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Forage Fact # 16

Management Brainstorming: Taking a Closer Look

Management Planning

1. Research your farm
2. Set goals
3. Write a flexible plan
4. Change the plan as the season progresses

“Just talking about a problem with my peers helps to generate solutions.”

John Kendrew

Successful Management

1. Plan
2. Monitor
3. Replan

“Success without management and management without planning cannot be accomplished.”

Grant Lastiwka

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Strolling Through the Ranch

This summer, John Kendrew and I walked through an alfalfa hayfield to discuss the irregularities in its growth. John wasn't looking for a quick temporary fix. He said "I want to manage my field and ranch for the long-term."

This long-term suggestion triggered a flurry of conversation about John's ranch management plans and goals. We exchanged ideas, possibilities and strategies to reach these goals.

Ranchers go through a similar pattern every year, creating and rearranging their management plan. There are many things to factor into the plan and many options to explore.



Sandra and John in his hayfield, are discussing the irregular growth in the field and the possible influences on this unhealthy field.

Factors of Ranching

During our discussion, we touched on several factors that influence the management on the Kendrew's farm.

- Ranch goals
- Soil type
- Pasture species
- Pasture rejuvenation
- Plant growth & health
- Plant nutrition
- Watering systems
- Fencing
- Summer feeding
- Winter feeding
- Economics

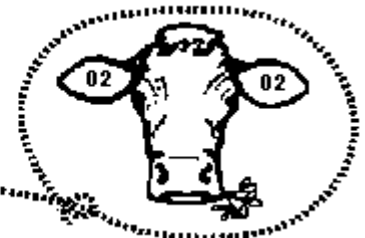
These factors influences their seeding, grazing, haying, fertilizing, herd size, and the level of management the ranch needs to operate successfully.

4 Step Planning Process

John and I went over the planning process during our conversation, starting with the background of his farm, then progressed through the other steps.

1. RESEARCH your farm
 - * How many acres & head of livestock
 - * What is soil fertility
 - * What is financial situation
2. Set this years GOALS
 - * Herd Size
 - * Desired field & pasture yields
 - * Length of summer & winter feeding
3. Write a FLEXIBLE PLAN
 - * Based on research
 - * Identify strategies to reach goals
 - * Identify alternatives to reach goals
4. UPDATE plan
 - * Revisit during the season
 - * Compare reality to plan
 - * Adjust plan for the unexpected

Peace River Forage Association
of British Columbia



Solutions:

- * Manage your manure
- * Fertilize
- * Custom manage problem areas
- * Change the use of the field
- * Change the timing of pressure on field

Innovative Ideas to Consider:

- * Swath / bale grazing
- * Anhydrous/protein supplement on straw
- * Straw & bale feeding
- * Stockpiling forage to graze off pasture late fall early spring
- * Managed grazing
- * Summer & winter remote watering systems (Kelln.Frostfree Nose Pump, CAP)
- * Feeding to compliment cows trimesters
- * Electric fencing



John & Dr. Jodie (Kendrew)
Glennon generating solutions.

Identify the Situation

John was not meeting the yield goal that he had set for this particular alfalfa hay field. His 2 year old alfalfa hay field does not have uniform growth. So to understand and help change the field yield to meet the desired goal we used the 4 step planning process.

1. Research

To determine what could be causing the irregular growth in his field we consider factors that could influence the situation:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Soil | 4. Weather |
| - Soil type | - Dry / wet year |
| - Fertility | |
| 2. Geography | 5. History |
| - Drainage | - Previous crops |
| - snowmelt, runoff | - Past management |
| 3. Forage varieties | |

We also went through the field history in detail and examined past crops, fertilizers, and management actions, such as deep plowing, or sub-surfacing. We examined the drainage and landscape for frost pockets and other irregularities.

2. Goals

John's goal is to establish a healthy alfalfa stand with longevity of stand and yields comparable to his other fields.

3. John's Flexible Plan

1. To achieve goals through long-term management.
2. Manage the fields to match landscape and soil types.
3. Take paired soil & tissue tests of areas with good and poor growth.
4. Examine the water flow in the field
5. Look into nutrient management.



Soil sampling at Kendrew's to determine if irregular growth of alfalfa caused by soil fertility.

4. Updating the Plan

After the soil and tissue results are back and they have been interpreted, he will have an idea if soil fertility is the problem or if we need to dig deeper.

"A big part of finding a solution is sounding ideas off with other individuals. Just talking about a problem with my peers helps to generate solutions," said John Kendrew.



The Kendrew's in partnership with PRFA of BC have recently installed a Frost Free Nose pump to meet their winter & summer watering needs.

Compiled by: John Kendrew and Julie Robinson

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