

BACK AT THE RANCH

Summer at the Ranch

SUMMER HAS FINALLY REACHED THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT AND THE TRM RANCH. THE MONTH OF JULY WAS HOT AND DRY. THE GREEN PASTURES AND HAY MEADOWS OF JUNE QUICKLY RIPENED, AND AN OCCASIONAL RAIN WOULD KEEP THE RANCH IN GOOD SHAPE. STOCK WATER AT PRESENT IS STILL SUFFICIENT.

The cattle on the ranch are in excellent shape and we had a fairly uncomplicated calving season with 98.3% success ratio. The calves should weigh well this fall, but cattle prices are in a decline in comparison to recent years. Hopefully, this market will gain strength in the coming months. The TRM Ranch cattle which are now on the U.S. Forest Service allotment are on good feed, and yet water will likely become a commodity in August.

We concluded a soil analysis and soil nutrient test on our hay ground last fall and have tailored the fertilizer use to the specific needs of soil here on the TRM Ranch and Research Center. As a result of these tests, we have added potassium and sulfur to the pre-existing nitrogen/phosphate mix. The positive response is clearly visible. In addition, we have upgraded the irrigation system, as well as water use. By turning the water on at an earlier date, I was able to check the feasibility of fertilizing the upper reaches of the large alfalfa field in the future. I plan on flooding these fields in April, despite the freeze-downs that occur in May and on into June. It is now necessary to start increasing our hay base, due to our increasing cattle numbers here at the TRM Ranch.

Herbicide use

on the ranch will continue, plus the TRM Ranch has also introduced an additional biological toxic weed control. Currently, this biological control has targeted three plant species with their specific insects:

1. Canada Thistle - Seed head weevil and stem gall fly
2. Musk Thistle - Seed head weevil - *Rhinocyllus conicus*
3. Leafy Spurge - Spurge root boring flea beetle

These insects were chosen for

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their over-wintering capabilities; thus next year they should re-emerge and begin infecting the new plants of 1995. This biological control was established to reduce

herbicide use on the TRM Ranch, especially along aquatic and riparian zones.

Most of the elk and mule deer have pulled off the ranch and have moved into the Lewis & Clark National Forest and Bob Marshall Wilderness areas. About 80 head of elk remain on the TRM Ranch and these young bulls, cows and calves are seen quite frequently.

It is also interesting to note that beaver are making a comeback along Dupuyer Creek and its tributaries. Since the 1964 and 1975 floods this comeback has been slow. After 30 years, this devastated stream has repaired itself to the point where the beaver population is finally starting to increase. This is largely due to the re-establishment of cottonwoods and willow species along this important riparian corridor. As the beaver increase - controlled management will become necessary, but I have always enjoyed the company of a beaver family. To watch their work and assess their progress during the summer months, as a beaver family collectively prepares for winter, is quite a sight to behold. The sharp "slap" of a tail on a cold fall morning can be as exhilarating as a bugling elk; both vividly representing a continuance of nature's cycle. On a similar note,

wolf tracks were observed on a game trail, superimposed over a set of cow/calf elk tracks. I haven't seen any recent evidence of this wolf, but it's presence is harder to confirm during the drier summer months.



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MANAGER
Theodore Roosevelt
Memorial Ranch

THE BEAVER CONTINUES TO MAKE A COMEBACK ON DUPUYER CREEK AT THE TRM RANCH. ONE FLOOD FROM THIRTY YEARS AGO AND ANOTHER FLOOD TWENTY YEARS AGO DEVASTATED THE CREEK.

