



Southern Colorado Ag and Range Newsletter

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Monday—Friday 8 a.m.—5 p.m.
(excluding holidays)

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All articles written by Tom Laca unless otherwise indicated.

Ag Agent Greeting

It is time once again for another newsletter. The last few months have been busy for me and my family as we have purchased property in Beulah and became residents of Pueblo County. As we continue to get un-packed and settled, I am looking forward to becoming more involved with the community. The kids love their new school and friends and we have been eagerly welcomed. I have still been spending most of my weekends traveling back and forth to the San Luis Valley trying to get everything moved.



After a much-needed, near-normal rainfall this summer it is hard not to keep thinking “post-drought.” I know we have a long way to go to recover from the last several years, but being an optimist I have to believe it is going to get better. Let’s just hope that the wetter weather patterns hold up through the fall and winter.

Be watching for upcoming classes this fall and winter. I am planning classes for this fall on Small Ruminants—Raising Sheep and Goats, Vaccinations and Parasite Control for Livestock, and Direct Marketing of Livestock. We are also planning a Bee Keeping class and a land restoration workshop early next year. If you have an interest in any of these areas, please contact us at the office. We will get more information out as soon as possible. Finally, the Ag Advisory Group has been assembled and will be meeting in October.

As always if you have any questions or comments, don’t hesitate to call me at 719-583-6566. I look forward to hearing from you and good luck in all your endeavors.

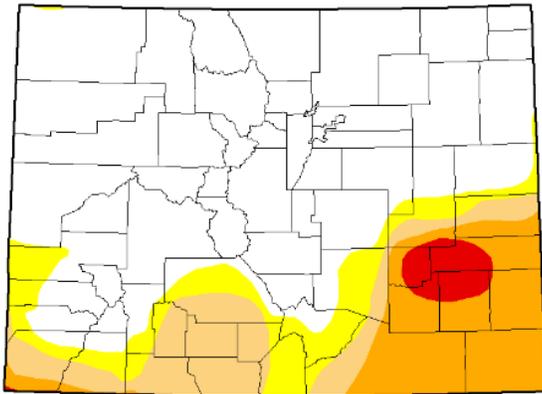
Tom

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

September 23, 2014
(Released Thursday September 25, 2014)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Statistics type: Traditional (D0-D4, D1-D4, etc.) Categorical (D0, D1, etc.)
Drought Condition (Percent Area):

Week	Date	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	2014-09-23	66.51	33.49	24.00	14.11	2.33	0.00
Last Week	2014-09-16	63.98	36.02	25.12	15.56	2.67	0.00
3 Months Ago	2014-06-24	50.84	49.16	26.49	17.30	9.32	1.89
Start of Calendar Year	2013-12-31	32.04	67.96	22.33	13.56	4.01	1.47
Start of Water Year	2013-10-01	24.91	75.09	37.88	12.01	4.01	1.47
One Year Ago	2013-09-24	19.96	80.04	40.26	15.75	4.01	1.47



Population Affected by Drought: **190,002** [View More Statistics](#)

Intensity:

- D0 - Abnormally Dry
- D3 - Extreme Drought
- D1 - Moderate Drought
- D4 - Exceptional Drought
- D2 - Severe Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying [text summary](#) for forecast statements.

