

INTERSEEDING: a drought opportunity

by Gary Hall

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When we experience a natural disaster, thinking of opportunities isn't the first thing that pops into our mind. The drought certainly has left a mark and that mark can be considered an opportunity. With the thinning of grasses in our range and hay meadows there has been an opportunity presented.

You may want to consider interseeding a more desirable grass mixture on those thin stands. You might be afforded the opportunity to improve your range with new plants that don't have to compete with a healthy stand of grass. With the snow and moisture this may be the opportune time for planting some grass.

Be sure to analyze the grasses that are still present to see if interseeding would be to your advantage. If the current plants are still alive there may be no need to seed. Take a good audit of your grass stand. I can help with that audit or the NRCS will help out too.

The best time to interseed is in the spring prior to the start of irrigation, late summer following haying of heavy grazing or late fall prior to the ground freezing. Interseeding is usually done with a grass drill without destroying grass that is currently established.

Joe Brummer, CSU forage specialist, provided some ideas on cool season grasses to use for interseeding in our area. Some grasses he mentioned for irrigated sites included orchardgrass, meadow brome, smooth brome, creeping meadow foxtail, timothy, tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. For drier sites he suggested crested wheatgrass, hybrid wheatgrass, intermediate wheatgrass, Russian wildrye, western wheatgrass, mountain brome and Arizona fescue. Be sure to use a mixture and don't mix warm and cool season grasses.

If you would like more information on these grasses and interseeding, contact the Custer County Extension Office at (729) 783-2514 or your local Extension Office.

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