



## **Ranchers' Perspectives on Invasive Annual Grass Management in Sagebrush Steppe Rangelands**

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Invasive plants are arguably the largest threat to the sustainability of arid sagebrush steppe rangelands throughout the West. Invasive annual grasses are of particular concern because of their demonstrated potential to dominate large expanses of rangeland and degrade the economic, environmental and social services yielded by rangelands. Annual grass invasion is an ecosystem scale management issue that transcends political boundaries. Ranchers who operate on private or public grazing lands will play an integral role in determining the success or failure of invasive annual grass management programs. However, their current weed management knowledge, awareness, practices and resource needs are not well understood. To address this knowledge gap, a survey of 600 ranchers operating on sagebrush steppe rangelands was conducted to evaluate managerial, institutional, and social factors that may affect the rate and extent of implementation of invasive annual grass controls in a three-county region in eastern Oregon. Specific study objectives were to determine: 1) awareness/concern about invasive plants and specifically, invasive annual grasses; 2) current invasive annual grass management practices employed; 3) sources of information used for management of invasive plants and specifically, invasive annual grasses; 4) resource needs (e.g., information, education, technology); and 5) response variation of the previous four research questions by ranch operation and operator characteristics (e.g., operation size, livelihood dependence on ranch operation, access to technology, etc.). This information is critical for determining where future educational, technical assistance and research programs should be focused with respect to improving invasive annual grass management on sagebrush steppe rangelands.

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