

Improving Stewardship in Pastures

A hands on demonstration site

The Hotchkiss demonstration plot is specifically designed to help landowners and managers understand and implement stewardship on the land. This grass demonstration provides a hands-on visual approach allowing better understanding and increased exposure to what works best locally.

Situation

It has become increasingly apparent that there is a significant need for education and hands on demonstrations related to irrigated and dryland pasture establishment, renovation, and management for small acreage landowners. Encouraged by the increasing demand and need for quality pasture and hay, small acreage landowners are interested in learning more about specific seed mixes that will grow adequately, increase water conservation practices, meet their domestic livestock needs, reduce weed occurrences, and are suitable for marketable hay production.

Extension's Response

In cooperation with our partners, including the Delta Conservation District, Delta County, CSU Ext., NRCS, and others, grant funds were secured from a variety of sources to install the Demonstration Plot on approximately 2 acres of land in Hotchkiss Colorado. The installation of the irrigation system was completed in the spring of 2014, and the first round of seeding conducted in the spring of 2014. The plot includes (17) common irrigated and (17) dryland species best suited to grow in the local area. The field demonstration site illustrates individual characteristics of grasses and their suitability as pasture and hay for livestock.

This demonstration planting provides visual information and practical lessons for small acreage landowners about which adapted grasses will be adequately established, survive our specific climate, and outcompete invasive weeds in order to improve range and pasture quality to address specific landowner objectives.

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