



ADVANCING THE LEGACY

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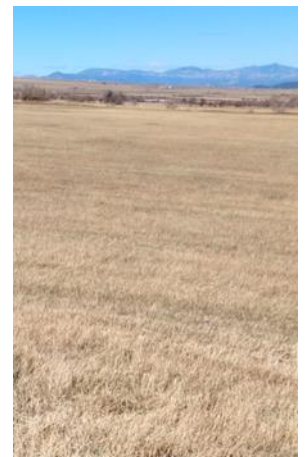
WEBINAR Highlights – Drought Resilient Forages

Recorded December 20, 2022

Presenter: Don Hajar, Pawnee Buttes Seed Co., Greeley, CO (www.PawneeButtesSeed.com)

Sod-bound conditions:

- Mountain pastures can vary in productivity from 3 – 5 T/ac down to 0.5 T/ac.
- Management, grazing impact and pressure can accelerate how fast Smooth Brome and Bluegrass create sod-bound conditions.
- Inter-seeding into Smooth Brome generally fails because the brome eventually crowds out the newly planted grasses.
- Fertilization and aeration are not very effective at overcoming sod-bound conditions.
- Starting over (killing the existing stand) is the only reliable way to eliminate the sod-forming grasses and get a new stand of more desirable grasses established.
- Spraying with herbicides typically does not fully kill the old sod-bound stand. Plowing, disking or roto-tilling followed by seed-bed preparation is typically needed.
- It may be a multi-year approach that involves planting an annual crop (ex. oats) for a year or two. The sod-forming grasses can be sprayed if they start coming back. New seed can be planted into the annual crop stubble.
- Companion crops such as rye or oats can protect newly planted grass or legumes from wind damage and then be harvested to allow the new forage plants to flourish.
- Cover crops can be fall planted and spring harvested / killed in preparation for spring re-seeding.



Drought-tolerant grasses for grazing and haying (non-sod forming):

- Cool Season: Pubescent, Intermediate and Slender Wheatgrass, Meadow brome, Russian wildrye, tall wheatgrass.
- Warm Season: Indiangrass, Big Bluestem, Switchgrass, Sideoats grama, Sand bluestem, prairie sandreed.
- All the species listed above are nutritious, palatable and drought-resilient if managed properly.
- Cool season species will do better at elevations west of the Front Range.

Basics:

- There is no magic grass. Balance between palatability and productivity and adaptability.
- Irrigate as uniformly and efficiently as possible.
- Leave forage cover standing in the fall to protect forage health and increase winter moisture capture and retention.
- Burning should be avoided as it removes cover and loses valuable carbon.