CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Pasture Improvement Project

Montrose, CO

FERGUSON WATERWORKS


After


Before: Controlled burn


Before: Fertilizer application

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT / CUSTOMER:

Private Landowner

LOCATION:

Montrose, CO

PRODUCT / SOLUTIONS:

NutraFix® Micronutrient Fertilizer

CHALLENGE:

Russian knapweed is an aggressive invasive species in western Colorado and is toxic to horses. After many years of spread, this pasture had low forage quality.

SOLUTION:

The landowner chose to use regenerative cover cropping strategies including NutraFix® Micronutrient Fertilizer to restore soil health and return the pasture to productivity with emphasis on providing forage. The initial step included burning the dense patches of Russian knapweed. Russian knapweed is a deep-rooted perennial that spreads by aggressive, creeping, horizontal roots (rhizomes) and seeds. Its rhizomes make it very difficult to manage because, even if you mow the plants, the rhizomes remain, and the plants can regrow.

SOLUTION ADVANTAGES:

- Easy to apply granular fertilizer
- Increased germination and establishment of seeded species
- Improved vegetation through micronutrient availability
- Soil health from investing in the building blocks for plant growth and nutrient cycling

BACKGROUND

This land is situated at 5,800 feet elevation, with saline soils and average annual precipitation of 9.5 inches. It has a history of intensive grazing, a long period of soil depletion of nutrients and prolific weeds dominating the pasture. After land ownership changed, the new landowner wanted to use this pasture for regenerative cover cropping systems that produce beneficial livestock forage and/or grazing opportunities. Another goal of this landowner was to introduce flood irrigation practices.

METHOD

The landowner decided to burn down the decadent vegetation in the pasture using controlled burns in April 2024. After the burning, NutraFix Micronutrient Fertilizer was applied. The pasture was seeded with triticale, beardless barley and oats. Irrigation was implemented. NutraFix Micronutrient Fertilizer was applied at a rate of 100 pounds per acre after controlled burning of the pasture. The pasture was irrigated and seeded after NutraFix application. This application of NutraFix was highly successful in promoting the growth of desirable seeded species, allowing for their rapid growth and establishment. The presence of the sturdy and healthy cover crop outcompeted the Russian knapweed, and the regrowth was very low. The productivity of the forage was sufficient to allow for baling.

THE SOLUTION: FERGUSON WATERWORKS

NutraFix Micronutrient Fertilizer helped to germinate and quickly establish the seeded cover crops on the previously abandoned, Russian knapweed-dominated pasture. The improved soil health and establishment of regenerative cover crops on this pasture was so successful in a single growing season that the landowner was able to harvest and bale forage for his livestock. Initial burning and restoring irrigation water to this pasture were also important drivers of the successful outcome for this pasture improvement.