

Critical Date / Target Date / Trigger Date

What do these words mean?

- *“what we get for moisture in April kind of tells our story”*
- *“if this is the average (precipitation) and that is the amount of grass that we grow, on average from that precipitation, then these must be some pretty critical dates from a planning perspective”*
- *“for our part of the world, most of the contracts for custom grazing or stocking rates are pretty well set by April 1st. The April 1st date has nothing to do phonologically with the plants, but it is a critical decision-making date for producers.”*
- *“It’s when we pull the trigger and we do not look back.”*
- *“Trigger dates are keyed on rapid growth windows of the dominant plant species of your forage base.”*

Some Critical Dates May Be Used as Early Warning System

- Early Warning System: “a system to monitor drought, to provide *timely* notice when crisis threatens and elicit appropriate response”
- Timely – before you are in crisis situation

Some Critical Dates May Be Used as Early Warning System

- Above average Moisture to date
- Average moisture to date
- 20%-30% below average moisture to date (not officially drought)
- 50% below average moisture to date (official drought declaration)
- 75% below average moisture to date (severe drought)

Information that may help a producer determine critical dates:

- **How much forage your pasture/forage resources produce, and when**
- **Precipitation patterns**
- **How much total feed is needed throughout year**
- **Other decision making dates**

Questions for you

- Is it necessary to determine critical decision making dates?
- If so, how should producers determine their critical dates?
- How can we help producers determine critical dates?