

Sheep may replace herbicides

A recent study has indicated that sheep may be a suitable replacement for herbicides used in national forests.

Criticisms of herbicides used in various national forest lands prompted the study, sponsored by Oregon State University. The U.S. Forest Service is funding the project with a \$55,000 grant. The study is in its second year.

Using sheep to control brush while Douglas fir and other seedlings gain a foothold may be an attractive alternative to using expensive, time-consuming and controversial herbicides, according to Steven Sharrow, one of the project leaders.

"The idea is to get on top and keep the brush knocked back so the trees can grow through and you don't have to spray," Sharrow said. "Judging by our findings last year, if you can get sheep on a clearcut the first year or two after it's replanted, they might do the job. But it's too early to draw general conclusions; we have a lot more research to do."

Sharrow added that sheep would be inexpensive compared to spraying. "It would be a money-making thing, unlike herbicides," he said. "You could sell the wool and meat. The Forest Service would offset brush control expenses by charging for grazing."

Preliminary observations on a 54-acre clearcut in the Alsea area, grazed by 800 ewes and lambs for two weeks, showed little evidence of damage to Douglas fir seedlings from browsing or trampling by the sheep. The animals grazed most of the brush species.

About half the forage consumed was tansy ragwort, a noxious weed commonly found in forest and pasture areas of western Oregon. Brush species utilized by the sheep included trailing blackberry, vine maple and red huckleberry.

Normally, the 800-ewe flock grazes on forest lands from May to September and elsewhere during the rest of the year, Sharrow said, noting that the sheep industry needs forage in the summer.

"The dryland areas, where no irrigation is used, produce little forage in the summer and the forest lands are the obvious place to go," Sharrow said.

A Forest Service economic impact projection prepared as part of an environmental impact assessment shows sheep grazing, if effective, would be dramatically cheaper than controlling brush with herbicides or by hand.

The cost to control brush on 1,500 acres in the Alsea district during the seven years it takes a Douglas fir seedling to gain a foothold would be \$675,000 with her-

bicides, \$1.4 million with hand labor and \$206,000 with sheep.

"They optimistically assumed sheep could do the job based on some pretty good luck with sheep in the Umpqua National Forest," Sharrow said.

"During the next two summers, researchers plan to study the results of grazing sheep on six clearcuts in the Alsea area."

"We'll measure how much brush there is when the sheep come in, measure how much is left when they leave and measure the brush growth between grazings," he said, adding that he plans to record browsing damage

to seedlings, if there is any.

One problem with sheep may be that those raised in the Willamette Valley are mainly meat breeds, which do not stay in a herd.

"To use this non-chemical method, we will have to bring in sheep from another area or change the nature of our sheep so they will herd for easier management," Sharrow said.

He is using Rambouillet sheep in the study because they herd instinctively. Rambouillet, commonly grown in western states because of their superior wool quality, are less attractive for meat production than some other breeds.



Grazing sheep may soon be used to clear undergrowth in the national forests of Oregon and Washington.

Staff photo

Tri-Met changes system for Honored Citizens

Tri-Met is using a multimedia campaign to update the transit district's Honor Citizens Program.

The program entitles disabled riders under 65 years and senior citizens 65 and over to ride the bus for substantially reduced fares during weekday non-commuter hours and for free on evenings and weekends.

During the next two months, the word will go out to elderly residents and disabled individuals through the mail and by personal contact. Advertisements inside buses and public service announcements on radio and television will also make Honored Citizens aware of the update in the program.

Effective June 14, 1981, the familiar orange and white Honored Citizen Card will be replaced by two cards: a Tri-Met Senior Citizen Card and a Tri-Met Disabled Citizen Card.

Applications for a Tri-Met Disabled Citizen Card are available at all Tri-County offices of Adult and Family

Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Division, the Veterans Administration, Social Security Administration and Commission for the Blind.

Tri-Met Senior Citizen Card applications are available from bus operators, at the Tri-Met Customer Assistance Office (522 SW Yamhill) and at most senior centers in the Tri-County area.

Fares for Honored Citizens will remain the same: During commuter hours, 5 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 7 p.m. weekdays, Honored Citizens pay regular fares; with the card as identification, Honored Citizens ride for substantially reduced fares during non-commuter hours: 10 cents between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays; free at all other times.

To qualify for the new Honored Citizen card, seniors must be 65 or older by June 14, 1981. Those with disabilities who are 65 must have certification of their impairment by the public agencies named above.



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