

# BEWARE: New Invasive Grasses in Wyoming!! (What are they and what do we do?)

## What Are They?

Medusahead and ventenata (North African wiregrass) are invasive annual grasses with extremely aggressive characteristics. These invasive species have higher silica contents than other invasive species such as cheatgrass, leading to reduced palatability. Similar to cheatgrass, these species mature early, but often have less biomass resulting in reduced forage quality. Currently they are only known in Sheridan and Campbell counties. (see plant characteristics on back)



## What Happens Next?

**Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR):** To eliminate these species or reduce their impacts, we must find and manage populations quickly.

**Play Clean Go:** To prevent accidental spread of seeds: clean boots, clothing, animals, and equipment before entering or exiting an area (for example, clean seeds from pant legs, remove mud from tires and boots, etc.)

**Reporting:** Report these grasses through EDDMapS or to a contact listed on the right. This allows managers to start controlling the invasion and reduce additional spread. Your help in reporting these species is critical.

- **EDDMapS** is a multiregional resource for reporting, tracking, mapping, identifying and managing weed species. Locations of weed species can be reported online ([www.eddmaps.org](http://www.eddmaps.org)) or through a smartphone app (free download). A photo and GPS location or knowledge of the exact location of occurrence (if not using the app) are required.

**Management:** These species can be managed much like cheatgrass - fall-applied herbicides may be most effective. In areas with small patches, plants can be hand-pulled and removed prior to seed production to prevent seed deposition.

## Impacts

Medusahead and ventenata can negatively impact pasture and rangelands. They are capable of excluding desirable native species, and reducing livestock forage by up to 70%. Similar to cheatgrass, they can increase wildfire frequency and intensity. Awns can lead to physical injury in grazing animals and seeds attach readily to clothing, animals and equipment. Some managers consider medusahead and ventenata to be worse than cheatgrass and have observed these species replacing cheatgrass.

## Contacts

Report sightings through EDDMapS or to one of the following:

### **Sheridan Co. Weed and Pest:**

Luke Sander:  
[luke@scweeds.com](mailto:luke@scweeds.com)  
307-752-7930

### **Johnson Co. Weed and Pest:**

Rod Litzel:  
[rod@jcweedandpest.com](mailto:rod@jcweedandpest.com)  
307-684-5715

### **Campbell Co. Weed and Pest:**

Quade Schmelzle:  
307-682-4369

### **State W&P Coordinator:**

Slade Franklin:  
[slade.franklin@wyo.gov](mailto:slade.franklin@wyo.gov)  
307-777-6585

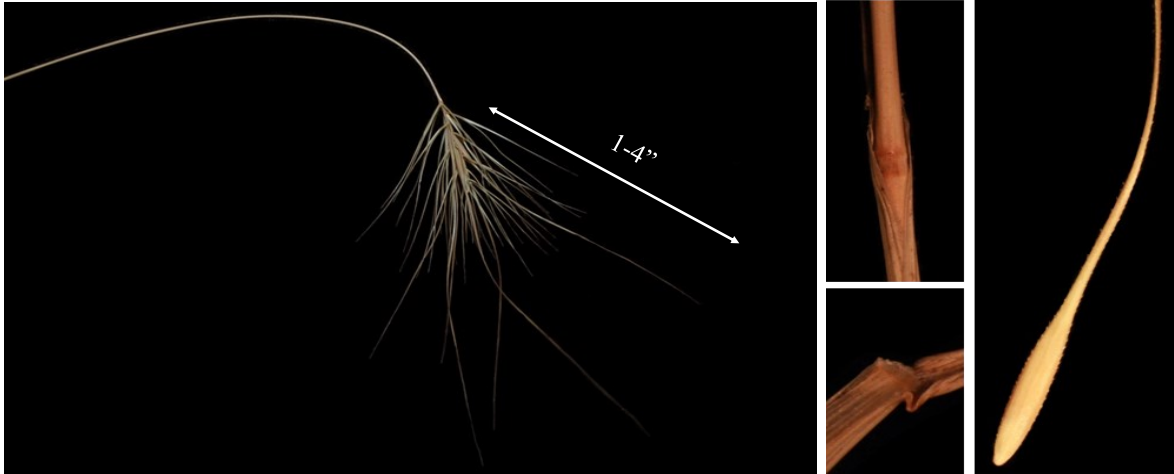
### **UW Sheridan Research and Extension Center:**

Brian Mealor:  
[bamealor@uwyo.edu](mailto:bamealor@uwyo.edu)  
307-673-2647



~~We will hold informational meetings this Spring. Please contact us to get on a mailing list!~~

## MEDUSAHEAD (*TAENIATHERUM CAPUT-MEDUSAE*)



**Height:** 6-24 in. **Leaves:** Rolled leaf blades,  $>1/8$  in x 4-12 in; open sheaths; slightly hairy **Hairs:** Soft short hairs; collar sparsely long haired **Node:** Green, darker at maturity **Ligule:** Membranous, truncate, 0.3-0.8 mm **Inflorescence:** Long awned spike, nearly as wide as it is long, 1-4 in **Seedhead/spikelet:** Spikelet attaches directly to stem, 2/node 2 florets/spikelet, top floret typically sterile and smaller **Awns:** 1-4 in long; at maturity: twisted, stiff with minute barbs; awned floret falls out, awn-like glumes persist on head through winter

## VENTENATA (*VENTENATA DUBIA*)



**Height:** 6-27 in. **Leaves:**  $3/4 - 2\ 3/8$  in x 1-3 mm; narrow, rolled lengthwise or folded; open sheaths **Hairs:** Microscopic hairs give a shiny appearance **Node:** Dark red or black **Ligule:** Membranous, long, cut into narrow segments **Inflorescence:** Lax, open pyramidal panicle, 8 in long; turns to light yellow with a distinct sheen **Seedhead/spikelet:**  $7/16-5/8$  in long 2-3 florets/spikelet 15-35 seeds per plant **Awns:** Lower awns straight,  $3/16$ "; upper awns  $3/8 - 1$  in, bent and twisted, similar to wild oat; hairy at base (callus)