

## MANAGEMENT NOTES November through February



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It's fall and time to think about fall and winter management. As fall moves into winter it is probably hot and dry if the forecasters are right. Regardless of what the weather has done since August, major damage has been done to the rangeland and woodlands in Texas. In addition, wildlife has suffered and many populations have been declining. Blame it on lack of water, reduced natural forage and feed, heat and all the other things that drought and heat bring. Needless to remind most of you, once we get good rain and see recovering start, it will take a long time for the vegetation to recover to what was there or maybe never.

How has your land resource withstood the ravages of summer and the drought? Be sure to evaluate the current use to determine if there will be adequate resources for fall and winter use. Hope you have been actively evaluating and managing your resources and finances in 2011. Also, don't forget to adjust your 2011 management, begin making and adjusting your plans for 2012, and above all, start updating your five-year plan.

Here are some points to consider in the next few months.

- As always, water should always be your highest priority. Without adequate water, production is difficult at best.
  - Continue monitoring your water resources for availability and quality. Develop options if sources appear to be less than optimal. Continually evaluate water needs for the rest of the year with an eye on the potential for 2012 needs. Be prepared to move animals to where water is available if possible.
  - If extreme temperatures and drought continue, check water sources more often.
- Review rainfall records for the past 12 months, the forecast for the next three to six months, and determine if the current soil moisture availability is adequate for the rest of the fall and winter seasons. Even if current soil moisture is fair to good, projected plant growth may be below average if drought conditions have continued as some have predicted. If drought conditions do continue, prepare for below average growth in 2012.
- Evaluate the status of the fall grazing and browse use. The amount of use on highly desirable species is critical especially during drought. If use was heavy this year, plan to reduce the pressure if possible. Plan to reduce 2012 rates to allow the preferred species to recover and improve next year.
- Routinely check and repair or replace, where possible, all improvements such as fences, water sources and equipment.
- Continue analyzing financial data for 2011. Evaluate and adjust the five-year management and economic plans based on current and projected weather plus current and projected economic conditions. Start finalizing the 2012 management and economic plans and update the five-year plans.
- Evaluate 2011 broadleaf and woody plant control sites and develop 2012 management plans.
- Finalize the evaluation of prescribed burn areas for 2011 against the objectives. Begin preparing plans for their management in 2012. Start identifying and planning potential 2012 burns areas.
- Continue the management for 2011 seeded areas to insure long term management is accomplished. Evaluate and plan the management requirements for 2012.
- Finalize plans for any seeding opportunities for 2012 and begin preparing for seeding.
- Update your land resource records through new photos or other means.
  - If you haven't started a land resource record, start now. If you use photographs, establish points that you can return to and photograph at least once each year.
- Remember, manage for today and the future based on what you have documented, what is currently happening and what is planned or predicted for the future. Include how you expect weather, economic conditions and your personal life to interact. Management is not easy!
- If you haven't developed a business management plan, please get started! 