

Fall and Winter Forage: Case Study - Sieben Land and Livestock

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Winter feeding accounts for up to 70% of the annual costs of livestock production in the western U.S. These costs can be reduced by extended grazing into the fall and winter. Collaborative research with Sieben Land and Livestock ranch in Cascade MT, identified meadow brome grass, intermediate wheatgrass, small burnet, and alfalfa mixtures for improved winter forage. Mixed plantings of intermediate wheatgrass and meadow brome grass doubled forage yield and animal carrying capacity compared to the native range and orchardgrass/alfalfa mix typically used as winter forage. Forage quality and economic analysis will also be presented. This research provides new plant options and management providing significant economic savings to ranchers/farmers by reducing the need for mechanically harvested winter forage.