

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

The Floyd County AG NEWSLETTER *November, 2012*

November 14, 2012

WILDLIFE PROGRAM

The Floyd County Extension Service will be holding a wild life program on November 29th. The program topics will cover pheasant and pheasant habitat management. The program will be held at the county extension office at 5:30 pm in the meeting room. Sausage wraps and a drink will be served at 5:30 and the meeting will start after, there will be a ten dollar fee for all who attend.

TEXAS ANIMAL HEALTH COMMISSION ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF NEW CATTLE TRACEABILITY RULE

AUSTIN - A requirement for adult cattle in Texas to have an approved form of permanent identification in place at change of ownership will go into effect January 1, 2013 according to the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC). The Commission amended its rules in June of this year to enhance the effective traceability of beef cattle movements in Texas, which is the cornerstone of disease control activities. Implementation of the changes was delayed by the Commission to ensure cattle producers understand the requirements and can prepare for the changes.

The amended rule permanently cancels the brucellosis test requirement for adult cattle at change of ownership, which was unofficially suspended in the summer of 2011. Although testing of adult cattle is no longer required with the rule change, all sexually intact cattle, parturient or post parturient, or 18 months of age and older changing ownership must still be officially identified with Commission approved permanent

identification. This change primarily affects beef cattle, as dairy cattle in Texas have had an even more stringent identification requirement in place since 2008.

Before August of 2011, official identification devices such as ear tags were applied automatically at the time a brucellosis test was performed. The inadvertent loss of the identification devices applied to cattle when brucellosis testing stopped has threatened TAHC's ability to effectively trace cattle as part of any ongoing disease investigation.

The TAHC routinely performs cattle health investigations where the identification and location of exposed/infected animals is critical to success. For example, 30 Brucellosis reactors, over 300 Bovine Trichomoniasis affected bulls and 22 bovine tuberculosis cases have been investigated by the TAHC to date in 2012. The new traceability rule will help preserve the TAHC's ability to identify and trace animal movements quickly and effectively, no matter which disease is involved.

A complete list of acceptable identification devices/methods may be found at www.tahc.state.tx.us, but the most commonly used devices include USDA metal tags, brucellosis calfhood vaccination tags, US origin 840 series Radio Frequency Identification tags (RFID), and breed registration tattoos or firebrands. Producers are encouraged to contact their veterinarian or TAHC to determine which method of tagging will be best for their operation.

Free USDA metal tags, and a limited number of free applicator pliers (dependent on available funding) will be provided by the TAHC to producers wishing to use them. The tags and/or pliers may be obtained by

contacting local TAHC field staff and USDA APHIS Veterinary Services representatives. The TAHC is developing tag distribution partnerships with interested veterinary practitioners and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension offices. Partner contact information will be published as it becomes available. Producers may locate the closest tag distributor online at www.tahc.state.tx.us.

For additional ear tag information, including the nearest distributor of free USDA tags, contact the TAHC Traceability Team at 1-800-550-8242 ext. 733, or visit www.tahc.state.tx.us.

Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock

BODY CONDITION OF BEEF CATTLE

Profitability in the cow-calf business is influenced by the percentage of cows in the herd which consistently calve every 12 months. Cows which fail to calve or take longer than 12 months to produce and wean a calf increase the cost per pound of calf produced by the herd. Reasons for cows failing to calve on a 12-month schedule include disease, harsh weather and low fertility in herd sires. Most reproductive failures in the beef female can be attributed to improper nutrition and thin body condition.

Without adequate body fat, cows will not breed at an acceptable rate. The general adequacy of diets can be determined by a regular assessment of body condition. Body condition scores (BCS) are numbers used to suggest the relative fatness or body composition of the cow. Most published reports are using a range of 1 to 9, with a score of 1 representing very thin body condition and 9 for extreme fatness. There has not been total coordination by various workers concerning the descriptive traits or measures associated with a BCS of 5. As a result, scoring done by different people will not agree exactly; however, scoring is not likely to vary by more than one score between trained evaluations, if a 1 to 9 system is used. For BCS to be most helpful, producers need to calibrate the 1 to 9 BCS system under their own conditions.

Body condition affects the amount and type of winter feed supplements that will be needed. Fat cows usually need only small amounts of high protein (30 to 45 percent) supplements, plus mineral and vitamin supplementation. Thin cows usually need large amounts of supplements high in energy (+70 percent TDN), medium in protein (15 to 30 percent), plus mineral and vitamin supplementation. It is desirable to maintain cows at a BCS of 5 or more through breeding. This implies that cows scoring less than 5 at calving need to be fed to improve their condition through breeding, which is expensive to accomplish while they are nursing calves. If cows scoring 5 or less lose condition from calving to breeding, pregnancy rates will be reduced. Cows scoring 7 or 8 can probably lose some condition and still breed well provided they do not lose enough to bring their score below 5.

