



# McClain County Commentary

## McClain County Extension Service Oklahoma State University

September 2017

### McClain County Cattlemen Educational Meeting Sept. 7th, 6:30pm

The McClain County Cattlemen’s Association (MCCA) would like to invite all those with an interest in the cattle industry to their next educational meeting. It will be held on Sept. 7th at 6:30pm at the McClain County Farm and Home Building in Purcell.

MCCA has invited Dr. Steven Meyers, a feed specialist with Purina Animal Nutrition to visit with us about feed and mineral programs for a successful cow-calf operation.

Purina is sponsoring a Beef BBQ dinner being prepared by Klein’s Catering from Perry. In order to obtain an accurate meal count they are asking that you RSVP by Friday Sept. 1st by calling the OSU Extension Office at 527-2174. We look forward to seeing you there.

### Beware of Fall Armyworm Issues

The cool, wet August has brought us more than green grass and comfortable temperatures. Along with it have come a large population of fall Armyworms.

Numerous reports have been coming in from McClain County that fall armyworms are feeding on bermudagrass and may be ready to damage seedling wheat when planted. Fall armyworms are caterpillars that directly damage many crops including sorghum heads, fescue and bermudagrass pastures, seedling wheat, soybeans, and residential lawns. Fall armyworms get their name because they generally occur in greater numbers in the fall, and they have a tendency to move in large numbers and “march” to their next meal. McClain County wheat producers should be on the lookout for this insect from emergence to the first killing frost.

- Newsletter Contents**
- MCCA Educational Meeting
  - Fall Armyworms
  - OCA Checkoff
  - Stockpiling Bermuda
  - Master Cattlemen’s Class
  - Destiny Ranch Tour



Fall armyworms are surface dwelling, "climbing cutworm" caterpillars. Mature fall armyworms measure 1½ inches long. Their body color can range from green, to brown to black. When looking for them, pay particular attention to their head capsule and the presence of a prominent inverted white "y" on its head. Female moths lay eggs at night on grasses or other plants and hatch a few days after being laid. One female can lay up to 1000 eggs.

Small larvae do not eat through the leaf tissue, but instead, scrape off all of the green tissue and leave a clear membrane that gives the leaf a "window pane" appearance. Larger larvae can feed voraciously on newly emerged leaves, chewing completely through them. When large larvae are present, significant damage can occur in a relatively short period of time. If you took all of the food they eat during their larval stage, 70% of it would be consumed in the 6<sup>th</sup> or last instars (stage of growth).

Scout for fall armyworms every few days after emergence by examining plants in several locations within the field. Fall armyworms are most active in the morning or late afternoon. Inspect some plants that are showing evidence of injury, and look for small caterpillars in the whorl of the wheat seedling. When scouting, look at plants along the field margin as well as in the interior, because they often move in from road ditches and weedy areas. The suggested treatment threshold in seedling wheat is 2 to 3 larvae per linear foot of row.

More often than not, economically damaging numbers do not occur in Oklahoma. But, with the right weather conditions, they can build up and cause problems. If they occur on wheat this fall as predicted, it will be the third year in a row that damaging numbers have been present.

Fall armyworms are most easily controlled when they are small (less than ½ inch). Several insecticides are registered for control of fall armyworm in wheat. Carefully read and follow all label restrictions for application and grazing restrictions. If you need assistance in insect identification or pesticide selection, give me a call at the county extension office.

## OCA Checkoff Increase Vote

Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association (OCA) has been granted authority by the Oklahoma Department of Food and Forestry (ODAFF) to host a referendum for the creation of a state beef checkoff. The date for the in-person voting will be November 1st.

On that day, cattle farmers and ranchers can go to any Oklahoma county Extension Office to vote. If that date is unworkable or if cattle producers prefer, they have the option to call the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association during the first three weeks of October to request a ballot be mailed to them. More specific details for the referendum will be made available later this summer.



