Benefits of Prescribed Burning on Plainview Ranch

by

Michael Clarke, Berwyn, NE
Plainview Ranch
Family Owned and Operated since 1888
Our Start with Prescribed Burning

• 1998 with NRCS technical assistance
• Prescribed Burn Task Force
  - attended PBTF burn schools
  - attended PBTF training burns
  - used PBTF equipment
• First burns expired CRP acres (1998 & 2000)
• Didn’t burn from 2001-2006
History of burning on our ranch
Cut all cedar trees over 4’ in height
Lack of vegetation under large trees
1 year after burn, & 3 years after cedar was cut.
Vegetation coming back after brush pile burnt

- Weedy species at first
- Then native grass fills in
2015 Burn
March 12th

- Grazed after 90 days of regrowth and 10” of rain
- Photo taken July 4th after heifer pairs were removed (21 days use)
• 70 pair 1\textsuperscript{st} calf heifers
• Grazed June 12 – July 3
Obstacles in Ranching

• Grasshoppers in 1999 (no burn)
  - Decreased herd size
• Drought in 2009 (still burned)
  - Decreased herd size
• Drought in 2012 (still burned)
  - Sold fall herd and kept no replacement heifers
What Works for Us

• Average acres burned per year: 202
  - Just burn small areas (use temporary fences)
• Cost assistance on 3 burns (tree cutting only)
• GIP (Grassland Improvement Program) in 2015
• Our own expense
  – Sitting idle is the most expensive part
    - can rotate into a pasture early, then take out and use regrowth for next year’s burn
  - graze after the burn if precipitation is received
Custer Prescribed Burn Association
Est. 2012

– Charter Member
– Secretary / Treasurer
– Hosted 2012 Training burn
Burn
Crew
Family
Friends
and
Neighbors