

Coffee Point Test Site Up In Smoke
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A range fire which consumed 225,000 acres northwest of Aberdeen, Idaho began by lightning on August 27, 1996. The fire was named the Coks Well fire. On August 30, the Coffee Point Off-Center Advanced Test Site located east of Coks Well and used by the Aberdeen Plant Materials Center was burned.

The purpose of the Coffee Point Test Site located approximately 25 miles northwest of Aberdeen is to evaluate and demonstrate the potential of grasses for revegetation and forage for livestock and wildlife in areas of 8-10 inches of annual precipitation in southeastern Idaho. The site has been used for testing purposes since 1982.

The current test plots were planted in November, 1994. This year, the second year of evaluations, we collected forage production data. Fortunately we were able to collect the data before the fire. The forage production data has not yet been summarized but will be featured in an upcoming article.

It appears that the fire moved quite rapidly through the test plots and hopefully the grasses were not severely damaged. Some of the posts on the enclosure fence were burned and will need to be replaced.

The fire has created an excellent opportunity to evaluate the ability of the grasses to recover from fire. In addition, we will be able to evaluate a display nursery which was planted in 1982 to observe how the fire affected much older plants.

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