



# Blaine County Agriculture Newsletter

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2019

Blaine County Cooperative Extension Service  
212 N Weigle—Watonga OK 73772  
Office: 580-623-5195 <http://oces.okstate.edu/blaine>

## **Leasing Land for Wildlife and Recreation** Trent Milacek, NW Area Ag Economics Specialist

Producers in Oklahoma have access to an abundant resource that is both valuable for rental income and allows them to continue using the land for farming practices. Hunting leases provide another revenue source while ensuring natural resources are managed and protected.

Hunting leases are a form of recreational leasing. Producers are encouraged to read the OSU fact-sheet NREM-5032 for detailed information on developing and marketing a hunting lease. The factsheet can be found at the following web address: <http://factsheets.okstate.edu/documents/nrem-5032-lease-hunting-opportunities-for-oklahoma-landowners/>

A good hunting lease outlines appropriate use of the land and facilities so that the lessor and lessee are aware of each party's expectations. Native wildlife are publicly owned, so hunting leases only grant access and use of the property in which these resources can be pursued. A "hunting lease" only grants the lessee the right to make specific and limited use of the property. Therefore, this lease is more easily revoked if the need arises.

There is no "standard" hunting lease. Multiple-year leases are less common than one-year leases. Multiple-year leases may be more attractive to organizations or groups and could be more valuable to lessees looking for consistency. One-year leases are flexible for landowners if they are unsure of their future intentions or if they want to change the use of the land in the future.

Reducing liability to landowners when leasing land for hunting is a serious consideration. From NREM-5032, "Oklahoma's recreational use statute and Oklahoma Limitation of Liability for Farming and Ranching Act may offer protection from liability for land-owners when guests use their property without fees, when lessees pay less than \$10 per acre, or when the lessees and guests sign a properly executed liability waiver." Landowners should consult an attorney for assistance with preparing lease documents in order to insure they are properly protected.

Consulting the aforementioned factsheet will give producers an idea of how to price their hunting lease. Once a landowner is ready to lease they will also need to advertise. There are many free and paid websites dedicated to this task. An example of a free option can be found at the following web address: <http://www.noble.org/apps/weblistings/wildlifelease>

Hunting leases can be a good way to gain revenue from agricultural land. Hunting leases can help reduce trespassing, vandalism and theft due to increased activity through the presence of lessees. However, landowners will need to consult an attorney when developing a lease and must work with lessees throughout the lease. Landowners may also lose some use of their land as is necessary for lessees to utilize the land. If these potential positives outweigh the negatives, both parties can benefit. For more information or to obtain a copy of the factsheet NREM-5032, please contact the Blaine County OSU Extension Office at 580-623-5195.

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## Thinking Outside the Box to Reduce Feed Costs

Dana Zook, Area Livestock Specialist

The calendar has flipped to September and that registers the fall season for everyone from the corner coffee shop to the local football team. For the Oklahoma cattle producer, fall typically means weaning calves, planting wheat pasture, and booking supplement prices.

I often think of September as the start of a new production year because it kicks off feed season for cattle producers. Feed is the largest expense in cattle production making it an important yearly consideration. In 2018 the Kansas Farm Management Association reported feed costs to maintain a cow ranged from \$400.90 to \$539.23. In this analysis, cow calf operations are divided into high, middle, and lower third profit levels and these costs contributed to a negative return to management for each profit category. This same summary reported that cow calf operations that make up the lower 1/3 profitability category spent 36% more on feed than the high 1/3 category.

These statistics make me think that even small improvements could help narrow this gap for producers. One simple way to reduce overhead in a cow/calf system is to improve feed efficiency. This can be done in a variety of ways such as hay testing, grazing stockpiling forage, and enhancing or developing a grazing plan. Each of these suggestions increase feeding accuracy and reduce the need for supplement. Another interesting consideration when trying to reduce feed for an operation is to lessen the nutritional demand on cows. Of all stages of production, lactation is the most stressful. During lactation, cows are feeding their calf and recovering from pregnancy all while trying to supply their own system with adequate nutrition. Intriguing research out of the University of Nebraska Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory shows that simply weaning a month earlier can make effective change in improving body condition score. In this research, cows with calves weaned one month prior to traditional October weaning were able to recover body condition and be in better condition at calving.

In Oklahoma, this change in management could allow cows to graze pastures in September and early October and improve body condition without the need for excessive supplementation. Improved body condition puts cows on the fast track of earlier cycling and breeding in the subsequent season.

OSU Extension Beef Specialist, Dr. Dave Lalman has reported that increased selection for Milk EPDs in cows has led to the explosion of body weights and therefore a much greater need for nutrition overall. The concept that cows are bigger and require more nutrition than originally thought makes it even more important to find ways to feed more efficiently. Take this as a challenge to improve feeding efficiency in the coming year. If you need information or help please contact the Blaine County OSU Extension Office.



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Editor—Becky Bedwell, Extension Educator—Ag/4-H

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## Fall Garden Tips

### Turfgrass

You can continue to replant or establish cool-season lawns like fescue.

The mowing height for fescue should be lowered to approximately 2½ inches for fall and winter cutting.

Broadleaf weeds like dandelions can be easily controlled during October ([HLA-6601](#)).

Mow and neatly edge warm-season lawns before killing frost.

### Ornamentals

Plant cool-season annuals like pansies, ornamental cabbage or kale, snapdragons and dusty miller when temperatures begin to cool.

Begin planting spring-flowering bulbs like tulips, hyacinths, crocus and daffodils.

