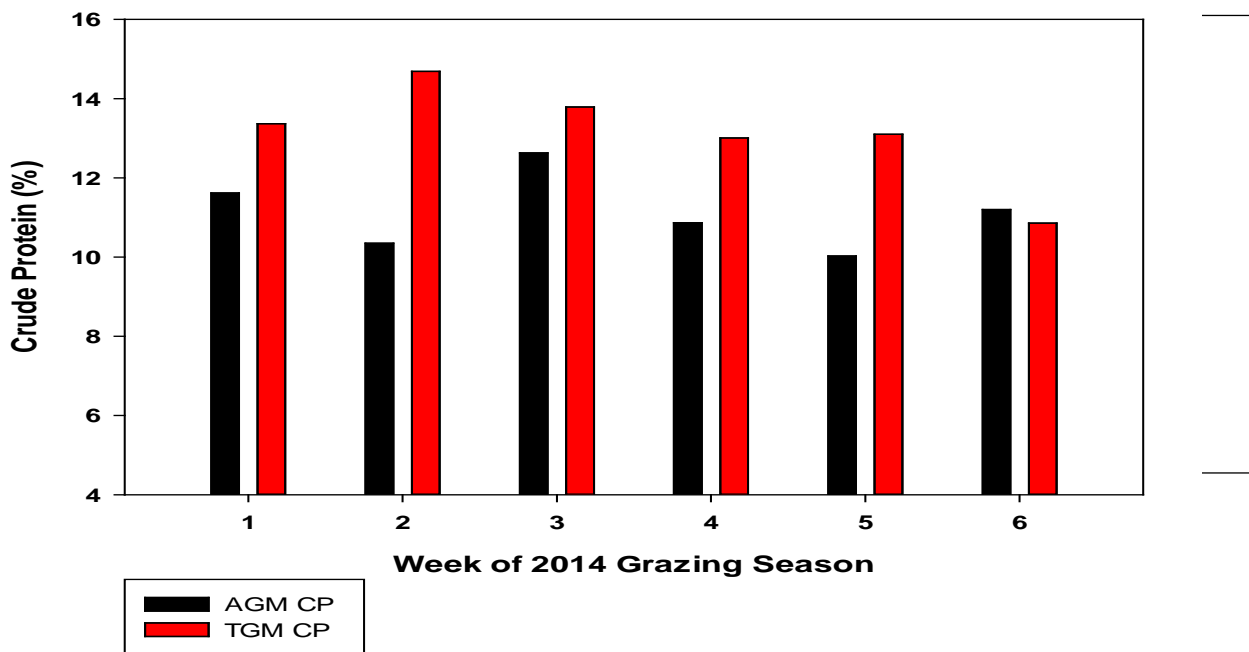


Chart 1: VORs from throughout the grazing season so far...

Crude Protein



Charts 2 & 3: The differences between the AGM and TGM steers for fecal crude protein (top) and fecal digestible organic matter (bottom) in the past six weeks of grazing.

For more detailed precipitation data and maps, see our website: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/docs.htm?docid=24218>. Also, 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.



Captain America responding to the discovery of the noxious forb, Scotch Thistle, at the corrals in Section 19.



A bird's eye view of the corrals at CPER headquarters.



Our forb of the week, Rocky Mountain Bee Plant near the water tanks in section 8.

Other Notables:

- Forb of the Week: Rocky Mountain Bee Plant (*Cleome serrulata*) is a favorite among, not only bees, but dove hunters as well. It's seed pods look similar to a small bean are a sought after food for mourning doves. Much like me after a hard day in the summer heat, it gives off a foul odor and is mostly avoided by livestock. Check out tons of great info at: http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/cleome_serrulata.shtml
- Great paper on foot-rot from OSU Extension: <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2023/ANSI-3355web.pdf>

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

Nick Dufek