



RUNOFF

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Dave Rose

Hello to one and all across California and Nevada. We have now reached Spring, with the promise of Summer very close at hand.

Though our annual conference was postponed to Spring of 2009, we will be holding our annual business meeting on June 13, 2008 in Davis. Pelayo Alvarez of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition will be there to talk with us about the Coalition's work in California and ways in which our Society can be involved in rangeland conservation. Please see page 2 of this newsletter for more details. I look forward to visiting with many of you to discuss the functioning of our chapter in this current lean budget times. Your opinions and guidance will be critical for us to move forward.

The new Farm Bill has now become law. Our concern about the Farm Bill relates to the levels of funding and assistance for conservation of natural resources on private lands. Private lands are the best place for significant improvement of wildlife habitat, wetland conservation, improvements in water quality, and now even air quality. The agencies will be moving through a period of rulemaking so it may be some time before the full impact of this Farm Bill can be assessed.

On a sad note, we lost a true giant in the conservation community with the passing of former NRCS Chief,



Norm Berg. Please see the parent society website for more information on the tremendous impact of Mr. Berg. We've also learned that we will be losing our Executive Director, Craig Cox, as he leaves to take a position with the Environmental Working Group. Craig's contributions to our society have been many and we wish him the best of luck.

Hey folks, remember membership? This is my "broken record" message. I've said it in every message; it's a top priority for me all this year as President. I also submit that it should be a top priority for you too. Have you talked to a non-member and talked about the advantages of joining the society? The member benefits are easy to list off, but perhaps the best message that you can use when recruiting is to talk about what you have gained from society membership. What have you learned? How has the networking benefited you in your professional life? Personal testimonials are very powerful. If you haven't talked to someone and asked them to join us, I urge you to take that step. Most people say that they join organizations because someone asked them to. The chapter and parent society becomes stronger and more vibrant when we are able to gain members. Those new members give us insight and perspective that we haven't had. Thanks again to you all for your efforts.

Our election was completed and we have a new slate of directors joining the Executive Board. Mark Steffek, our Past-President, headed up the Nominations Committee and did an excellent job. Thanks Mark!

My year as President is nearly complete now. As Past-President I'll remain engaged with the business of the chapter and the society as a whole. Let's keep working together to make conservation of natural resources a high priority for everyone.

Yours in conservation,

Dave

ALL CHAPTER MEMBERS INVITED TO ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

California Rangeland Coalition and Native Grassland Agriculture will be topic of lunchtime seminar

The Annual Business meeting of the California-Nevada Chapter is scheduled for Friday, June 13th at the USDA-NRCS State Office in Davis.

Please join your fellow Chapter members as we welcome and install our new slate of Chapter officers, present Chapter awards, make plans for the Annual Conference, and discuss the workplan which outlines various aspects of Chapter activities including professional development, policy actions, and our scholarship program. The meeting will begin at 11:00. A no-host lunch will be provided.

The highlight of the business meeting will be a

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED TO LEAD CA-NV CHAPTER SWCS

by Mark Steffek, Past President

Congratulations to our new members on the Executive Council! Our membership elected three Directors to serve a two year term each and our President-Elect. Andrea Casey, Bill Daily and Eric Berntsen are the new Directors. Erik Beardsley is our President-Elect.

Andrea is a District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Colusa. Bill is a Soil Conservationist with the NRCS in the Nevada State Office. Eric is an Environmental Scientist with the CA Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento. They will have the responsibility, along with the other members of the Executive Council, to develop and implement the Chapter's strategic and annual plan in order to make our Chapter stronger, sustainable, and a recognized force in natural resource management throughout California and Nevada.

Erik Beardsley will be responsible for organizing the

presentation by Pelayo Alvarez of Defenders of Wildlife and Director of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition (CRCC). Mr. Alvarez was invited to talk about CRCC's formation, purpose and various activities in support of working rangeland landscapes. He will also be part of a discussion in which we will learn about possible ways in which our Chapter can enhance our own support as an official signatory of CRCC. A local rancher may also join Mr. Alvarez to provide additional perspectives. In addition, Mr. Alvarez will give an

overview of an upcoming economic study of native grass restoration that Defenders of Wildlife will be conducting. For more information about the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition see <http://www.carangeland.org/>

**Annual Business Meeting
Friday, June 13th, 2008
USDA-NRCS State Office
Room 229
430 G Street, Davis
11:00 am - 2:00 p.m.**

NEW CA-NV CHAPTER MEMBERS *by Walt Bunter*

We extend a **GREAT BIG WELCOME** to the following seven members who recently joined or rejoined the SWCS and our California-Nevada Chapter or transferred in from another state chapter. We have 174 members as of 1 May.