## Stockpiling Bermuda

The most expensive part of maintaining a cow is the winter feeding costs. One of the largest components of winter feeding cost can be harvested forages. It is almost always more economical to let the cow graze to consume her nutrient needs than to provide it in hay or feed supplements. If you are fortunate enough to have cool season forage pastures such as fescue, wheat, or ryegrass, your purchased feed costs can be very low. For the majority of us with only warm season grass pastures, the winter feeding costs can be very high. One fall option for bermuda grass fields may help reduce those costs.

With the moisture we have in the soil this year, the option of potentially growing some of our winter forage needs with "stockpiled" bermudagrass can be effective. This can be accomplished by a late summer nitrogen application and deferred grazing until after a killing frost on bermuda. On average, September is

our third wettest month of the year.

A recent OSU trial had the objective to economically evaluate stockpiling bermudagrass in the fall to consume instead of bailing it up for hay. The research found that this practice can reduce cow-wintering costs especially on spring calving herds that are dry in the winter.

Forage accumulation during the late summer and fall is variable from year to year depending on moisture, temperatures, date of first frost and fertility. OSU research has found that 50 pounds of actual nitrogen fertilizer applied in the late summer has produced 1000 – 2000 pounds of forage per acre on bermuda grass pastures. In some ideal situations even more forage has been produced.

Studies between 1997 and 2000 found stockpiled bermuda grass protein concentrations were quite impressive, even after frost. In November, the range of protein content of the standing forage was 13.1% to 15.2%. The protein held up in December and ranged from 12.5% to 14.7% and declined to 10.9% to 11.6% in January. Energy (TDN) also held up well until after the first of the year. Excessive moisture after a killing frost may reduce these numbers somewhat. The following is a list of recommendations for stockpiling bermudagrass pastures for best results and reducing winter feed bills:

1. Remove existing forage by haying, clipping, or grazing by late August.
2. Apply 50 to 75 pounds of actual nitrogen fertilizer per acre early September.
3. Defer grazing until at least late October or early November (after a killing frost).
4. Control access to forage by rotational or strip grazing to cut waste and extend grazing.
5. If cool season forage is available for use in the winter, use the stockpiled bermudagrass first.
6. Feed supplementation should begin in December on wet cows or around the first of the year on dry cows.
7. Provide a free-choice mineral package throughout the grazing season.

## Master Cattlemen's Class

McClain, Garvin and Cleveland County Extension Offices are now taking reservations for a Master Cattlemen's Class to be offered this winter at the Mid America Technology Center in Wayne.

Master Cattlemen is an OSU program that provides an educational opportunity for a wide range of subjects dealing with the cattle industry. The class is scheduled to start on October 16th, from 6 to 9pm and continue for most Monday nights thru January. It takes 28 hrs. minimum to complete the course.

The cost of the class is \$100 per household and will include all classroom materials, refreshments, and a metal Master Cattlemen gate sign. Couples are encouraged but will only receive one textbook and one gate sign.

Class size will be small (15 to 25) and will feature speakers from OSU campus, Area Specialist, and County Educators. Schedules are being finalized now but will include marketing, nutrition, animal health and forage management topics.

Give me a call if you would like more information on the class. Deadline to sign up will be October 6th at 4:30pm.

## Destiny Ranch Tour

Mark your calendars for a tour of the Destiny Ranch in St. Louis, Oklahoma on October 27th. This tour is affiliated with the Master Cattlemen Class above but open to all cattlemen in McClain and surrounding counties. Transportation will be provided and lunch will be on site for a small fee.

Destiny ranch is a family owned farm that produces cattle and markets the beef in a value added program. The goal is to produce native grass fed, grain finished beef that is free from hormones and additives.

Look for more information to come on the tour including pick up times and locations as we get closer to the date.

## Upcoming Calendar of Events

September 7th. 6:30pm. McClain County Cattlemen's Meeting. Purina Feeds and Minerals. McClain County Farm and Home, Purcell.

Oklahoma State Fair. September 14-24, OKC Fairgrounds.

October 16th, Master Cattlemen's Class begins. Classes held at MATC on Monday nights. Deadline to sign up, Oct. 6th.

October 27th, Farm Tour, Destiny Ranch, Pottawattamie County. Look for more details to come.

November 2nd. MCCA Annual Meeting and Membership Drive. McClain County Farm and Home, Purcell.

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