

AGM Weekly Update

Good Day AGMers,

For this, the third week of June, the vegetation crews have been all but vegetative. If my projections are correct they should be wrapping up the first and most difficult round of measurements for the year on Friday. Woo-hoo!! But that's not the only good news. Our high-tech redneck, Master Smith, and his trusty sidekick Grant switched out the batteries and downloaded the tracking data from the cattle GPS collars as the CPER and HPGRS crews checked and weighed the AGM herd on Wednesday. Stay tuned for some really cool cattle tracking maps from Snow Fence and Salt Flat and their corresponding TGM pastures.

Highlights of Happenings:

- On Wednesday, the AGM herd was escorted back to the headquarters corrals for weighing, GPS collar replacement, and individual health inspection. **Average daily gains (ADG) for the AGM herd were 4.19 lbs./head/day. In the paired TGM herd from 17N, ADG was 4.63 lbs/head/day.** We hope to have a map with cattle movements based on the GPS data for you all next week.
- The cowboys, for the fourth week in a row, report **zero animal health issues**. Last year at this time, we had 6 foot rot cases and one pink eye. They did, however, report a small mix up as a couple of AGM steers joined their friends in 17N for a spell.
- **Our VORs in the unburned plots in the Salt Flat pasture were 5.8 cm (~1,530 kg/ha).** This is a decrease of about 300 kg/ha from last week's measurements. **Biomass in the burned plots was 670 kg/ha.** This is a decrease of about 60 kg/ha from last week. So, our **average between the burned and unburned plots is about 1,100 kg/ha.** Looks like the AGM herd will stay put in Salt Flat for the time being.
- Only **0.19 inches of rain this week** at CPER headquarters. This brings the June total up to 1.87 inches. The average for June is 2.25 inches.
- We have some more fecal crude protein results for everyone this week. **For the first two weeks of this season, the TGM herd in 19N consumed a more protein rich diet than the AGM herd in the Snowfence pasture.** This may suggest less selectivity among the more crowded AGM herd. It will be interesting to see how these results change as the results come in from after the move to the patch burned Salt Flat pasture.

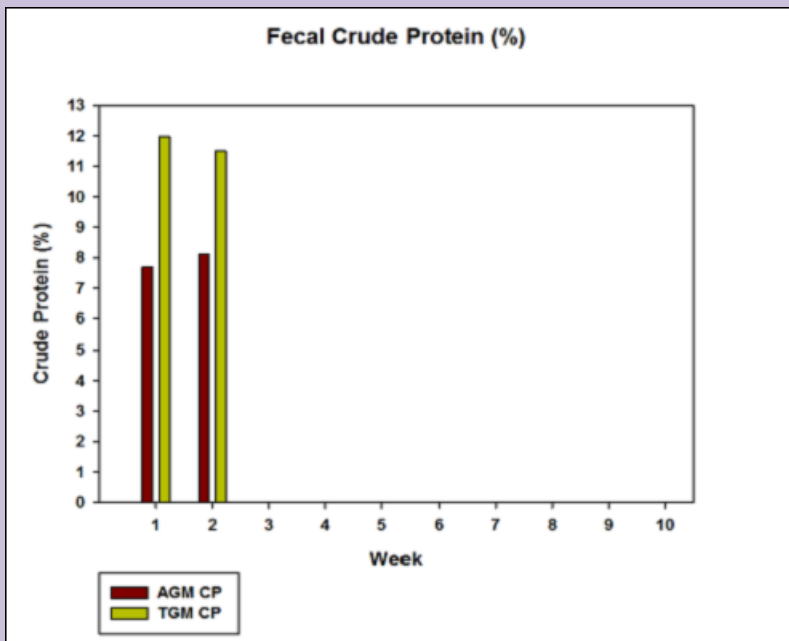
For detailed precipitation data, maps, last year's updates, scientist bios, and AGM documents, see our website: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/docs.htm?docid=24218>. Remember to send your questions, concerns, and ideas my way and I do my best to have them addressed in next week's email.

I made a rookie mistake when calculating the Average Daily Gain for the AGM/TGM steers.

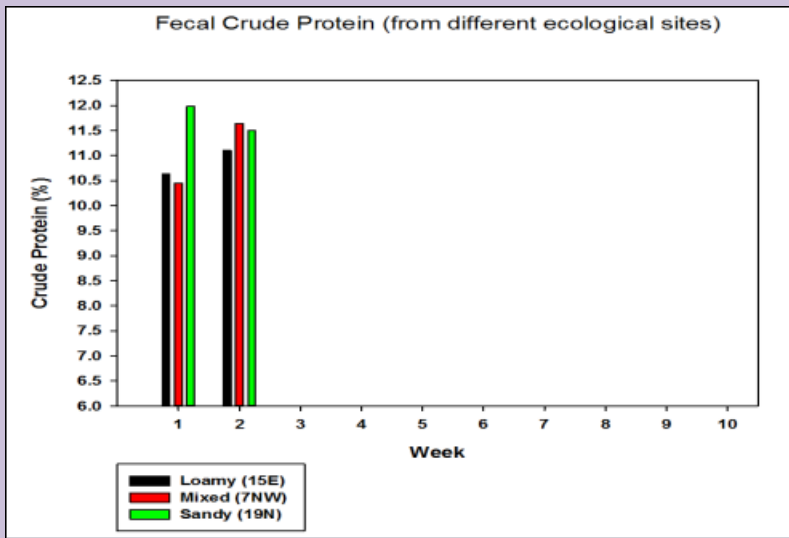
Here are the correct ADGs:

2.72 pounds/hd/day for AGM

3.13 pounds/hd/day for the TGM



Above: Fecal crude protein comparison between the AGM (Snow Fence) and TGM (19N) steers for the first two week of the 2015 grazing season.



Above: Fecal crude protein from different ecological sites at CPER.

Photos



Plant Quiz! What's this flower from?



Caption Contest! Write a caption for this photo of Cristiana and I will post them next week.



Above: Grass and forb diversity in the “plagued out” prairie dog pasture (section 22). We counted over 20 different forb species along one 25 m transect.

Other Notables and Questions:

- Jeff and Terri were the only ones to correctly answer last week's plant quiz which was *Abronia fragrans* or snowball sand verben. Points awarded. Good luck with this week's quiz!

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

Nick Dufek