



July 26, 2016



Re: 2015/16 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.

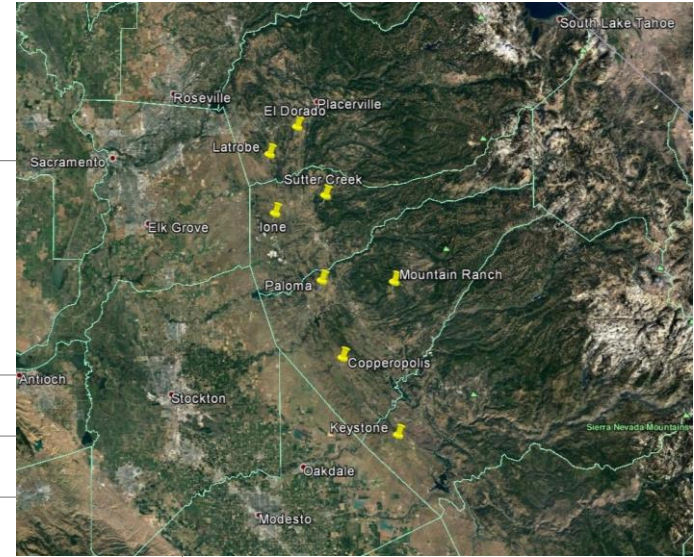
The return of average precipitation and a mild winter resulted in above normal forage production across the region. For the 2015/16 season, our data showed that annual peak forage production (gathered June 1st, 2016) throughout the four county area was above the long term average at each site. The Mountain Ranch site hit a new long-term record at 8,310 pounds/acre. The high productivity at this site can be attributed to the above average season and the site burned during the fall of 2015 in the Butte fire. The Copperopolis and Sutter Creek locations reached the 2nd highest production on record and the Paloma, Ione and Latrobe locations all reached the 3rd highest level on record. Lastly the El Dorado and Keystone site were also very productive and reached the 4th highest level at each of their respective locations.

We continue to see an increase in the amount of noxious weeds on annual rangeland. Medusahead (*Taeniantherum caput-medusae*) is becoming more widespread and in some pastures it may represent 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. We are seeing increased levels of medusahead in our forage plots. In addition to Medusahead another noxious grass that is starting to become more abundant across the region in barbed goatgrass (*Aegilops triuncialis*). Both of these grasses mature later in the season and are unpalatable to livestock. To date we have not taken into account the amount of non-desirable species in total forage production. However, in the future, we will begin to take this into account so we can better determine desirable versus non-desirable vegetation as it relates to total forage production.

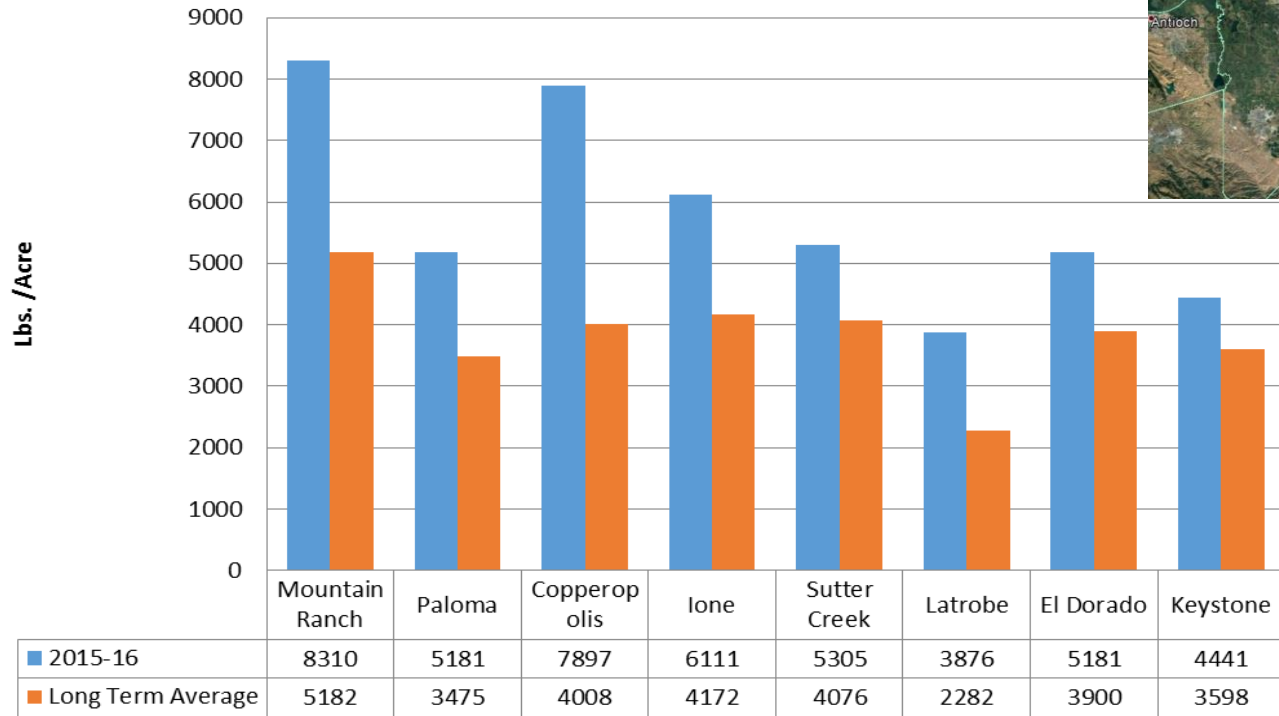
I am enclosing a copy of our forage production figures for the year. I hope this evaluation of the 2015-16 forage production is helpful. If you have any questions, please let me know. ***Thank you for your continued collaboration on this project.***

Sincerely,

Scott Oneto



Sierra Nevada Annual Range Forage Production 2015-16 Season





Annual Range Forage Production Monitoring – 2015/2016

El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne counties

The University of California Cooperative Extension monitors a number of plots throughout the foothills to gather forage production figures on annual rangeland to accurately gauge the total peak standing crop on an annual basis. Data is gathered in early spring (late February/early March) to gauge spring growth and establishment; in late spring (late May/ early June) to measure peak growth; and in the fall to measure residual dry matter (RDM).

Forage Production

<u>Location</u>	<u>Early Season Forage</u> <u>February 10, 2016</u> <u>(lbs. / acre)</u>	<u>Early Season Forage</u> <u>% Gain / Loss of</u> <u>long term avg.</u>	<u>Peak Standing</u> <u>May 15, 2016</u> <u>(lbs. / acre)</u>	<u>Peak Standing</u> <u>% Gain / Loss of</u> <u>long term avg.</u>
<i>Amador County</i>				
Ione	891	-21%	6,111 (3 rd highest on record)	46%
Sutter Creek	800	-32%	5,305 (2 nd highest on record)	30%
<i>Calaveras County</i>				
Copperopolis	1731	59%	7,897 (2 nd highest on record)	97%
Mountain Ranch	677	-31%	8,310 (Highest on record)	60%
Paloma	1987	65%	5,181 (3 rd highest on record)	49%
<i>El Dorado County</i>				
El Dorado	1248	-9%	5,181 (4 th highest on record)	33%
Latrobe	444	-47%	3,876 (3 rd highest on record)	70%
<i>Tuolumne County</i>				
Keystone	978	22%	4,441 (4 th highest on record)	23%

Data provided by UC Cooperative Extension:

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