Brian Boyd, JBR Environmental, Reno
Linden Brooks, USDA-NRCS (Ret.), Red Bluff
Rebecca Kit Hale, Reno
Richard Hathaway III, Packaway Materials, Hat Creek
Ray Hendrickson, Blythe
Diana Ruiz, Riverside-Corona RCD, Riverside
Luke Smith, Hanover Inc., Chico

Chapter's Conference in 2009. The President-Elect automatically moves into the President's position where Erik will then be responsible for Chapter leadership to our members.

I personally thank all the new officers and other candidates for being willing to serve and lead the Chapter.

Also, special thanks to all who took time to return their ballots and to the nominating committee. I am looking forward to a great future for the Chapter with the addition of these folks to our leadership positions.

CHAPTER POLICY COMMITTEE CREATED

New Committee Seeking Input on Topics for Policy Position Papers

The Board of Directors of the California-Nevada Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society has approved the establishment of a new Society Policy Committee. The Committee, convened by Ladi Asgill, met on May 21 to launch its work. The purpose of the Committee is to develop Chapter position papers on current resource conservation issues relevant to the Society's stated mission, "to foster the science and art of natural resource conservation." It is the intent of the Board that these papers will be used by the Chapter and its members to inform and influence federal, state and local decision-making on policies and programs that address important conservation issues. The Committee is seeking your input on priority resource issues that should be addressed by Chapter position papers.

At its first meeting, the Committee, comprised of Asgill, Phil Hogan and Ken Trott, agreed upon the following initial list of topics ripe for Chapter position papers:

- Land use: Addressing the loss of the State's best agricultural lands;
- Water Use and Conservation: A position paper on one or more of the following water management topics: floodwater and floodplain management, water quality, groundwater management, water use efficiency; and, water transfers.
- Climate Change: The use and management of working landscapes to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions and sequester carbon; and,

- Bio-energy. Should food-producing lands be used to produce renewable energy, and if so, how can it be done to avoid environmental degradation or soil and water resources?

According to Asgill, these are ideas intended to stimulate the thinking of Chapter members. "Before we

make any commitment of the Committee's time and energies to developing position papers, we would like your ideas. Our membership, collectively, represents a wealth of knowledge and experience that this Committee needs to tap." Asgill and the Committee request members to submit their ideas for policy position papers to the Committee either directly by calling or e-mailing its members, or by logging onto the Chapter's website and registering your ideas at: <http://www.caswcs.org/>. Member input can either be in the form of an endorsement or ranking of the four topics listed above, or as the submission of other topics that merit the Chapter's attention. The Committee requests that members submit ideas by June 30, 2008.

Finally, the policy committee welcomes additional members.

If you are interested in helping to shape Chapter positions on critical conservation issues that can help extend the Chapter's influence, contact one of the Committee's members listed below:



AP / Craig Kohlruess

Water flows through a 150-foot break on the western levee of the Sutter Bypass in Sutter County near Meridian in January 1997. Marysville-Yuba City Appeal-Democrat file photo, 1997, Associated Press

Ladi Asgill	Phil Hogan	Ken Trott
lasgill@suscon.org	phil.hogan@ca.usda.gov	ktrott@cdfa.ca.gov
(209) 576-7729	(530) 662-2037	(916) 651-9445

TECHNICAL BRIEF

SEEDING RATE ADJUSTMENTS FOR PLS AND COATED SEED

BY Walt Bunter

Make sure you have enough seed on hand when the seeding rate is specified as pounds of pure live seed (PLS) per acre without any coating.

Pure live seed (PLS) is a term used to describe the amount of viable seed in the bag of seed. Check the tag on each bag of seed for the percent germination and percent purity of each specified species. You can calculate PLS by multiplying the percent germination by the percent purity. If the bag of seed contains less than 95 percent Pure Live Seed (PLS) of a specified species or is coated by the supplier, then the seeding rate should be based on the "Adjusted Seeding Rate."

Step 1. Check the % PLS for each species.

Example: If the seed bag tag shows: 90% purity and 70% germination for species A, then that bag of seed contains: $90\% \times 70\% = (0.90 \times 0.70) \times 100 = 63\%$ actual weight of PLS of species A.

Step 2. Determine the adjustment factor.

Example: 100% specified PLS divided by 63% actual PLS = $1.00 / 0.63 = 1.59$ for species A.

Step 3. Calculate the Adjusted Seeding Rate for uncoated seed.

Example: If the specified seeding rate for species A is 10 lbs PLS/acre and the adjustment factor = 1.59, then the Adjusted Seeding Rate = 1.59×10 lbs/acre = 15.9 lbs/acre. Therefore, you would need to plant species A at the rate of 15.9 or 16 lbs/acre to meet the 10 lbs PLS/acre specification.