Good companion plants for bulbs are ground covers such as ajuga, vinca, English ivy, alyssum, moneywort, thrift, phlox, oxalis and leadwort.

Peonies, daylilies, and other spring-flowering perennials should be divided or planted now.

Dig and store tender perennials like cannas, dahlias, and caladiums in a cool, dry location.

Purchase trees from nurseries and garden centers at this time to select the fall color you prefer.

Many perennials can be planted at this time and the selection is quite nice.

Plant fall mums and asters and keep them watered during dry conditions. Don't crowd since they take a couple of years to reach maturity.

Plant container-grown trees and shrubs this month.

Check and treat houseplants for insect pests before bringing them indoors and repot rootbound plants.

### Fruits and Vegetables

Dig sweet potatoes and harvest pumpkins and winter squash.

Remove green fruit from tomato plants when frost threatens.

Harvest Oriental persimmons and pawpaws as they begin to change color.

There is still time to plant radishes and mustard in the fall garden.

Use a cold frame device to plant spinach, lettuce and various other cool-season crops for production most of the winter.

Plant cool-season cover crops like Austrian winter peas, wheat, clover, and rye in otherwise fallow garden plots.

Remove all debris from the garden to prevent overwintering of various garden pests.

Start new planting bed preparations now with plenty of organic matter.

### Water Gardens

Take tropical water garden plants indoors when water temperatures near 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Close the water garden for the winter by placing hardy plants in the deeper areas of the pool. Stop feeding the fish.

Cover water gardens with bird netting to catch dropping leaves during the winter months.

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## Blaine County Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting—November 7, 2019

The Blaine County Cattlemen's Association is open to all Cattle producers in Blaine County. The annual meeting will be Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Blaine County Fairgrounds. Dues for the year are \$40.00. Your dues include two meals for the banquet, Educational meetings throughout the year and the Spring Tour. We would like to encourage you to come and be part of the Association. Additional information will be out in the near future about the banquet speaker. Please RSVP to the Extension Office at by November 4<sup>th</sup> with number attending banquet for meal count. Additional meals can be purchased for \$10.00 per person. There will be lots of good door prizes! An Electric Grill is one of the door prizes. So don't miss out on a good program, food, fellowship and door prizes. If you raise cattle in Blaine County, please consider being a part of the Cattlemen's Association.

## Hay Sampling

The first step to getting your results is taking the most representative sample of your hay as possible. The best option to collect a sample is using a forage probe, which can be borrowed from the OSU Extension Office. (We have a new one at the office) When taking the sample, be mindful that we are asking you to bring in a sample that would fill a gallon size zip-lock bag. The lab will only be using about a tablespoon size sample once the forage is dried and ground. Potentially that teaspoon could be representing up to 200 tons of hay. We recommend to take a minimum of ten probes from random bales for large round bales and a minimum of twenty probes for small square bales.

For more information on collecting a forage sample see the OSU Extension Factsheet at <http://factsheets.okstate.edu/documents/pss-2589-collecting-forage-samples-for-analysis/>. Or call the office and I can send you the fact sheet. Bring your sample to the Blaine County OSU Extension office (located in the basement of the courthouse in Watonga) and in about ten days you can have the result factors that go into picking your feeding and supplement programs.



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## **Are the replacement heifers ready for the fall breeding season?**

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist

Fall-calving herds will be breeding replacement heifers in late November. Now is the time to make certain that those heifers are ready for the upcoming breeding season.

Immunize the heifers. Ask your large animal veterinarian about proper immunizations for yearling replacement heifers. Replacement heifers should be immunized for respiratory diseases such as IBR and BVD. The heifers should receive this vaccination at least one month before the start of the breeding season. This would also be a good time to include other reproductive disease protection that may be recommended by your veterinarian. Examples of other immunizations that should be considered include leptospirosis and campylobacter (sometimes called vibriosis).

If a set of scales is available, weigh the heifers. There is time to make adjustments to the supplementation being fed to the heifers to insure that they meet the target weight at the start of the breeding season. To be certain that a high percentage of heifers are cycling at the start of the breeding season, they must weigh a minimum of 60% of their mature weight ([Davis and Wettemann](#)). [See OSU Research Report 2009](#). If these heifers will eventually grow into 1200 pound cows, then they must weigh 720 at the beginning of the estrous synchronization and artificial insemination (or bull turn-out if natural breeding is used). Calculate the weight gain needed between now and the start of the breeding season to see if additional energy is required to achieve the desired weight gain.

Some producers may choose to grow heifers at a lower rate and attempt to breed them at 55% (or lower) of their estimated mature weight. In this scenario, about twice as many heifers need to be raised, synchronized and inseminated in order to assure that adequate numbers are bred in a timely manner to meet the future needs of the herd. All of the heifers need to be pregnancy checked about 60 days after the breeding season so that non-pregnant heifers can be marketed as soon as possible.

Many small cow calf operations will not have scales available to monitor weight gain. The next best evaluation tool is to monitor body condition of the heifers. If all of the heifers are in a body condition score of 6 (based on the 1 to 9 BCS system) then they should meet the desired target weight. With adequate summer forage available this year, heifers should need only a small amount of protein supplement (1 to 2 pounds of high protein (about 40% protein) supplement per head per day) to maintain adequate body condition going into the breeding season.



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OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
212 N WEIGLE  
WATONGA OK 73772

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**Blaine County Cooperative Extension Service**  
Oklahoma State University  
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