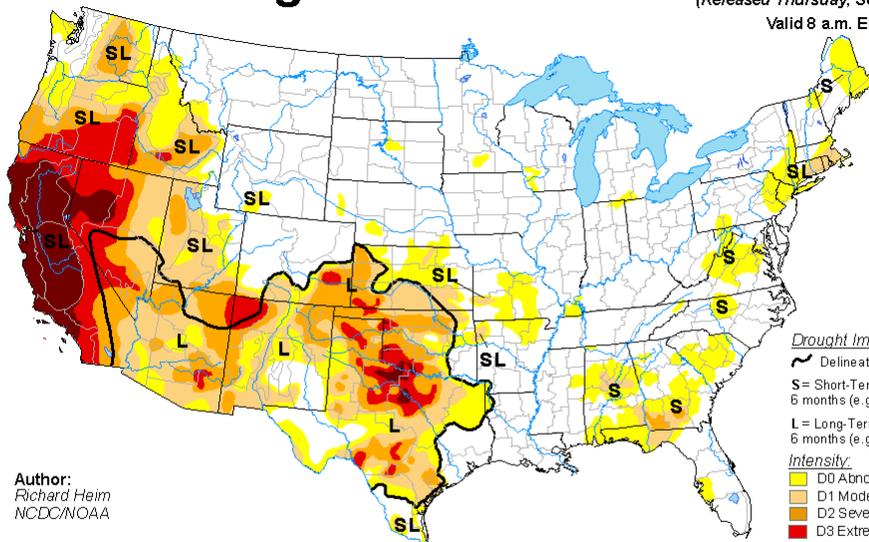
Download: [PNG](#) [PDF](#) [JPEG](#)

For more details and maps go to:

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/sdo_summary.html

U.S. Drought Monitor

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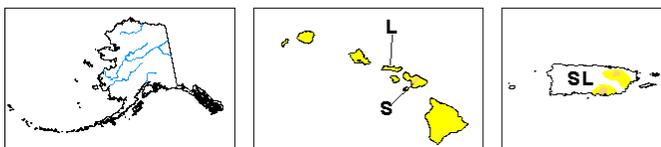


Author:
Richard Heim
NCDC/NOAA

Drought Impact Types:
~ Delineates dominant impacts
S= Short-Term, typically less than 6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)
L= Long-Term, typically greater than 6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

Intensity:
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme Drought
D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.



USDA National Drought Mitigation Center NOAA

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

This map is updated weekly and can be viewed at <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

From this website, if you are viewing the US map, click on the state of Colorado to view a more detailed map.

Once again CSU Extension-Pueblo County will be offering seedling trees for sale in cooperation with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) Nursery. Delivery dates are tentatively going to be May 1, 2015. The nursery has informed us that this year they will have some new species to introduce as well as some new trial sizes of some species. Order forms should become available in **October**. There are many species of trees and shrubs available and are sold on a first come, first served basis, so order early. No plant purchased from the CSFS may be resold.

The only program qualification is that the seedlings be used for conservation practices only. If you have purchased trees from us in the past, you will receive an application in the mail. More information can be obtained on the web at <http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/Pueblo/nat/seedling.shtml> or by contacting CSU Extension – Pueblo County at 583-6566.



Know a Native—Vine Mesquite-*Panicum obtusum*

Facts:

- ▶ Native, Warm Season, Perennial
- ▶ Prefers low, moist sites
- ▶ Spreads by seed, rhizomes and stolons (above ground runners)
- ▶ Generally grows 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 feet tall
- ▶ Effective for erosion control
- ▶ Provides good quality forage for livestock
- ▶ Palatability decreases as the plant matures
- ▶ Grows best in sandy to sandy loam soils
- ▶ Seeds have a low germination rate



Sources: United States Department of Agriculture

Noxious Weed Control Plan

- 50% **Cost Share** is available to property owners who apply and are afflicted with a species of weed listed on the Colorado Noxious Weed A or B List.
- Turkey Creek Conservation District highlights their role in Pueblo County's **Noxious Weed Control Program**.
- User friendly method of making this cost share an easy reality for landowners.
- Contact Turkey Creek Conservation District at 719-543-8386 ext. 116 or email: info@puebloweeds.com

website: www.puebloweeds.com

Last weekend I had the opportunity to walk through some mountain hayfields as the custom hay maker was both cutting and baling. Looking at the maturity of the still standing grass compared to the looks of the bales that had been rolled up a couple of days earlier, I couldn't help but think that I hoped the hay purchaser knows the value of a hay analysis test.

