

CONSERVATION CORNER

Wyoming Ground Squirrels

Ground Squirrels are a growing problem here in Northwest Colorado. They compete with wildlife and livestock eating grasses, forbes, and seeds. The Ground Squirrels will also eat eggs of ground nesting birds. They are particularly damaging to range, pastures and hay crops. Their burrows cause injury to wildlife and livestock and can damage farm equipment used in the fields. They eat the grasses, seeds and forbes from above ground as soon as they emerge from the soil in the spring, and when they go underground for a few weeks in the heat of the summer, they eat the roots of grasses, forbes and crops such as alfalfa and grains.

Timing is an important factor in controlling the Ground Squirrels with baits or fumigants. Both methods of control should be implemented in the spring before the grass is up for best results. Pre-baiting is recommended prior to using the poison bait to get the squirrels used to eating the grain. There are different types of bait to be used, some are Restricted Use Pesticides (RUP), only sold to individuals with a state issued Pesticide Applicator license and some are sold to individuals without a pesticide applicator license. Fumigants are a Restricted Use Pesticide and can only be purchased and applied by a state licensed Pesticide Applicator. The Colorado Department of Agriculture has more information on obtaining a Pesticide Applicator's license.

Please contact Jane at the County Weed and Pest Department 970-878-9670 for chemical and County cost share information or the White River and Douglas Creek Conservation District office at 970-878-9838 for more information on the District cost-share vouchers.

