

Weekly Ag Report
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Good Morning Lassen County! This is Tom Getts from the Cooperative Extension Office with your Weekly Ag Report. Well, it seems like the water is a feast or famine ordeal. Years of drought followed by some really wet weather! My thoughts go out there for all of the people who were impacted by the flooding. Hopefully some of the land has been drying up around your places with the spell of warm weather we have had over the past week. Snowpack levels, as of Monday, are still sitting high and pretty where here in the north state we are at 152 percent of average. Hopefully it doesn't heat up too much to melt the snowpack before it is needed later in the growing season.

With all the moisture and cool weather, many alfalfa fields here in the Honey Lake Valley are just breaking dormancy. This is good news for those of you still planning on doing dormant season herbicide applications with products like Velpar or Dimetric. It is important to get those out before there is too much spring regrowth coming up from alfalfa, as application to non-dormant plants can cause injury.

All plants should be able to take advantage of the moisture in full soil profiles. Which means not only will it be a good year for the crops, but a good year for the weeds, too! There is a University of California Weed Science blog, which has a lot of good information posted about weed work throughout the state. Dr. Joe DiTomaso recently wrote a post about the yellow star thistle populations in '97 and '98, a similar cycle of wet weather. He recalls yellow star thistle plants reaching heights of over six feet that growing season! Now a six foot plant is going to produce a lot of seeds!

It is not just yellow star thistle which will benefit from the moisture, almost all unwanted plants will. Now is the time to go after them! When the annual weeds are small, both physical and chemical control methods work better. Likewise, biennial plants, such as Scotch thistle, are still in the basal rosette growth stage. And spring is the time to target them, before they bolt and send up flowers. Even perennial species like Canada thistle can be targeted in the spring. However, if you have tall white top, wait until it reaches the bud stage to treat it, as research indicates that is the most effective timing. Make sure to follow the label if using any pesticide, as the label is the law! If you have any questions about weeds, feel free to contact me at the Cooperative Extension Office.

Driving around there are a lot of furry creatures waking up and causing mischief. Ground squirrels and rodents are becoming more active with the warming weather. If there was anything good about the flooding this year, it is that hopefully it eliminated some ground squirrel populations. Before you get ready to start trapping, shooting, and baiting, it might be worthwhile checking out the new ground squirrel best management practices website. This page has a plethora of information regarding species identification, range, best management practices, and regulations. It is a pretty nifty website, which has a bit more information than the UC IPM web page. The URL is www.groundsquirrelbmp.com, and will be the second link to pop up if you google "ground squirrel best management practices."

Well, that is it for this week's Ag Report - until next time!