



July 18th, 2018



Re: 2017/18 Sierra Nevada Foothill Annual Forage Production

The University of California Cooperative Extension monitors annual rangeland forage production throughout the foothills to accurately gauge the total forage production on an annual basis. Data is gathered at eight locations throughout the central Sierra Nevada foothills in El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne counties.

For the 2017/18 season, data showed that annual peak forage production (gathered May 29th, 2018) throughout the four-county area was variable (see table). Three locations (Copperopolis, Mountain Ranch and Lone), had production values similar to their long-term averages. The El Dorado, Sutter Creek and Keystone sites saw increases of 21%, 29%, and 92% respectively. The only site that saw a considerable decrease in forage was the Paloma site with a 21% reduction. The variability in production across the region is likely due to the amount and timing of precipitation and the amount of residual dry matter left last Fall.

Throughout the region we continue to see an increase in the number of noxious weeds on annual rangeland. Medusahead (*Taeniantherum caput-medusae*) is becoming more widespread and in some pastures, it represents up to 80% of the total biomass. Medusahead is a non-desirable forage species and most livestock will selectively graze around it late in the season. In addition to Medusahead another noxious grass that is starting to become more abundant across the region is barb goatgrass (*Aegilops triuncialis*). Barb goatgrass much like medusahead matures much later in the season and will stay green after many of the desirables forages have died. Like medusahead it is highly unpalatable and most livestock will avoid it. Over the past few years, barb goatgrass has expanded its range at an alarming rate. There are many strategies that can be implemented to help control these weeds. The University recently published a management guide for the control of medusahead and barb goatgrass. They can be downloaded at:

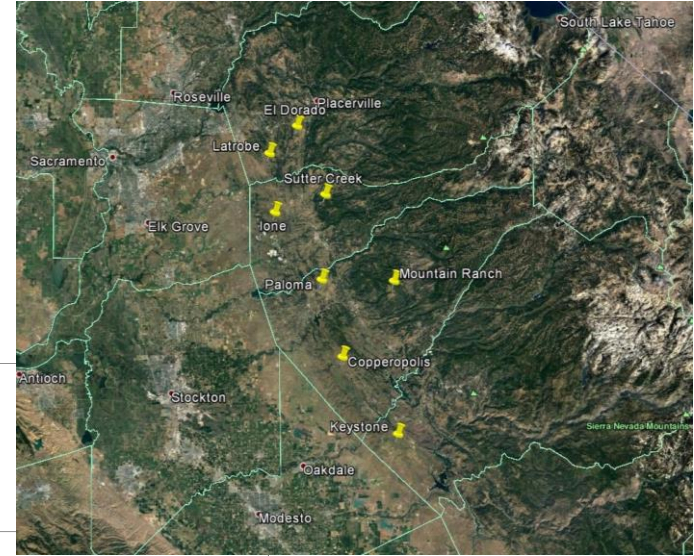
http://wric.ucdavis.edu/publications/MedusaheadManagementGuide_pub_2014.pdf
<https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8315.pdf>

We hope this evaluation of the 2017-18 forage production is helpful. If you have any questions, please let us know. **Thank you for your continued collaboration on this project.**

Sincerely,

Scott Oneto, Farm Advisor

Bill Frost, Emeritus Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor



**Sierra Nevada
Annual Range Forage Production
2017-18 Season**

