

Contact: Bruce Fickenscher
CSU Extension Agent
Range and Livestock Management
719-438-5321
Email: bruce.fickenscher@colostate.edu

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**HOW CAN YOU TELL WHERE YOU ARE GOING, IF YOU
DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE – OR WHERE YOU
HAVE BEEN?**

SOUTHEAST AREA: A simple question! One we should probably all ask ourselves once in a while; especially rangeland managers! Is the primary “crop” grass or livestock? Many would argue that they are “cattlemen” – first and foremost! But, do your livestock perform if you do not have the grass to feed them? A lot of questions; let’s consider some responses.

First let’s consider the “have been”. Native rangeland, traditionally, was a very diverse environment. There was a variety of cool and warm season grasses to sustain grazing animals. Problems developed because many of the most nutritious of the plant species do not withstand repeated grazing, defoliation if you will. Therefore, because of continuous grazing, year after year, many of these nutritious, high tonnage species are slim to none on the majority of modern rangelands. Yes we have buffalo grass and

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**Southeast Area
Extension**

**County Extension
Offices**

Baca County
772 Colorado St.
Springfield, CO 81073
719-523-6971

Bent County
1499 Amb. Thompson Blvd.
Las Animas, CO 81054
719-456-0764

Cheyenne County
425 S. 7th W.
P. O. Box 395
Cheyenne Wells, CO 80810
719-767-5716

Crowley County
603 North Main St.
Courthouse Annex
Ordway, CO 81063
719-267-5243

Kiowa County
1305 Goff
P. O. Box 97
Eads, CO 81036
719-438-5321

Otero County
411 N. 10th
P. O. Box 190
Rocky Ford, CO 81067
7190-254-7608

Prowers County
1001 S. Main
Lamar, CO 81052
719-336-7734

blue grama; very nutritious species in their own right. But how many have seen viable stands of native sideoats grama, big bluestem, little bluestem, green needle grass, and others, that actually produce more pounds of forage – i.e. – more feed? Good background information can be found in the Colorado State University fact sheet – *Grass Growth and Response to Grazing* –which can be accessed on the internet at: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06108.html>

Now, where “are” we? The only way we have to know where we are with rangeland is through monitoring our production. A grain producer can measure the amount of grain yield; range producers should measure tons of forage produced and species of grasses available. Monitoring does not have to be complicated, just consistent! Again, there are several good publications on the CSU Beef Team website (<http://csubeef.com/>) and the “Cattleman’s Library” to help you get started. We need to keep in mind that we must know “what” we are looking at before we can “understand” what we are seeing! Your local CSU Extension office has more information to help you get started as well.
