

# Forage Research Updates

## NORTH DAKOTA- Targeted Grazing to Manage Kentucky Bluegrass in Native Rangelands

*John Hendrickson, USDA-ARS*

Kentucky bluegrass has increased on native rangelands in the northern Great Plains over the past 30 years and has negatively impacted ecological services. Previous grazing management recommendations have emphasized not starting grazing until native grasses have at least 3½ leaves, which is usually late May to early June. However, since Kentucky bluegrass starts growth relatively early, this delay may give it an ecological advantage. We evaluated cattle grazing in the early spring with a more traditional start to the grazing season. Grazing early increased native grass abundance by 26% over a 5 year period. However, the impacts on Kentucky bluegrass depended on year. Early spring grazing by cattle has potential, but should be incorporated into a management program that is adaptable enough to take advantage of differences between years.

**Table 1.** Native Grass % in the Relative Species Composition.

