

**2007 END OF SEASON REPORT
LEADBELT ALLOTMENT**

TERM GRAZING PERMIT				AUTHORIZED USE				ACTUAL USE			
NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.	NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.	NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.
860	07/01	09/15	2177	860	07/07	09/21	2177	860	07/07	09/20	2041*

*660 pairs left the allotment on 09/15.

UNIT DATES AND UTILIZATION RESULTS:

ACTUAL GRAZING SCHEDULE			ALLOWABLE USE	ACTUAL USE
UNIT NAME	ON DATE	OFF DATE	RIPARIAN/ BROWSE	RIPARIAN/ BROWSE
Horsethief/Deer Creek	08/17	09/09	50% (4 in)/ 50%	Horsethief Creek: 4 inches/ 44% Deer Creek: 4 inches/ 46%
Leadbelt(Upper/Lower)	07/18	08/16	50% (4 in)/ 50%	Dry Fork Road Y: 4 inches/ 26% Upper Leadbelt: 5 inches/ N/A Lower Leadbelt: 4 inches/ N/A
Upper Camp Creek	09/10	09/20*	50% (4 in)/ 50%	4 inches/ 35%
Lower Camp Creek	07/07	07/17	50% (4 in)/ 50%	Pine Spring: 4 inches/ N/A Camp Spring: 4 inches/ 74%

*Livestock were moved through the Lower Camp Unit on 09/15 & 09/20 to leave the forest.

Allotment inspections were conducted on the following dates: 03/27, 06/09, 06/14, 06/18, 07/11, 07/18, 07/20, 07/23, 07/25, 08/06, 08/15, 08/17, 08/31, 09/17, 09/18, 09/21, 09/27, 10/29, 10/31. Allotment inspections include, long term assessment for vegetation trend, range improvement maintenance checks, cattle location checks and utilization monitoring.

The precipitation information for the District is included in the table below. While this information is collected at the office in Mackay and is not specific to your allotment areas, it does give a good idea of the available moisture on the District. The totals for 2007 are compared to the average total precipitation by month for Mackay from the Desert Research Institute website for 1931-2005. The low precipitation levels and early warm temperatures caused vegetation to mature at a faster rate this year, two to three weeks ahead of normal in many areas. This caused upland vegetation to dry out at a faster rate and made these grasses less desirable to your livestock.

Month	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Total
Precipitation (in inches)	0.03	0.48	0.59	0.48	0.36	1.07	0.17	0.46	0.88	1.19	5.71
Average Precipitation 1931-2005	0.78	0.60	0.61	0.68	1.09	1.34	0.93	0.80	0.67	0.57	8.07

The warmer, drier conditions caused cattle to utilize woody browse species heavier than in normal precipitation years. This use was seen across the district as a whole. A browse standard of 50% is included in your permit and should be watched carefully in the future. While this standard has not been focused on by range specialists in the past because minimal use of woody browse by livestock was observed, browse on willows, aspen, and riparian shrubs is an important consideration especially in dry years. In general, cattle began to shift to woody browse species as the four inch stubble height on grasses and sedges was met which could be used as an indicator for riders/ permittees to move cattle in the future. Using this tool to adjust movement dates could avoid overuse or missing end of season standards for herbaceous and woody species in these riparian areas during years of low precipitation.

Due to dry conditions and limited watering sources, cattle were moved through the allotment more quickly than usual and resulted in cattle leaving the forest 1 to 6 days early. This decision was based on in season use being met along riparian areas and water limitations causing cattle to sit on the streams. Discussions and a field trip with the range specialist have been ongoing to consider locations for conversion of dirt tanks to troughs in order to remedy the water limitations in some areas of the Leadbelt Allotment. The ability of the Forest Service to complete the necessary analysis to install these troughs has yet to be determined and we will notify you if/when we are able to proceed.

As a whole, livestock use levels for 2007 on the Leadbelt Allotment were within acceptable levels for grass and sedge use, with no key areas exceeding the 4 inch use level in your permits. Camp Spring browse level exceeded the 50% use in your permits while Pine Spring and two of the Leadbelt unit key areas did not have browse plants within the criteria to measure browse use. The browse use is measured within 3 feet of the greenline on both sides of the creek with only those plants at 5 feet tall or less being considered for cattle browsing. Some meadows have extensive woody browse away from the greenline that was used at a heavier level and these areas should be watched carefully by permittees and range specialists to prevent unacceptable use in the future. In addition, dry meadows on benches along creeks should be left with patchy use patterns to avoid overuse of these areas. Your range specialist may be placing cages in some of these dry meadows to better gauge growth of vegetation and actual use by livestock in these areas in the future. The full time rider did a good job of keeping the cattle moving and distributed in the appropriate pasture. Riding by permittees was at an acceptable level to complete all of the necessary backriding and cleaning of units that had already been used.

There were several reports of cattle finding their way to the private land in Fish Creek and permittees responded to these reports in a timely manner. Please continue to communicate with Lava Lake to reduce conflicts along allotment and forest/private boundaries. Since a continuous boundary fence does not exist between cattle and sheep allotments, some conflict along this

boundary is expected. Options are being considered and recommendations from permittees are encouraged to reduce this conflict. Any new improvements require written analysis and clearance prior to implementation and there is not a timeline for completion of such documentation.

The Forest Service is in the process of completing an environmental analysis on your allotment and others in Antelope Valley. If you have any questions or comments on the information we are collecting to complete this analysis, please contact your range specialist or the district ranger.