

FORAGE SUITABILITY GROUP

SUBIRRIGATED, LOAMY/SANDY, 12-16" ppt/ >90 Freeze Free Days

FSG No.: G053AY031MT

Major Land Resource Area: 053A -Northern Dark Brown Glaciated Plains

Physiographic Features

MLRA 53A is characterized by gently undulating to rolling till plains including areas of prairie pot holes, kames, and moraines. Adjacent to major stream valleys are strongly rolling and steep slopes. Elevation ranges from 1600 to 3600 feet, increasing gradually from southeast to northwest. The Missouri River is the largest river flowing through MLRA 53A.

Subirrigated, Loamy/Sandy FSGs occur on terraces and floodplains.

| | <u>Minimum</u> | <u>Maximum</u> |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Elevation (feet): | 1600 | 3600 |
| Slope (percent): | 0 | 2 |
| Flooding: | | |
| Frequency: | None | Occasional |
| Duration: | None | Brief |
| Ponding: | | |
| Depth (inches): | | |
| Frequency: | None | None |
| Duration: | None | None |
| Runoff Class: | Negligible | Low |

Climatic Features

This FSG occurs in a mid-continental climate characterized by wide seasonal temperature and precipitation fluctuations and extremes.

Annual precipitation varies widely from year to year in MLRA 53A. Average annual precipitation for all climate stations listed below is about 13 inches. About 80 percent of that occurs during the months of April through September. Precipitation in the winter falls as snow.

Average annual snowfall ranges from 9 inches at Redstone to 42 inches at Opheim 16 SE. Snow depths greater than 1 inch range from 16 days at Opheim 10 N to 97 days at Bredette.

Average July temperatures are about 68 degrees F., and average January temperatures are about 9 degrees F. Recorded temperature extremes in the MLRA during the years 1971 to 2000 are a low of -52 at Redstone, and a high of 110 at three Montana locations. The MLRA lies in USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 3b and 4a.

In most years, moisture is inadequate for maximum crop production. The Missouri River is the only dependable source of water for irrigation; therefore, only a small acreage is irrigated. Ground water is in limited supply.

Detailed information, which describes the physiography, groundwater, soils drainage and climate is available by referring to the local USDA-NRCS County Soil Survey. Site specific climatic data within MLRA 53A can be found at the following web

site; <http://www.wrcc.sage.dri.edu/> OR <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/state.pl?state=mt>.

With such wide variations in climate information, the user should access the station closest to the site being evaluated.

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| Freeze-free period (28 deg)(days): (9 years in 10 at least) | 96 | 113 |
| Last Killing Freeze in Spring (28 deg): (1 year in 10 later than) | | |
| Last Frost in Spring (32 deg): (1 year in 10 later than) | | |
| First Frost in Fall (32 deg): (1 year in 10 earlier than) | | |
| First Killing Freeze in Fall (28 deg): (1 year in 10 earlier than) | | |
| Length of Growing Season (32 deg)(days): (9 years in 10 at least) | 55 | 124 |
| Growing Degree Days (40 deg): | | |
| Growing Degree Days (50 deg): | | |
| Annual Minimum Temperature: | -41 | -33 |
| Mean annual precipitation (inches): | 12 | 16 |

Monthly precipitation (inches) and temperature (F):

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 2 years in 10: | <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>Jun</u> | <u>Jul</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
| Precip. Less Than | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Precip. More Than | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Monthly Average: | 0.36 | 0.27 | 0.48 | 0.88 | 1.90 | 2.80 | 2.10 | 1.48 | 1.24 | 0.68 | 0.36 | 0.36 |
| Temp. Min. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Temp. Max. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Temp. Avg. | 8.8 | 16.1 | 27.1 | 42.2 | 54.0 | 62.8 | 68.4 | 67.3 | 55.8 | 44.1 | 26.8 | 14.2 |

| <u>Climate Station</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| MT6236 | Opheim 10 N, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT6238 | Opheim 16 SE, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT2122 | Culbertson, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT6927 | Redstone, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT5572 | Medicine Lake 3 SE, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT6660 | Poplar 2 E, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT6893 | Raymond Border Stn, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT7424 | Scobey, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT8777 | Westby, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT5285 | Lustre 4 NNW, MT | 1971 | 2000 |
| MT1088 | Bredette, MT | 1971 | 2000 |

Soil Interpretations

This FSG consists of very deep, somewhat poorly drained, moderately permeable soils. These soils formed in alluvium and have a water table which affects plant species selection and growth habits. Electrical conductivity is <4 mmhos/cm. Sodium absorption ratio is <13. Calcium carbonate equivalent is <15 percent.

