

USDA Satellite Features Feed

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FEATURE – FIRE HELPS TEXAS RANCHER

INTRO: Having most of your ranch burn is not a good thing, But a Texas rancher found a silver lining in this usually dark cloud. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:43)

A SPRING WILDFIRE ON A NORTH TEXAS RANCH SCORCHED EQUIPMENT AND GRAZING LAND. AND WHILE NO RANCHER WANTS TO SEE HIS OPERATION DAMAGED BY WILDFIRE, DOUG DUNKEL WAS QUICK TO SEE THE BRIGHT SIDE.

Doug Dunkel, Rancher, Archer City, TX: Our native pastures that burned, I think is the best thing that could've happened to it. No I didn't want to burn the whole ranch off at one time, but in the long run it will be the best thing for us.

DUNKEL SAYS THE FIRE HELPED GET RID OF INVASIVE PLANTS LIKE MESQUITE TREES THAT HAD TAKEN ROOT ON HIS PROPERTY.

Dunkel: All of our dead mesquite trees that was four to five foot tall and the base of them trees are only like an inch in diameter, the fire just burned them trees off right at the ground.

DUNKEL GOT HELP FROM THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE ON HOW TO MANAGE THE BURNED PASTURE LAND. N-R-C-S EXPERTS ADVISED DUNKEL TO KEEP HIS ANIMALS OFF THE BURNED PASTURE UNTIL IT COULD REINVIGORATE ITSELF.

Kent Ferguson, USDA NRCS: It's very tempting to look out the window and say I've got green, I've got grass, I've got hungry animals. And you disperse them and put them back out on the land and in fact they're actually doing damage. They're injuring the crop. They're basically depleting all the carbohydrates in the plants.

N-R-C-S EXPERTS SHOWED DUNKEL HOW FIRE CAN BE NATURE'S WAY TO CLEAN THE LAND AND HOW U-S-D-A PROGRAMS COULD HELP PAY FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO REINVIGORATE IT.

Don Gohmert, USDA NRCS: Now's the time to do some good planning and use our program such as EQIP to realign those fences, to make their pastures smaller.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AT YOUR LOCAL SERVICE CENTER OR AT N-R-C-S DOT U-S-D-A DOT GOV. FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.

