



EXTENSION

Drought and Forage Conditions

Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

One-third of the U.S. is in drought, predominantly in the western half of the country. Only about seven percent of the country is in the worst drought categories (D3-D4), but 26 percent is in D1 and D2 drought and another 21 percent of the country is abnormally dry (D0). Table 1 shows the corresponding pasture condition ratings at the end of August. Nationally, 46 percent of the pastures are in poor and very poor condition with just 22 percent in good to excellent condition. The western region (West) has 50 percent of pastures in poor to very poor condition followed closely by the Great Plains (GP) and Southern Plains (SP) each with 42 percent of pastures in poor to very poor condition. At the current time, 41 percent of beef cows are in states that have at least 40 percent poor to very poor pasture conditions, compared to 19 percent one year ago.

There is no doubt that lack of pasture is creating management challenges in the worst drought areas and likely leading to some regional destocking and relocation of cows. However, it is not clear that drought has resulted in significant net herd liquidation thus far. Beef cow slaughter for the year to date is up 3.3 percent year over year but is down fractionally for the past four weeks.

Poor pasture conditions at the end of the grazing season makes the question of hay supplies more critical going into the fall and winter. USDA provided estimates for alfalfa and other hay production in the August Crop Production report. In total, 2020 alfalfa hay production is estimated to be down 5.9 percent year over year with other hay production is down 0.5 percent compared to last year (Table 1). The reduction in alfalfa hay production is generally more important in the northern half of the country and affects both beef and dairy cows.

In the western region, both alfalfa and other hay production are down year over year and, combined with the poor pasture conditions suggest the biggest regional challenges in the coming months (Table 1). The western region has just over 10 percent of the total beef cow herd. The Corn Belt (CB) region also has year over year decreases in both alfalfa and other hay production. However, pasture conditions are substantially better in the Corn Belt compared to regions farther west. Crop aftermath is likely a more significant component of total forage supplies in the CB region, which represents nearly 15 percent of the total beef cow herd. The Great Plains and Southern Plains regions combined, have over 50 percent of the beef cow herd and have reduced 2020 alfalfa hay production with small year over year increases other hay production. These two regions are vast and vary widely with conditions ranging from very good to very poor.

USDA reported July alfalfa hay prices of \$174/ton, down from \$179/ton in June and \$183/ton one year ago. Only six states reported year over year higher prices in July. Other hay prices in July were \$137/ton, up from \$128/ton in June and higher year over year compared to \$134/ton last year. (Cont. Pg. 5)

