Upcoming Events

Cattlemen’s Stag
Kay County Farm Youth Center
November 19, 2009
6:30 pm

OQBN Certified Sale
Blackwell Livestock
Blackwell, Oklahoma
November 30, 2009

Horticulture Industries Show
Tulsa Community College
Tulsa, Oklahoma
(Visit www.hortla.okstate.edu/his.htm for registration materials.)
January 8-9, 2010

2009 OSU Winter Crop School
Wes Watkins Center-Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
(Visit www.wheat.okstate.edu for registration materials.)
January 27, 2009

2010 Oklahoma Soybean Expo
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
(More details to follow.)
Feb 8-9, 2009

2010 No-till Oklahoma Meeting
National Center for Employee Development
Norman, Oklahoma
(More details to follow.)

Leasing Your Land for Hunting
Dr. Dwayne Elmore, Extension Wildlife Specialist

Leasing land for recreational hunting has become a major source of revenue for landowners. In fact, in many areas, revenue generated for hunting leases has surpassed lease rates for more traditional agriculture production. Here in Oklahoma, lease rates for hunting varies tremendously based on quality and quantity of land, proximity to urban areas, type of game, amenities offered, and the clientele. On the low end, we see lease rates around $4/acre. However, rates in excess of $20/acre are not hard to find.

For landowners thinking of leasing their land, there are several factors to consider. Finding the right
lessee can be a challenge, but asking around in your area will usually be all that is needed. Alternatively, a good resource is the Noble Foundation’s recreational lease web site (http://www.noble.org). You will want a good lease agreement that has conditions for termination, a legal description of the property, rights granted or withheld, terms of payment, effective dates, liability waivers, and acknowledgements of risk. The OSU fact sheet on lease hunting (NREM 5032) has a good example of a draft lease agreement. Liability is always a concern for landowners considering allowing hunters on their land whether payment is transferred or not. A lease agreement is a major step in minimizing liability risk, and you should always have your attorney help you with it. Additionally, you might consider having the lessee take out a supplemental insurance policy. These usually can be obtained at a low cost.

Landowners should consider other reasons to lease their land besides monetary. Often, services provided by the lessee are of greater value to landowners, particularly older or absentee landowners who may not be able to take care of the land as they would like to. Many lessees would be willing to offer labor in exchange for access to private land.

A final consideration for landowners is the compatibility of a lease with current land management. Management for wildlife can be very compatible with cattle and agriculture production. The primary consideration is having abundant native habitat. With grazing land, this means maintaining as much native rangeland as possible and being properly stocked with cattle. Your local Natural Resource Conservation Office can help you determine what the proper stocking rate is for your land objectives.

Introduced pastures are much less productive for wildlife, and will almost always yield much lower lease rates. Cultivated ag land can provide good wildlife habitat, and hence good lease rates, assuming that most of the landscape is still in native habitat. So, farmers can help diversity their farm income by maintaining wide fence rows and field corners in native range or forest. Having larger blocks of native habitat between fields will also increase the value of this land for lease hunting. Leasing land for recreational hunting is not for every landowner. However, many will find that it can add to their income, reduce trespass, add labor resources, and perhaps create a few friends along the way. If you would like more information on lease hunting, view fact sheet NREM 5032 at http://nrem.okstate.edu/Extension

The Kay County Extension Office will be closed on Thursday 26th & Friday 27th for Thanksgiving and Thursday 24th & Friday 25th for Christmas.

COW/CALF CORNER

Winter Wheat Pasture: Better Late Than Never?
Derrell S. Peel, OSU Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

I am not sure you can say that September weather was like November but so far it seems that we are having September in November in Oklahoma. After an unusually wet and cold September and October, the weather has finally dried out and warmed up. Much of the state has not yet had a freeze and it appears unlikely to freeze in the next several days. Wheat planting is still behind schedule and some producers are just now finishing up planting, some of which was intended to be planted in September. Overall, wheat stands are highly variable with the wheat that was planted early very big with good stands (except where pests have taken a toll) to just planted or barely emerged wheat.

