

ask Sam

This column features questions from Wyoming landowners that were submitted via the Web site. To submit a question to Small Acre Sam, visit BarnyardsandBackyards.com. If your question is featured, you will receive a free one-year subscription to *Barnyards and Backyards*!



Mowing Pasture Grass – To mow or not to mow

Question:

What is the best way to manage prairie grass? We have six acres, and we keep the acreage trimmed around the house, each side of our “loooooong” driveway, and about 3 feet along the common road running in front of our house along our acreage. But we never know if we should mow all the acreage (for mosquito control?), or is it best to leave “as is.”

Additionally, we are always looking for the best ways to control mosquitoes. They appear by the zillions from the end of June until early August. They are really a pesky problem!!

Vicki – Laramie, WY



Answer:

Vicki,

For the grass, it is best to leave it unmowed at least until it matures in mid-summer. Then, mowing it to a height of at least 6 inches is OK, although leaving it completely unmowed would be better for the long-term health of the grass and the land. The taller grass will prevent wind erosion, hold snow in the winter, and provide habitat for wildlife throughout the year. Mowing would reduce fire danger so if this is a concern, then mowing a buffer around the buildings is appropriate.

Mowing will do little to reduce mosquito numbers. The greatest contributor to mosquitoes is standing water as this serves as breeding grounds for larvae. If you have any standing water near your property, there are larvicides available that will reduce the mosquitoes you encounter. Check with your local weed and pest office for larvicides.

Sam