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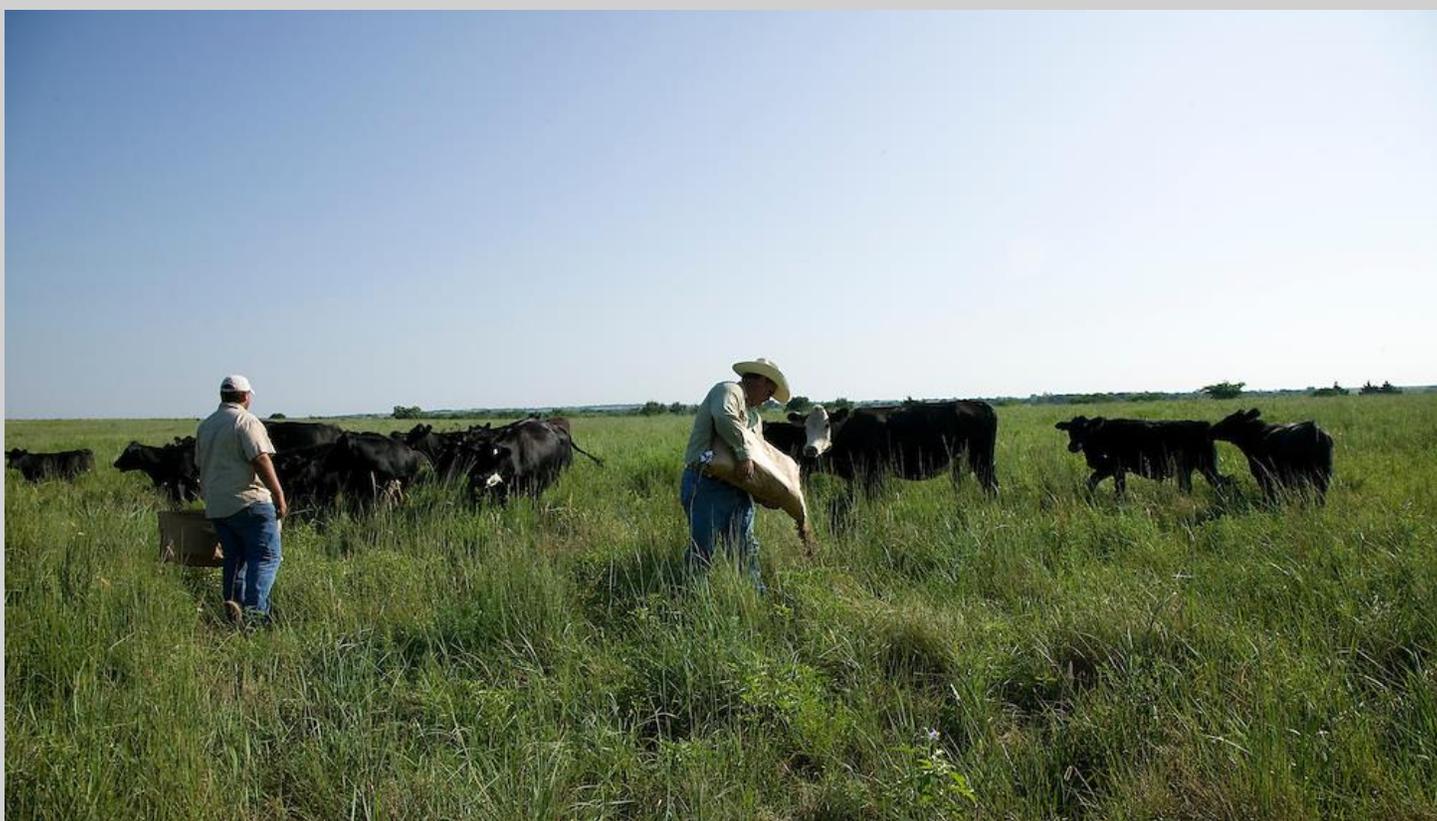
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Should I Spray Pasture Weeds in September?

Brian C. Pugh, Area Agronomy Specialist

This is usually the time of year when I begin getting calls about controlling summer weeds in pasture. At this period of the year, evenings are beginning to cool off which entices producers to spend more time assessing their pastures and making plans for the winter-feeding period. Couple this with summer weeds that have reached the pinnacle of their growth and are in full seed production mode and many realize the full extent of their weed problem which has went unnoticed. So what should we do?

Can I spray my sericea lespedeza now?

If you are battling sericea lespedeza, now is a great time to spray. Long-term OSU research

has shown that metsulfuron methyl at 0.4 oz/Acre is an excellent control method for sericea when it is in the bloom stage of production. This chemical was once marketed as Cimarron but is now sold as generics in the form of Plotter, Patriot, MSM 60 and others. It is a great option to have in the toolbox because these generics at the rate of 0.4 oz will cost a producer around \$1.50 per acre for chemical costs! There are currently no other herbicide options that offer the potential control level of "MSM", either alone or in tank mixes, at this low of input cost. Again, ideal timing is from flower bud initiation through full flowering. Don't expect one application to eliminate the stand

as many hard seeds will emerge in future years.

What about other brushy species like blackberry, oaks, elms, etc.?

Unfortunately, the ideal time for optimum chemical control of these species is past for the growing season. For dense stands requiring broadcast applications, most of these woody species are best controlled in late winter with soil applied herbicides such as tebuthiuron (Spike) or in the June/July timeframe if using a foliar product such as triclopyr (Remedy), picloram (Tordon) or a combination of these products with 2,4-D. At this point, many producers ask if they can clip or "brushhog" the offending brush down to release fall grass growth. (Continued on Pg. 4)

Pasture Weed Control in September (Cont.)

Our standard answer is this is not a good decision if optimum control of the brush is your goal. Clipping these plants will reduce your control next year and therefore they should be left alone. The ideal strategy is to be prepared to spray these species when the proper time of application rolls around next year and you will be much happier with the outcome. If you absolutely have to do something this year, then based on the excellent soil moisture for the summer and lack of stress hardening, a herbicide application would still be preferable over clipping the plants down.