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| Drainage Class: | Somewhat poorly drained | To | Somewhat poorly drained |
| Permeability Class: (0 - 40 inches) | Moderately slow | To | Moderately slow |
| Frost Action Class: | High | To | |

| | <u>Minimum</u> | <u>Maximum</u> |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Depth: | 60 | 72 |
| Surface Fragments >3" (% Cover): | | |
| Organic Matter (percent): (surface layer) | 2.0 | 4.0 |
| Electrical Conductivity (mmhos/cm): (0 - 24 inches) | 0 | 4 |
| Sodium Absorption Ratio: (0 - 12 inches) | 0 | 13 |
| Soil Reaction (1:1) Water (pH): (0 - 12 inches) | 5.5 | 8.5 |
| Available Water Capacity (inches): (0 - 60 inches) | 6 | 10 |
| Calcium Carbonate Equivalent (percent): (0 - 12 inches) | 0 | 15 |

Adapted Species List

The following forage species have been separated by common grouping methods which relate to principle growth period or taxonomic differences. Within these categories a further subdivision has been provided denoting whether the plant is native (N) or introduced (I) and recommended for dryland or irrigated conditions. Since some forages can be valuable when grown under dryland conditions but provide enhanced yield or additional cuttings when irrigated they may appear under both categories. Some species are more or less exclusive to only one management system and are represented as such.

| <u>Cool Season Grasses</u> | <u>Scientific Symbol</u> | <u>Dryland</u> | <u>Irrigated</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Altai wildrye (I) | LEAN3 | YES | NO |
| Basin wildrye (N) | LECI4 | YES | NO |
| Big bluegrasses (N) | POSE | YES | NO |
| Canada wildrye (N) | ELCA4 | YES | NO |
| Creeping meadow foxtail (I) | ALAR | YES | NO |
| Crested wheatgrass (I) | AGCR | YES | NO |
| Green needlegrass (N) | NAVI4 | YES | NO |
| Hybrid wheatgrass (I) | ELHO3 | YES | NO |
| Intermediate wheatgrass (I) | THIN6 | YES | NO |
| Pubescent wheatgrass (I) | THIN6 | YES | NO |
| Russian wildrye (I) | PSJU3 | YES | NO |
| Slender wheatgrass (N) | ELTR7 | YES | NO |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-----|----|
| Tall wheatgrass (I) | THPO7 | YES | NO |
| Thickspike wheatgrass (N) | ELLAL | YES | NO |
| Western wheatgrass (N) | PASM | YES | NO |

| <u>Warm Season Grasses</u> | <u>Scientific Symbol</u> | <u>Dryland</u> | <u>Irrigated</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Big bluestem (N) | ANGE | YES | NO |
| Little bluestem (N) | SCSC | YES | NO |
| Sideoats grama (N) | BOCU | YES | NO |
| Switchgrass (N) | PAVI2 | YES | NO |

| <u>Legumes</u> | <u>Scientific Symbol</u> | <u>Dryland</u> | <u>Irrigated</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Alfalfa (I) | MESA | YES | NO |
| Cicer milkvetch (I) | ASCI4 | YES | NO |
| Red clover (I) | TRPR2 | YES | NO |
| Sainfoin (I) | ONVI | YES | NO |

| <u>Other Perennial Forbs</u> | <u>Scientific Symbol</u> | <u>Dryland</u> | <u>Irrigated</u> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Lewis flax (N)* | LILE3 | YES | NO |
| Maximilian sunflower (N)* | HEMA2 | YES | NO |
| Purple/white prairieclover (N)* | DAPU5 | YES | NO |
| Winterfat (N)* | KRLA2 | YES | NO |

| <u>Annual Species</u> | <u>Scientific Symbol</u> | <u>Dryland</u> | <u>Irrigated</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Field peas | PISAA2 | YES | NO |
| Hay/ feed barley | HORDE | YES | NO |
| Hay/ feed oats | AVENA | YES | NO |
| Lentils | LENS | YES | NO |
| Peas/small grains | LATHY | YES | NO |
| Rye, wheat, spelt, triticale | TRITI | YES | NO |

Adaptation of forages to this Forage Suitability Group (FSG) covers a relatively wide range of potentials from highly adapted to moderately well adapted. Since various cultivars within a specie can be more or less productive on a particular site within this FSG the species in general will be listed if it will thrive on one or more of these sites. It is up to the FSG (user) to determine the appropriate scope of adaptation the listed species (or their cultivars) have which will lead to their successful establishment and acceptable yields.

*These species only recommended for components of native mixtures.

Production Estimates

The following data represents "best available estimates" from many sources on representative species adapted to this FSG. In time and as documented data acquisition allows, specific plot, field trial or field clipping information will be incorporated into this document.

All pasture production estimates are determined as initial stocking rates and developed by multiplying a predicted forage yield times an expected harvest efficiency of 30%, then dividing that value by 1 animal unit month's "consumption" (915 lbs air dry).