A BCS of 5 or more (at least 14 percent body fat) at calving and through breeding is required for good reproductive performance. Over-stocking pastures is a common cause of poor body condition and reproductive failure. Proper stocking, year-round mineral supplementation and timely use of protein supplements offer the greatest potential for economically improving body condition scores and rebreeding performance of beef cows in Texas. Sorting cows by condition 90 to 100 days ahead of calving and feeding so that all cows will calve with a BCS of 5 to 7 will maximize reproductive performance while holding supplemental feed costs to a minimum. Nutritional and reproductive decisions, so important to profitability, are made with more precision and accuracy where a body condition scoring system is routinely used.

Body Condition, Nutrition and Reproduction of Beef Cows

Dennis B. Herd and L. R. Sprott

Produced by AgriUfe Communications and Marketing

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U. S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. We will seek to accommodate all persons with disabilities for all meetings. We request that you contact the Floyd County Extension Office as soon as possible to advise us of any auxiliary and/or services needed

WEED RESISTANCE

With the advent of Roundup ready cotton, most farmers have gotten into the habit of only using one chemical (glyphosate). Producers may not want to admit that they have a resistance issue or they believe it was just a miss by the sprayer. The truth is weed resistance is becoming increasingly prevalent on the south plains, but there are ways to combat this problem.

First we need to know our adversaries in the war on weeds. Amaranth (pigweed) has developed the most resistance. Amaranth can produce up to 600,000 seeds per plant and the seeds can survive up to 42 months in the soil. Luckily for most farmers, not every plant produces seeds. Amaranth is a dioecious plant, meaning that the plants are either male or female and only the females produce seed. Kochia is another species that has been proven to resist glyphosate. Russian thistle (tumble weed) will not succumb to glyphosate applications and this leads most producers to believe it is resistant. The fact is, Roundup and other glyphosates are not labeled for Russian Thistles.

So the problem we now face is how to control these resistant species. First farmers need to remember that there are many other useful types of chemicals. Pre-emerge herbicides, for instance, still control the resistant species as well as they always have. Cultivation is also still an effective option. Stirring the soil can bring seeds that have been laying dormant underground to the surface, allowing them to sprout. The best thing a farmer can do is not only utilize one herbicide. The different modes of action that different herbicides have make them effective in different ways. Drift inhibitors can also increase the effectiveness of herbicides by increasing the coverage of the application.

Resistance is sure to change the tactics of the modern farmer, but it's a manageable problem. Glyphosate is still a useful herbicide; it's just not the only herbicide. It will take more strategy by farmers, but the weeds are still controllable.

Ethan Fortenberry, CEA Floyd County



Pictured are resistant Kochia plants in a harvested wheat field among other plants affected by two applications of Roundup. Photo supplied by Swisher County Extension

Pictured is a resistant Amaranth plant in a cotton field, plant is growing next to another plant affected by applications of Roundup. Photo supplied by Swisher County Extension



NITRATE TOXICITY IN FORAGES

Fall is here and winter is around the corner. Because of the drought the supply of forages going into winter is low. For most cattlemen standing forage and hay are the most utilized forms of winter feed. Plants that are grown in a drought such as this year can often be hazardous to animals when used as feed. That hazard can be a poison in the form of Nitrates.

Nitrate poisoning occurs when stressed plants produce more nitrates than they utilize, creating excessive nitrate buildup in the plant. When animals eat this, the result can be reduced oxygen supply and then death. Symptoms may appear within a few hours or not for several days.

Conditions that tend to favor high nitrate accumulation include stressed plant growth (drought, but also from cooler, cloudy days in the fall) or even a drought ending rain (causing excessive growth). It generally takes about 7 to 14 days after a good rain before nitrate levels will return to acceptable levels. Weeds damaged but not killed by a herbicide will have high nitrate levels.

Harvesting for hay will have little or no change in nitrate levels. Fermentation with ensiling can reduce nitrate levels by 40-60%, but extremely high levels may still be unsafe. Testing forage samples is always recommended before feeding livestock. Contact the Extension office for details on proper sampling, which is critical to good test results.

Sources: T.L. Provin and J.L. Pitt, Texas A&M; KSU Extension; OSU Extension

A publication of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service in Floyd County.
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