Most of us have used the "Eyeball 2000" at some point to make some assumptions about hay quality. We want to find hay that has a good green color, a high proportion of leaves, dust and mold free, and doesn't have weeds or foreign objects in it. One can even find conversion charts that will help you turn your visual evaluation into a number value and calculate a rudimentary estimate of "pounds of quality". If you only have a handful of animals to feed, this may be all of the evaluation you do when purchasing hay. After all, a chemical analysis of forages does require some effort, the appropriate equipment, and has an analysis charge associated with the test. (Typically between \$20 & \$45 per sample for a standard test, depending on what laboratory completes your forage testing.)



Photo courtesy of MJ Fisher

When you have a sizeable herd, flock, or band/mob of livestock; a few chemical analysis tests of your forages can quickly pay for themselves. At a minimum, a standard forage test should provide you with estimates of the hay's dry matter (**DM**), crude protein (**CP**), total digestible nutrients (**TDN**), acid detergent fiber (**ADF**), neutral detergent fiber (**NDF**), and relative feed value (**RFV**). Some labs will provide even more information in their standard package and most labs will have additional tests that can be run for additional charges.

Many producers will key in on the value of CP and TDN for determining how much of the hay they will need to feed to meet their animals' requirements for protein and energy, respectively. If you know how much protein and energy your hay possesses, it is easier to determine a ration that meets the needs of the livestock and you can determine a feeding cost. A producer can have greater accuracy both nutritionally and economically if they have ADF and NDF values for their feeds. This may be an oversimplification, but think of ADF as a measure of digestibility and NDF as a feed intake value. When I know a hay's NDF, I can estimate how much of that hay an animal may consume. Additionally, the ADF value can give you an idea of how much of that forage is digestible as opposed to wasted. If you know these two values before purchasing hay, you can use them to make an estimate of how much hay you will need to purchase.

Dry matter values and RFV come into play when you are sourcing hay from multiple locations or cuttings. All forage has some degree of water within it. When you look at a hay analysis report that is in "as-fed", the water is still in the data and will skew the quality data. A DM analysis shows the data as if all of the water has been removed. This allows you to make comparisons between two or more samples. The RFV is an index number that is designed to give a comparison between two samples. We abuse RFV to a certain extent. It was designed to compare between alfalfa samples but many unfairly infer its use onto other forages.

If you wish to discuss this subject further, you can contact your local Extension office. Here in Pueblo County we have a hay probe that Pueblo County producers may borrow from our Extension office so that they can collect hay samples to send off for analysis. Either Tom or I would be happy to visit with you about the process of hay sampling and/or interpreting the analysis results, should you have questions.

Pocket gophers are those burrowing rodents that leave mounds of soil in your yards and fields. They are so named due to their having fur-lined cheek pouches on each side of the mouth that they use to carry food and nesting material. Pocket gophers are rarely seen above ground and construct a system of underground tunnels that includes a main tunnel at 4 to 18 inches below the surface and a number of lateral tunnels that end at a soil mound or plug. Tunnel diameter varies with the size of the gopher, but most average about 3 inches. They use their long powerful claws and teeth for digging and push the loosened soil to the surface. One gopher moves about two and a half tons of soil to the surface in a year and creates 200 yards of tunnels.



Photo/diagram courtesy of
CSU Extension



Gophers can be a cause of significant damage to crops, rangelands, ditches and yards. Productivity to alfalfa fields and native grassland where gophers are present can be reduced by 20 to 50 percent. They prefer to eat fleshy roots such as alfalfa and dandelions that they encounter while tunneling, but will also venture above ground only a body length away from the tunnel opening to forage on aboveground vegetation. Gopher mounds will also smother existing forages as the soil covers it and provides seed beds for invading plants. The mounds will also dull and plug sickle bars when harvesting hay. Gophers can be extremely damaging to ditch banks as the water flows through the tunnels and sometime can completely wash out a ditch.