Sometimes the seed of legumes like clover is coated by the supplier with a coating of an inoculant or other

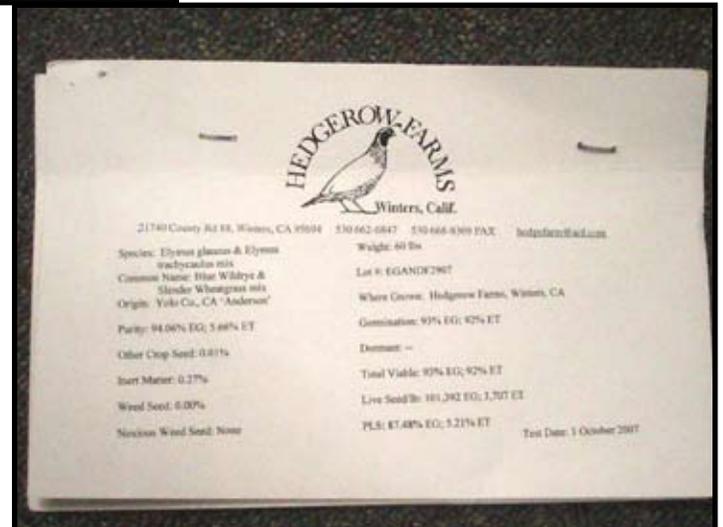
materials. When the specified seeding rate is based on uncoated seed, you will need to adjust the seeding rate for both PLS and the weight of the coating. No coating adjustment is needed when you inoculate seed at the site.

Step 4. Calculate the Adjusted Seeding Rate for coated seed.

Example: If the seed for species A used in Steps 1-3 above is coated (or pelleted) clover seed and the coating increases seed weight by 33.3%, then only 66.7% of the weight of species A in that bag of seed is actual seeds. You need to increase the seeding rate by a factor



Be sure your seeding rate is right!



Seed tag for California native grass seed mix.

of $100\% / 66.7\% = 1.00 / 0.667 = 1.5$. The Adjusted Seeding Rate for coated clover seed from that bag of seed = 1.5×15.9 lbs/acre = 23.85 lbs/acre. Therefore, you would need to plant the coated clover seed at the rate of 23.85 or 24 lbs/acre to meet the 10 lbs PLS/acre seeding rate specification.

Walt Bunter is a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Earth Team Agronomist and retired NRCS State Agronomist.

2008 Farm Bill Conservation Title: **Investing in Conservation Programs That Preserve Natural Resources**

**Excerpted from a fact sheet
by the House Committee on
Agriculture**

Increases total spending on conservation programs by \$7.9 billion

Extends the Popular Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- Authorizes 32 million acres to be enrolled in the program from 2010-2012
- Includes a new provision to allow retired landowners participating in CRP to modify their contracts if the land is being transferred to a beginning, limited resource, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher. This would allow eligible producers to return some of this land to grazing or crop production

Expands the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

- Provides funding to reestablish a baseline of \$1.3 billion and extends the program through 2012
- Increases the maximum enrollment to 3,041,200 acres
- Creates a Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program and updates the appraisal process

Strengthens the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Increases funding for EQIP by \$3.4 billion.
- Makes conservation practices related to organic certification and transition eligible for payments
- Improves the evaluation process for applications
- Establishes the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) to help producers achieve water quality goals and address water quantity concerns

Extends the Conservation Security Program (CSP)

- Provides \$1.1 billion in new funding to enroll nearly 13 million acres per year
- Expands eligible lands to include private forests
- Restructures the program to provide conservation stewardship payments that encourage producers to implement additional conservation practices
- Emphasizes attainment of new conservation benefits

Extends and Increases Funding for Farm Protection Program (FPP)

- Doubles funding for FPP to \$773 million
- Establishes a more user-friendly certification process that will determine eligibility for program funds
- Reduces pressure for development on farmland

Continues and Expands the Grassland Reserve Program

- Adds an additional 1.22 million acres to the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), which helps landowners protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property
- Allows for short-term contracts and easements, and for cooperative agreements

Reauthorizes the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

- Increases cost-share assistance on long-term agreements and provides technical assistance and cost-share assistance to establish and improve wildlife habitat

Extends the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program through 2012

- Reauthorizes the program and includes \$100 million in funding
- Provides technical and financial assistance for the rehabilitation of existing small watershed projects that may include upgrading or removing the dams

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CHAPTER SWCS
430 "G" STREET #4172
DAVIS, CA 95616-4172



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FIRST CLASS

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SPRING 2008

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***Submit articles
and photos to the
editor by August
22 for the next
issue of RunOff!***