

## **FEATURE – USDA SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR IMPROVES PASTURES**

INTRO: The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture is recognizing its Scientist of the Year for his efforts in improving pastures and other contributions. USDA's Pat O'Leary has more. (1:47)

AT THIS U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TEST SITE IN CENTRAL OREGON, RESEARCHER TONY SVEJCAR HAS SPENT A CAREER STUDYING AND IMPROVING RANGELAND. THIS AREA OF SCIENCE IS A BALANCING ACT OF PROTECTING ANIMAL INDUSTRIES, WATER SUPPLIES AND WILDLIFE. FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS, HE IS THE USDA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR.

Anthony Svejcar, USDA ARS Scientist of the Year: All the research in the past fifteen years has been directed at managing western Juniper. We also have a joint project that involves a lot of ARS locations looking at carbon fluxes on rangelands. We also deal a lot with invasive annual grasses like Medusa Head and Cheatgrass. And recently we've gotten into doing quite a bit of work on rangeland restoration, how seedlings become established, so hopefully we can do a better job at restoring rangelands in the future.

SVEJCAR SAYS RANGELANDS MAKE UP ROUGHLY FIFTY PERCENT OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE. HIS WORK TAKES PLACE BOTH IN THE FIELD AND IN THE LAB.

We collect plant samples out here pretty much all spring and summer. And in the fall and the winter we spend processing them in the lab. And it's long term. So we've published research in the last few years that encompasses between twelve and fifteen years of research results

SVEJCAR'S STUDIES ON HABITAT FOR AN ENDANGERED SPECIES COULD PROVE VALUABLE.

Where we can improve Sage Grouse habitat, that's a huge issue in the west right now. The Sage Grouse is a species that depends on Sagebrush habitats and it was considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. If that happens, then this information is going to become critically important.

You know it's not just the team here but we all work with other researchers, with land management agencies, with private landowners and with environmental groups. They look to us for research results they can apply from a conservation standpoint

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M PAT O'LEARY.