Production estimates represent total annual production.

| Forage Crop | <u>Dryland</u> | | <u>Irrigated</u> | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| | <u>Low</u> | <u>High</u> | <u>Low</u> | <u>High</u> |
| | (lbs/ac/yr) | (lbs/ac/yr) | (lbs/ac/yr) | (lbs/ac/yr) |
| Alfalfa | 9860 | 11460 | | |
| Alfalfa / cool season grass mix | 7000 | 11460 | | |
| Introduced cool season grasses | 1400 | 3500 | | |
| Native cool season grasses | 1085 | 1580 | | |
| Warm season grasses | 1000 | 1150 | | |

| Pasture | <u>Dryland</u> | | <u>Irrigated</u> | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| | <u>Low</u> | <u>High</u> | <u>Low</u> | <u>High</u> |
| | (AUMs/ac) | (AUMs/ac) | (AUMs/ac) | (AUMs/ac) |
| Alfalfa | 3.2 | 3.8 | | |
| Alfalfa / cool season grass mix | 2.3 | 3.8 | | |
| Introduced cool season grasses | 0.5 | 1.1 | | |
| Native cool season grasses | 0.4 | 0.5 | | |
| Warm season grasses | 0.3 | 0.4 | | |

1 AUM = 915 lbs air-dry

Forage Growth Curves

Growth Curve Number: MT53AY01
Growth Curve Name: 12-15" subirrigated
Growth Curve Description:

Percent Production by Month

| <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>Jun</u> | <u>Jul</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 35 | 25 | 15 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Growth Curve Number: MT53AY02
Growth Curve Name: 12-15" dryland alfalfa, 1 cutting
Growth Curve Description:

Percent Production by Month

| <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>Jun</u> | <u>Jul</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 25 | 20 | 20 | 10 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Growth Curve Number: MT53AY03
Growth Curve Name: 12-15" dryland legumes, 1 cutting
Growth Curve Description: (trefoil, sainfoin, clover)

Percent Production by Month

| <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>Jun</u> | <u>Jul</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Growth Curve Number: MT53AY04
Growth Curve Name: 12-15" dryland alfalfa (0-25%) with cool season grass (.75%)
Growth Curve Description:

Percent Production by Month

| <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>Jun</u> | <u>Jul</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 30 | 25 | 15 | 5 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Growth Curve Number: MT53AY05
Growth Curve Name: 12-15" dryland legume, 1 cutting with cool season grass
Growth Curve Description: (trefoil, sainfoin, clover + cool season grasses)

Percent Production by Month

| <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>Jun</u> | <u>Jul</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 30 | 20 | 20 | 5 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Growth Curve Number: MT53AY08
Growth Curve Name: 12-15" dryland intermediate/pubescent wheatgrass/Altai wildrye
Growth Curve Description:

Percent Production by Month

| <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>Jun</u> | <u>Jul</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 25 | 45 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Growth Curve Number: MT53AY09
Growth Curve Name: 12-15" dryland Russian wildrye
Growth Curve Description:

Percent Production by Month

| <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>Jun</u> | <u>Jul</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 25 | 40 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Growth Curve Number: MT53AY10
Growth Curve Name: 12-15" dryland crested and Siberian wheatgrasses
Growth Curve Description:

| <u>Percent Production by Month</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>Jun</u> | <u>Jul</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 40 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

Soil Limitations

The Subirrigated, Loamy/Sandy FSG is limited mainly by the drainage class (somewhat poorly drained).

Management Interpretations

Soils in this group are prone to flooding, which can negatively impact plant growth if it occurs in the spring or during growing season. Flooding duration, or how long the plant is under water, will have a greater impact on the plant than flooding frequency. Machinery and livestock also need to be excluded during these times to prevent wheel ruts, soil compaction, and trampling. To reduce the potential for sheet and rill erosion, especially on steeper slopes, include sod forming grass species in stands. Integrate both wind and water erosion control practices during the establishment period. Facilitating practices such as salting, water developments, fencing, trails, and herding can often be used effectively to change livestock behavior and use patterns.

Management can include considerations for wildlife. Timing of haying and livestock grazing can avoid peak nesting and fawning periods. Consider planting species with later maturity to allow nests to fledge before harvesting. Avoid mowing around the field; mow back and forth or from the inside to the outside of the field.

For detailed descriptions of management guidelines, refer to the NRCS Prescribed Grazing (528), and Pasture and Hay Planting (512) specifications.

Site Documentation

Similar Sites:

Inventory Data References:

Inventory Data References:

- Agriculture Handbook 296 - Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) National Water and Climate Center
- National Soil Survey Information System (NASIS) for soil surveys in Montana
- NRCS National Range and Pasture Handbook
- NRCS Field Office Technical Guides
- Various Agricultural Research Service, Cooperative Extension Service, and NRCS research trials for plant adaptation and production
- "Dryland Pastures in Montana and Wyoming" Species and Cultivars, Seeding Techniques and Grazing Management, Montana State University, EB19
- "Salinity and Sodicity and North Dakota Soils", North Dakota State University, EB57

-USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Maps

State Correlation:

This site has been correlated with the following states:

Forage Suitability Group Approval:

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Approval by: Loretta J. Metz
Approval Date: 8/10/2006