This leads to the question of whether it is too late for wheat grazing. The answer will depend to a large extent on producer decisions about whether to harvest grain. In some parts of the state wheat is grown primarily for forage most years and those producers will certainly buy stocker calves for grazing through the end of the year and into January if necessary, depending on when the wheat is ready for grazing. For other producers wheat graze-out is a year by year decision that is sometime not made until late February or early March when first hollow stem stage forces the choice between grain and grazing. However, this year, a late start to winter grazing likely means that some producers will not have enough days to make dual-purpose wheat feasible and the decision to graze now also involves a choice to go ahead plan for graze-out next spring. Some producers may take a bit of a wait and see...
attitude before deciding to buy stockers. However, the fact that the wheat is finally in the ground and fields and corrals are drying up likely means that stocker buying will pick up from now until Thanksgiving. Moreover, the current state of the wheat (grain) market makes graze-out a definite possibility for some producers. Feeder prices have finally stabilized in general and stocker prices in particular have shown a bit of strength the past two weeks. We are in the middle of the fall run of calves and available stocker numbers will decrease as we move into December. Delayed stocker cattle demand should help hold lightweight cattle prices through the end of the year and could provide more strength if demand picks up after the big fall run of calves is past. Despite the fact that much of the early promise of wheat pasture has fizzled, it still appears that we will have a large amount of wheat pasture and bigger numbers of cattle on wheat than the past two years.

Observe Bulls During the First Portion of The Fall Breeding Season
Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

The fall breeding season is about to begin. Herds that aim for a September 1 first calving date, will turn bulls with the cows in the latter part of November. A good manager keeps an eye on his bulls during the breeding season to make sure that they are getting the cows bred. Occasionally a bull that has passed a breeding soundness exam may have difficulty serving cows in heat, especially after heavy service. While conducting a research trial several years ago, I was collecting data on the ability of a bull to breed synchronized cows. The bull (being observed) was mature and had been successfully used in the past. Also he had passed a breeding soundness exam. However, it was apparent immediately that he could no longer physically breed females in estrus. Replacing him immediately was the only solution. If we had not been present to observe the problem, an entire calf crop for that breeding pasture was in jeopardy. Inability to complete normal service and low semen quality are more likely to be problems that affect breeding performance than failure to detect cows in heat. Nonetheless poor libido (sex drive) can occasionally be observed in beef bulls. Such problems can best be detected by observing bulls while they work. Therefore producers should (if at all possible) watch bulls breed cows during the first part of each breeding season. If problems are apparent, the bull can be replaced while salvaging the remainder of the breeding season and next year’s calf crop. Likewise a small proportion of bulls can wear out from heavy service and lose interest. These, too, will need to be replaced. The greater the number of cows allotted to each bull in the breeding pasture the more critical it is that every bull be ready to work every day of the breeding season. Injuries to bulls during the breeding season are relatively common. When a bull becomes lame or incapable of breeding, because of an injury to his reproductive tract, he needs to be removed from the breeding pasture and replaced with another bull.

Nitrogen Cycle
Brian Arnall, OSU Precision Nutrient Management Specialist

The weather lately has provided me with a smorgasbord of examples of the Nitrogen Cycle for the Nutrient Management class that is currently studying nitrogen. Unfortunately, these examples are not beneficial for the winter wheat producers and for some neither is the constant rain. This time of year is important in monitoring the nitrogen levels in your winter wheat fields. When we look at the N-Cycle, http://nue.okstate.edu/ncycle.htm, one of the primary pathways for loss is leaching. Nitrate is very mobile, and follows water through the soil system. Since we have been receiving consistent precipitation, there has been a great deal of water moving down through the soil profile. At the same time, nitrate is transported. Now this does not mean the nitrogen is lost forever, it may just be deeper in the soil. Unfortunately, the nitrogen may be out of reach for newly sown wheat which lack extensive rooting system. Thus, resulting in discoloration or yellowing in wheat. After receiving drier weather again, the water will move up towards the surface and the root systems will expand when nitrogen becomes available to the crop. However, no one knows when this will happen, and some soil may lose this nitrogen for good. This is likely to occur on sloping fields, potentially on ground where a shallow water table is present and deep sandy soils where the nitrate may
just go too deep. Luckily if you have recently fertilized, your nitrogen is not in the nitrate form and some is still in the ammonium form which is not mobile and will not leach out. The second N-Cycle pathway of loss experienced is denitrification. Denitrification occurs when the soil becomes waterlogged for extensive periods of time. This process commonly occurs on the high side of terraces where water collects and stands for weeks. In denitrification microbes that need oxygen to decompose organic matter strip the oxygen from nitrate and ultimately converting it into a gas that then escapes into the atmosphere. If this occurs there is no chance for recovery, but this normally only occurs in small pockets of low lying or poorly drained areas.

