

AGM Weekly Update

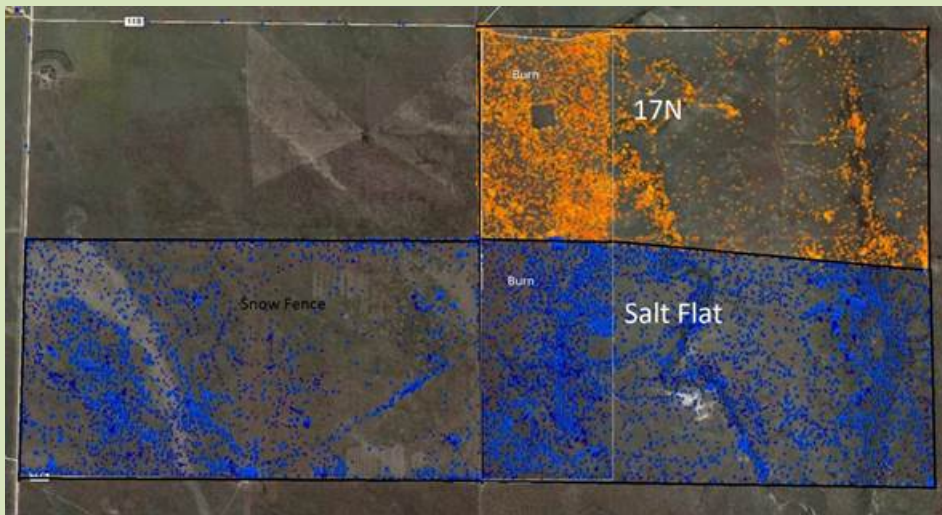
Hello AGMers,

We had quite a drop in the VORs this week that is worth checking out. It may finally be getting close to our first low-biomass-threshold move of the year. The CPER cattle crew tells me that the Nighthawk pasture is online and ready for steers.

Be sure to also check out our first GPS-Google Earth image of cattle movements. It's definitely a picture worth a thousand words. We would love to hear your questions and comments.

Highlights of Happenings:

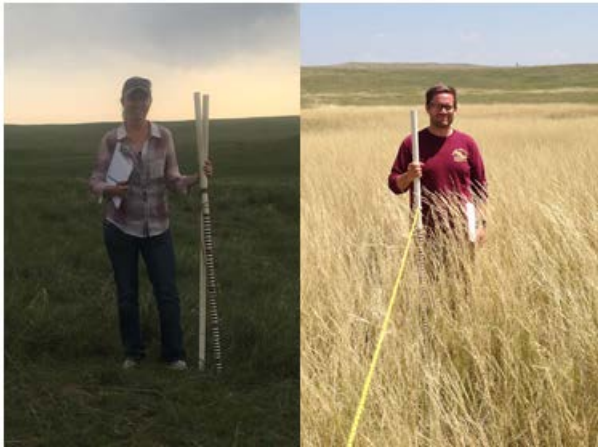
- **The AGM herd remains happy and healthy in the Salt Flat pasture.** Jake and Craig report **one case of pink-eye this week** bringing our 100% healthy streak to an end. It was an impressive run for 224 steers in a half section.
- **The VORs in the Salt Flat pasture averaged 3.5cm (~915 kg/ha).** This is a decrease of about 600 kg/ha from last week. **The biomass in the patch burned area was 680 kg/ha,** which is about the same as last week's estimate. **Our average estimate between the burned and unburned areas is about 800 kg/ha.**
- **Only a trace amount of rain to report this week** from CPER headquarters. The June total, so far, is 1.91 inches. The average precipitation for June is 2.25 inches.
- **We have some incredible GPS collar data to show you this week from late May through June, 17th (see below).** "The GPS collar results show herds are selectively grazing the patch burns both in the TGM pasture (17N) and the AGM pasture (Saltflat). However, the AGM herd is also spending more time grazing in lowlands off the burn, compared to the smaller TGM herd."-Dr. A



Above: GPS collar points overlaid on a satellite image for the Snow Fence, Salt Flat, and 17N pastures. The AGM collars are in blue and the TGM in yellow. The patch burn areas in 17N and Salt Flat are delineated by the thin white line.

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: Left- Alicia in the needle-and-thread dominated eastern Salt Flat pasture yesterday. Right-Jack in the same area in July 2014 during AGM herds occupation.



Above: The AGM steers making fun of Dammit's new haircut.



Plant Quiz!! What is this forb?

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:

- The flower in last week's plant quiz was from buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*). No one guessed it. Points awarded to me for trickery.

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

Nick Dufek