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Writing a Range Plan and a Ranch Drought Plan

Has the stress and worry of the present drought caused you to question the way in which you make management decisions on the grazing lands you operate? If your grazing lands or pastures could talk, would they answer the question the same as you?

Over the past couple of growing seasons, statements often heard are "I don't like the way my pastures look" or "I sure have had an increase in weedy-type plants" since the drought has been in place. Both are indications that we are starting to question the impact of our decisions or are at least concerned about the plant communities we have responsibility for managing.

With droughts which have staying power like this current one, the stress to both the land and the manager can accumulate. This leaves one hopefully asking the question, "How can I pre-decide actions to take when these conditions arise or persist?"

The answer to that question is to gain a better understanding of how climate and plant communities interact with one another, and when do I need to act on pre-decided management decisions based upon observations?

The Kansas Graziers Association along with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Kansas Farmers Union will be hosting two one-day drought plan writing workshops, in late August:

Monday 8/26: NRCS Office at 3020 W. 18th, Emporia

Tuesday 8/27: NRCS Conference Center at 747 Duvall, Salina

Presenters include: Kansas NRCS Range Specialists David Kraft, Dwayne Rice and Doug Spencer. Also added to the program are experienced ranchers Jane Koger (at Emporia) and Ted Alexander (at Salina) who have developed and implemented drought plans that have greatly benefited their ranches.

Attendees will be encouraged to:

- Identify critical decision dates at their ranch location;
- Pinpoint decisions which they can make before actual drought conditions are present; and
- Seek the development of a ranch forage inventory which is the benchmark for fine tuning all decisions on the ranch.

Each workshop will begin at 9:30 a.m. and finish mid-afternoon. There is no cost for this workshop. Lunch will not be provided; a break at noon is scheduled.

Space is limited, so please RSVP. Visit the Amazing Grazing blog for project info, event details and to RSVP: kansasgraziers.blogspot.com. For information contact Mary at kfu.mary@gmail.com or call 785-562-8726.

The Amazing Grazing project is a collaboration between the Kansas Graziers Association and the

Kansas Farmers Union. Project collaborators include Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition, National Resources Conservation Service, Kansas State Research and Extension, and Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops. Funding for this project is provided by the North Central Risk Management Education Center and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.