With the broad range of environmental conditions there is no way I could give one ideal recommendation for what needs to be done. Every situation will be unique and you should discuss your options with your county agricultural educator. Please keep in mind that just because your wheat turned yellow does not mean that you have lost nitrogen, there are many other culprits that can be making an impact on discoloration. In addition, wheat can only handle wet conditions for so long. This year may also prove to be another great example of how the N-Rich Strip can improve your soil nutrient management.

**HORTICULTURE TIPS FOR November/December**

David Hillock

**November**

Lawn & Turf

• Fertilize cool-season grasses like fescue with 1 pound nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft.
• Continue to mow fescue as needed at 2 inches and water during dry conditions.
• Control broadleaf winter weeds like dandelions.

• Keep falling leaves off fescue to avoid damage to the foliage.

Tree & Shrub

• Prune deciduous trees in early part of winter. Prune only for structural and safety purposes.
• Wrap young, thin-barked trees with a commercial protective material to prevent winter sunscald.
• Apply dormant oil for scale infested trees and shrubs before temperatures fall below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Follow label directions.
• Continue to plant balled and bur lapped trees.
• Watch for arborvitae aphids, which tolerate cooler temperatures in evergreen shrubs.

Flowers

• Tulips can still be successfully planted through the middle of November.
• Leave foliage on asparagus, mums, and other perennials to help insulate crowns from harsh winter conditions.
• Bulbs like hyacinth, narcissus and tulip can be potted in containers for indoor forcing.

Fruits & Nuts

• Delay pruning fruit trees until next February or March before bud break.
• Harvest pecans and walnuts immediately to eliminate deterioration of the kernel.

Miscellaneous

• Leftover garden seeds can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer until next planting season. Discard seeds over 3 years old.
• Gather and shred leaves. Add to compost, use as mulch or till into garden plots.
• Clean and store garden and landscape tools. Coat with a light application of oil to prevent rusting. Drain fuel tanks, irrigation lines and hoses. Bring hoses indoors.

**December**

Lawn & Turf

• Remove leaves from cool-season grasses or mow with a mulching mower.
• Continue mowing cool-season lawns on a regular basis.
• Continue to control broadleaf weeds in well-established warm- or cool-season lawns with a post-emergent broadleaf weed killer.

Tree & Shrubs

• Select a freshly cut Christmas tree. Make a new cut prior to placing in tree stand. Add water daily.
• Live Christmas trees are a wise investment, as they become permanent additions to the landscape after the holidays.
• Light pruning of evergreens can be used for
holiday decorations. Be careful with sap that can mar surfaces.

**Flowers**
- Apply winter mulch to protect rose bush bud unions and other perennials. Wait until after several early freezes or you will give insects a good place to winter.
- Poinsettias must have at least six hours of bright, indirect light daily. Keep plants away from drafts.

**Fruits & Nuts**
- Cover strawberry plants with mulch about 3-4 inches thick if plants are prone to winter injury.
- Wait to prune fruit trees until late February or March.

**General**
- Keep all plants watered during dry conditions even though some may be dormant.
- Irrigate all plantings at least 24 hours before hard-freezing weather if soil is dry.
- Order gardening supplies for next season.
- Now is a great time to design and make structural improvements in your garden and landscape.
- Send for mail order catalogs if you are not already on their mailing lists.
- Christmas gift ideas for the gardener might include tools, garden books, magazine subscriptions, *Oklahoma Gardening* educational tapes or membership to Oklahoma Botanical Garden & Arboretum.
- Clean and fill bird feeders.
- Make sure indoor plants are receiving enough light or set up an indoor fluorescent plant light.
- Till garden plots without a cover crop to further expose garden pests to harsh winter conditions.
- Visit your county office to obtain gardening fact sheets for the new gardening season.
- Join a horticulture, plant or urban forestry society and support community “greening” or “beautification” projects.
- Review your garden records so you can correct past mistakes. Purchase a new gardening journal or calendar to keep the New Year’s gardening records.

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Happy Holidays!