Back to the original question, what about spraying those summer weeds that have exploded across our pastures?

These could be members of the ragweed family, marshelder, bitter sneezeweed, broomweed, cocklebur, woolly croton, etc. The short answer is this might be the exception to the don't clip rule. If we were to spray these species now, it would require some of our strongest pasture products (highest cost per acre) to achieve optimum control because of the advanced stage of maturity. Most of these plants would still be able to undergo grain fill and produce viable seed for next year. It also could take 7-21 days to see complete brownout (depending on chemical) and release the grass underneath for active fall growth. The skeletons themselves could be at a sufficient density to continue to inhibit grass regeneration, not to mention limit the accessibility by the grazing animal to grass underneath the canopy of weeds.

How can clipping these weeds help our fall grass production?

Most of these weed species are in active reproductive growth in September and are very day length sensitive. The shortened days "tell" the plant that its' life cycle is nearing completion and the time for active growth is past. What this means to you is that by clipping at this stage, most of these plants will regrow very little in comparison to our desirable grasses. This removes the canopy of the weeds and any mature low-quality grass that could be present and allows new, high quality regrowth to take its place. Usually, clipping no sooner than the last week of August will shift the preference of regrowth back to the grass species within a pasture.

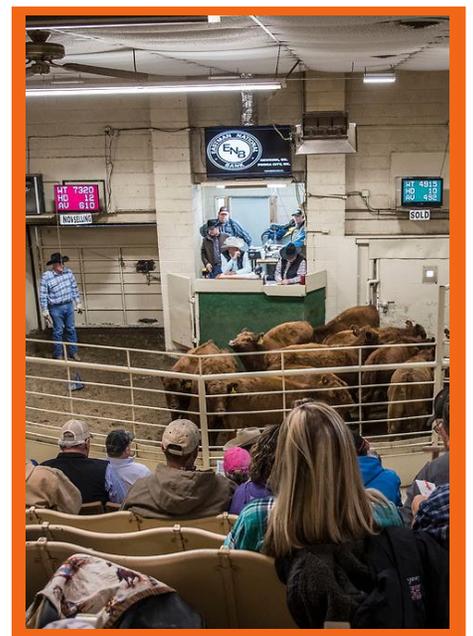
From an economic standpoint, the lower equipment application costs for herbicides (\$6/Acre) is not enough to offset the higher costs of running a "brushhog" (\$10-12/acre) due to the increased chemical cost necessary for optimum control (\$8.50/acre).

UPCOMING EVENTS and DATES

August - November 2020 –Master Gardener Volunteer Training
Wednesdays from 9a.m.-2p.m.
Pioneer Technology Center, Ponca City, OK

October 1, 2020 – Kay County Master Gardener's Monthly Meeting
9:30a.m.-10:30a.m.
First Thursday of Every Month
Cann Memorial Gardens, Ponca City, OK
(Could be moved to Zoom if guidelines change)

November 21st – OQBN Vac-45 Sale
Southern Plains Livestock Auction Inc., Blackwell, OK
60 Day Wean Date – Sept. 22nd
45 Day Wean Date – Oct. 7th



GARDEN TIPS FOR SEPTEMBER!

David Hillock, State Master Gardener Coordinator

Landscape

- Watch for fall specials at garden centers and nurseries since fall is a great time for planting many ornamentals.
- Choose spring flowering bulbs as soon as available.
- Plant cool-season annuals like pansies, ornamental cabbage or kale, snapdragons and dusty miller when temperatures begin to cool.
- Watch for and control any late infestations of tree webworms.
- Twig girdler insects should be controlled if large numbers of small branches of elms, pecans, or persimmons are uniformly girdled from the tree and fall to the ground.
- Begin to reduce the amount of light on outside tropical houseplants by placing them under shade trees before bringing them indoors for the winter.

Vegetables

- You have all of September to plant cool-season vegetables like spinach, leaf lettuce, mustard and radishes, and until the middle of September to plant rutabagas, Swiss chard, garlic and turnips.

