

# MANAGEMENT NOTES

July through October



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The old adage about Texas weather seems to be true this year. You know, “stick around a little while and the weather will change.” That’s what’s happening this year. We came through the winter much warmer and wetter than average, and after late March it looks like the rain may have shut off.

Looking at the Drought Monitor on the internet, the eastern part of Texas is doing pretty well moisture wise. However, the rest of Texas still remains with dry to extreme drought conditions. The weather prognosticators have given us various ideas of what they think will happen over the next few months. Most are normal to dry.

*From the standpoint of management, we need to look at the future with an eye to the past. The plants have been stressed for one to three years in many areas but look now like they’re really doing well in those areas where they have received good moisture. In the eastern to central parts of the state, the wildflower crop was very good. However, by late April, many areas were starting to show the effects of a dry season.*

Managing for this year needs to think in terms of what the plants need to recover and build back. They have been stressed for one to three years depending on where you are. Come to think of it, you’ve probably been stressed too.

## Some Ideas to Consider

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

- Water is the most important factor to consider in the months to come. That is water for animals and the plants. Continually monitoring water for all uses will be essential.
- From the animal’s standpoint, regularly evaluate the availability and potential for water sources to supply what is needed. You should have ready alternate plans on how you will handle the need for additional water or water sources. Being prepared will make it much easier if you run short of water.
- During high temperature periods over the summer having adequate cool water available for animals will help them perform better. The water temperature is part of the concern. If the water can be maintained below 75°, it will allow the animals to perform better.
- Along the same lines, continually review your rainfall records for at least the past 12 to 18 months as well as the three to six month outlooks as they are published. Along with this monitor, check soil moisture to see if there is adequate moisture for future growth. If the soil moisture is dropping have plans in place on how stocking will change.
- At least monthly, check browsing and grazing levels of the vegetation to ensure that the preferred species are not being over utilized. Remember, if there was heavy use in 2011, limiting this year’s use will help the plants recover quicker.