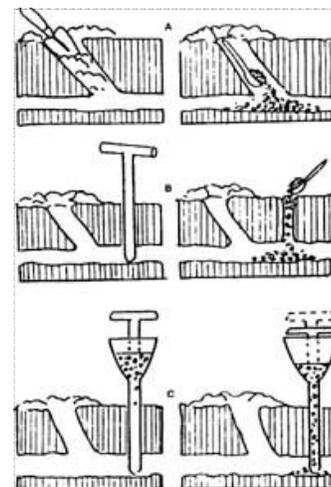


To be fair there are some benefits of gophers as well. They can increase soil fertility by adding plant material and feces. Also, they will increase soil aeration and loosen compaction. By bringing up subsoil and subjecting it to weatherization, there will be an increase in soil formation. Finally, the tunnels will increase water infiltration. The benefits of gophers are long term and not always easily recognized. With that being said, any decision to control these rodents needs to be made by taking all factors into consideration.

There are several methods for controlling pocket gophers. Exclusion by means of a wire-mesh fence buried no less than 18 inches will work but can be cost prohibitive depending on the area needing protection. Repellents have also been suggested but none have been proven effective on gophers. Flooding a field or a single mound can create an inhospitable environment and force them out of their tunnels leaving the gopher vulnerable to predation. Crop selection and rotation will also help to reduce the habitat suitability for pocket gophers.

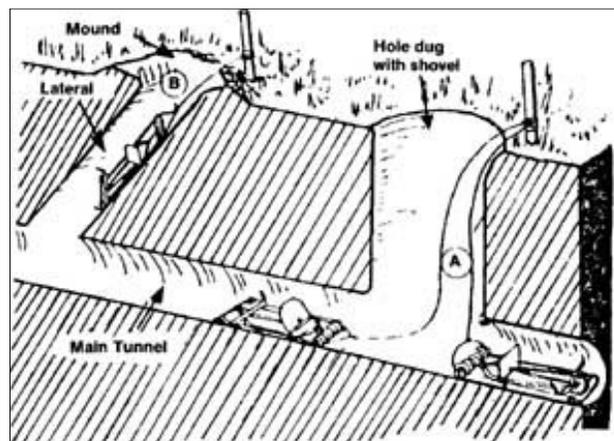
Toxicants can be an effective way to eliminate gophers. Baits can be in the form of a treated grain or a paraffin block. These baits need to be placed in the main tunnel by hand or with a probe. When using poisons, be sure to read and follow all labels. Grain baits are highly susceptible to decomposition in damp areas and may not last long.

Continued page 7



Caution should be used as any bait spilled above ground or not sealed in the burrow could cause harm to non-target animals.

Trapping is one of the best methods for reducing pocket gopher populations. There are different styles of gopher traps, but all seem to work well when used properly. Start by locating a fresh mound and then finding the tunnel. Traps can be placed in either the main tunnel or a lateral tunnel. Traps should be secured with a wire or other means to a marker stake that is placed outside the hole. After setting and placing the trap six to eight inches back in the tunnel you can either cover the hole or leave it open (both methods work equally well). Traps should be checked twice a day and if no gopher is caught in 48 hours it should be moved to a new location.



For more information or assistance contact Tom at the Pueblo County Extension Office, 701 Court St, Suite C, Pueblo, CO or call 719-583-6566.

AG Census Data 2012 & 2007—Pueblo County

By Jeff Tranel, Agricultural & Business Management Economist, CSU Extension

Field Crops, Hay, Vegetables	2012			2007		
	Harvested Land (ac)	Harvested Quantity	Average Yield	Harvested Land (ac)	Harvested Quantity	Average Yield
Hay, Alfalfa (tons)	5,596	18,045	3.22	11,185	36,121	3.23
Hay, All (tons)	8,541	27,218	3.19	15,864	45,651	2.88
Barley for Grain (bushels)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corn for Grain (bushels)	3,849	647,631	168.26	4,314	793,085	183.84
Proso Millet (bushels)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sorghum for Grain (bushels)	-	-	-	696	17,076	24.53
Sunflowers, All (pounds)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wheat, All (bushels)	514	17,049	33.17	2,016	87,946	43.62
Dry Edible Beans (cwt)	877	26,596	30.33	1,267	29,097	22.97
Vegetables, All & Potatoes	1,323			1,511		