Lawn

- Last nitrogen fertilizer application of the year on warm-season grasses should be applied no later than September 15. (HLA-6420)
- Winter broadleaf weeds like dandelion will begin to emerge in late September, which is also the best time to control them with a 2, 4-D type herbicide.
- If pre-emergent control of winter-annual weeds (henbit, chickweed, annual bluegrass, etc.) is desired in lawns, the application should be completed by the second week of September. *Note: Do not treat areas that will be seeded in the fall.*
- Continue bermudagrass spray program with glyphosate products for areas being converted over to tall fescue this fall.
- Plan to seed bluegrass, fescue or ryegrass as needed in shady areas in mid- to late-September. Fall is the best time to establish cool-season lawns. (HLA-6419)
- White grub damage can become visible this month. Apply appropriate soil insecticide if white grubs are a problem. Water product into soil. (EPP-7306)

A Second Crop

Remember there are several cool-season vegetables that can still be planted throughout the month of September for a fall/winter crop of fresh produce. Plant veggies that grow rapidly, such as lettuce, spinach, mustard, radish, beet, collard, Swiss chard, turnip, kohlrabi, and kale. Onion, garlic, and leek are also planted now, but won't be ready to harvest until late spring to early June of next year. If you can get broccoli and cauliflower seedlings, plant those as well.

The key to survival for these cool-season plants is to keep the plants cool and moist until temperatures begin to drop. You can purchase shade cloth specifically for this purpose, or use other materials found around the house. Old window screens, scrap wood staked vertically, extra pieces of landscape fabric etc. work well in reducing temperatures and dry winds that can exhaust young plants. Grass clippings sprinkled lightly on top of young seedlings about 1/8-inch thick, cools the soil, reduces evaporation, and suppress weed seeds on the soil surface.

Drought and Forage Conditions (Cont.)

Nine states reported year over year increases July other hay prices. Nevada and North Dakota were the only states in July with both alfalfa and other hay prices higher compared to last year.

Table 1. Regional Pasture Conditions and Hay Production

Region	Pasture Condition % August 31, 2020					Alfalfa Hay Production 2020	Other Hay Production 2020	% of Beef Cows
	VP	P	F	G	E	% change annual	% change annual	Jan 2020
West	22.3	27.3	34.4	15.1	1.0	-8.2	-6.9	10.3
GP	16.1	25.4	35.3	20.4	2.7	-4.1	+2.7	29.0
SP	12.5	29.0	35.5	22.0	1.0	-4.9	+1.9	21.4
CB	6.6	15.8	32.4	38.6	6.6	-5.3	-6.5	14.8
SE	1.7	6.7	26.7	56.9	8.1	-1.5	+4.0	23.3
NE	11.9	18.7	30.6	34.2	4.6	-10.1	-21.7	1.4
US	18.0	28.0	32.0	19.0	3.0	-5.9	-0.5	

VP=Very Poor; P=Poor; F=Fair; G=Good; E=Excellent

West = AZ, CA, ID, NM, NV, OR, WA, UT

GP = CO, KS, MT, NE, ND, SD, WY

SP = OK, TX

CB = IL, IA, IN, MI, MN, MO, OH, WI

SE = AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV

NE = CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT

Shannon's Kay County Corner

Kay County OSU Extension on 100.7 KPNC and 99.3 KLOR Friday Mornings at 7:40a.m.

We have been lucky enough to join KPNC and KLOR on Friday mornings around 7:40a.m. Kay County Educators will be talking about all types of events and timely information with the Beverly Cantrell and Sean in the Morning. Give us a listen, and let us know what you want us to talk about for upcoming shows.

Kay County OSU Extension YouTube Channel is up and Running

If you have not had a chance to check out our videos on YouTube, please look. Right now, there are videos on native pasture flowers, barbed wire fence tips, and fruit tree diseases. We plan to put more subjects up throughout the year, and are always up for more suggestions!

Kay County OSU Extension YouTube Channel Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8PF4BmW9J4fslUsidEvEFw/featured>

Kay-Osage Prescribed Burn Association Looking for New Members

I had the pleasure of becoming a member of the K-O Burn Association, and burning ~30 acres of pasture that had a sericea lespedeza problem on August 2nd. Growing season burns are effective up until Early November, if applied correctly. By paying the \$25 annual membership fee, you have access to spray rigs, signs, rakes, shovels, and a wealth of knowledge on burn procedure. If you have a piece of ground you need, or want to burn; I highly encourage you to contact the Kay County OSU Extension Office at 580-362-3194 to learn more about prescribed burning.

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