

AGM Weekly Update

Hello AGMers,

Boy...what a year so far. All this rain is unbelievable. But, as a prairie vegetation enthusiast, I am very enthused. If I have any say over the matter, I name this grazing season "The Year of the Forbs". Their number and diversity this year is really something to behold. Although, identifying all of them correctly is proving to be quite challenging at times.

Highlights of Happenings:

- 1.16 inches of precipitation for June** with more falling as I type. This is already half of the 76 year average for June.
- The average VOR was 6.9 (~1,800 kg/ha) for the two unburned plots of the Salt Flat pasture and an the estimated biomass on the patch burn was 730 kg/ha.** This gives us an estimated average biomass of 1,265 kg/ha overall in Salt Flat. I would like to note, however, that **six-weeks fescue made up a large portion (about 30% by my estimate) of the clipped biomass from the patch burned area.** As an unpalatable annual grass, it could inflate our estimated forage biomass on the burned area in the next couple of weeks. I will continue to report the estimated % of six-weeks fescue in the clipped biomass to help inform you all of its influence on forage measurements.
- The AGM herd extends their healthy and happy streak to 3 weeks as **the cowboys report no sickness or escapees.** Does anyone remember how many foot rot cases we had last year at this time?

For detailed precipitation data, maps, last year's updates, scientist bios, and AGM documents, 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.

Photos



Above: The rarely seen but brilliantly beautiful flower of *Coryphantha vivipara* (pin cushion cactus).



Plant quiz! What is this forb?



Above: Weekly VORs with Craig in the patch burn of the Salt Flat pasture.

Other Notables and Questions:

- **Skye Greenler, Jeff Thomas and Terri Schulz** correctly answered last week's plant quiz. **Rusty Lupine** (*Lupinus pusillus*) was the forb. You each get a point. Congratulations!!

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

Nick Dufek