Fun Facts

- ❖ Pumpkins were once recommended for removing freckles and curing snake bites.
- ❖ Honeybee workers must visit two million flowers to make one pound of honey.
- ❖ Onions contain a mild antibiotic that fights infections, soothes burns, tames bee stings and relieves the itch of athletes foot.

Newsletter Update—If you know of someone who would like to receive our quarterly newsletter, please contact Carolyn at 583-6574 or valdez@co.pueblo.co.us.

October13—Columbus Day, *Office Closed*

14—Advisory Committee Meeting

27—Small Ruminants—Raising Sheep & Goats, 6-9 p.m., CSU Extension,
\$10/person or \$15/couple sharing materials**November**

TBA—Vaccinations and Parasite Control for Livestock

11—Veterans' Day, *Office Closed*20—Direct Marketing of Livestock, 6-9 p.m., CSU Extension,
\$10/person or \$15/couple sharing materials27—Thanksgiving, *Office Closed***December**25—Christmas, *Office Closed***Monthly meetings:****Pueblo County Stockmen's Association** meets the first Thursday of each month at Mesa Vet Clinic at 7 p.m.**Turkey Creek Conservation District** meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month, Time: 2:30 p.m. Location: 200 S. Santa Fe Ave., 4th floor, Call: (719) 543-8386 Ext. 116 for details.**South Pueblo Conservation District** meets the 3rd Thursday of every month, Time: 6:00 p.m. Location: 200 S. Santa Fe Ave., 4th floor, Call: (719) 543-8386 Ext. 3 for details.**Upcoming Classes**Cost: \$10/person, \$15/couple
(*may vary depending on class*)

Classes held at CSU Extension/Pueblo County

Fall 2014

- Small Ruminants—Raising Sheep & Goats
October 27, 6-9 p.m.
- Vaccinations and Parasite Control for Livestock
November, TBA
- Direct Marketing of Livestock
November 20, 6-9 p.m.

Spring 2015

- Bee Keeping
February, TBA
- Land Restoration

More details will be available soon.

Colorado State University
Extension**Save the Dates:****Upcoming Fall Classes**

Presented by: Lois Illick, CSU Extension Agent Family and Consumer Sciences

Guide to Living Gluten-Free

Do you have questions about going gluten-free? Find answers and learn to spot hidden sources of gluten while trying out new gluten-free recipes.

Wednesday, October 22, 2014, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
\$10.00 fee. Registration required by Oct. 15th.**Rock Around the "Crock"**

Prepare safe, nutritious meals in your crockpot. Learn the do's and don'ts of crockpot safety. Receive recipes for breakfast foods to desserts.

Tuesday, November 4, 2014, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
\$10.00 fee. Registration required by Oct. 28th.**Bake with an "Altitude"**

Baking at Pueblo's 4700' Elevation can be tricky. Learn to adjust your favorite recipes for baking success at high altitudes.

Wednesday, December 10, 2014, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
\$10.00 fee. Registration required by Dec. 3rd.**For all classes**—Registration required by deadline—To register, mail or bring cash or check (payable to Extension Program Fund) to CSU Extension-Pueblo County, 701 Court St. Suite C, Pueblo, CO 81003. No credit or debit cards accepted. Include name, address, phone and name of class to register. Call 719-583-6566 for more information."like" us on
facebook
Pueblo County Extension - FCS

If you have a facility for which you seek an accommodation, please notify CSU Extension at 719-583-6566 at least five (5) business days in advance of the event. Colorado State University Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating. Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES
Creating Healthy & Sustainable Familieswww.ext.colostate.edu