A Note From the New Agriculture Educator

As many of you may already know, as of July 1st, I have been named as the new Agricultural Educator for McCurtain County. We all know that Dennis has left me with some large shoes to fill, but I’m working hard to develop the skills needed to assist you with your agriculture and horticulture questions and needs.

Our new 4-H Educator, Cathleen Taylor, started work in early September and I am now working full time with agriculture programs. I am currently planning programs that I hope will be of interest and benefit to the Ag producers of our county. If you have any ideas or concerns, feel free to give me a call anytime. I’m here to help you and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Brad Bain
County Agriculture Educator and Interim Extension Director

MCCA Meeting Set

The McCurtain County Cattleman’s Association will meet Thursday, October 23rd, at the Kiamichi Technology Center in Idabel. The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m.

The association will be providing brisket for the meal and all attending are asked to bring either a dessert or a vegetable.

The educational presentation will be on the new County or Origin Labeling Requirements and County USDA/FSA director Jerry Robinson will be providing an update on the new Farm Bill.

If you’re not a member, a membership form is included in this newsletter. We hope to see you Thursday night.

Pesticide Training Set

McCurtain county agricultural producers interested in obtaining a private pesticide applicator license should mark November 6th on their calendars. The OSU Extension Service will be providing a training course to assist producers in preparing themselves for the test required for this license.

Producers not able to attend the workshop can pick up application materials at the Extension Office for $15. and take the test at home. The cost will be the same at the workshop.

The workshop will be held at the OSU Forest Research Center east of Idabel on Highway 3. The program will begin at 1:00 p.m. and will last from 2 to 3 hours.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP by October 30 so that we will know how many packets to have available.
Growing Bred Replacement Heifers

Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

Bred replacement heifers that will calve in January and February need to continue to grow and maintain body condition. Ideally, two year old heifers should be in a body condition score “6” at the time that their first calf is born. This allows them the best opportunity to provide adequate colostrum to the baby, repair the reproductive tract, return to heat cycles, rebreed on time for next year, and continue normal body growth. From now until calving time, the heifers will need to be gaining about 1 pound per head per day, assuming that they are in good body condition coming out of summer.

Heifers will need supplemental protein, if the major source of forage in the diet is Bermuda grass or native pasture or grass hay. If the forage source is adequate in quantity and average in quality (6 - 9% crude protein), heifers will need about 2 pounds of a high protein (38 - 44% CP) supplement each day. This will probably need to be increased with higher quality hay (such as alfalfa) or additional energy feed (20% range cubes) as winter weather adds additional nutrient requirements. Soybean hulls or wheat mids may also be used to insure adequate energy intake of pregnant heifers.

Wheat pasture (if adequate rainfall produces growth) can be used as a supplement for pregnant replacement heifers. Using wheat pasture judiciously makes sense for pregnant heifers for two reasons. Pregnant heifers consuming full feed of wheat pasture will gain at about 3 pounds per head per day. If they are on the wheat too long the heifers can become very fat and cause calving difficulty. Also the wheat pasture can be used for gain of stocker cattle or weaned replacement heifers more efficiently. If wheat pasture is used for bred heifers, use it judiciously as a protein supplement by allowing the heifers access to the wheat pasture on at least alternate days. Some producers report that 1 day on wheat pasture and two days on native or Bermuda will work better. This encourages the heifers to go rustle in the warm season pasture for the second day, rather than just stand by the gate waiting to be turned back in to the wheat. Whatever method is used to grow the pregnant replacement heifers, plan to have them in good body condition (BCS = 6) by calving so that they will grow into fully-developed productive cows.

Poor Temperament Adversely Affects Profit

Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

October is a traditional weaning and culling time for spring-calving herds. This is a time when producers decide which cows no longer are helpful to the operation and which heifer calves will be kept for future replacements. Selecting against ill-tempered cattle has always made good sense. Wild cattle are hard on equipment, people, other cattle, and now we know that they are hard on the bottom line.

Mississippi State University researchers (Vann and co-workers. 2006. Southern Section of American Society of Animal Science) used a total of 210 feeder cattle consigned by 19 producers in a “Farm to Feedlot” program to evaluate the effect of temperament on performance, carcass characteristics, and net profit. Temperament was scored on a 1 to 5 scale (1=nonaggressive, docile; 5=very aggressive, excitable). Three measurements were used: pen score, chute score, and exit velocity. Measurements were taken on the day of shipment to the feedlot. Exit velocity is an evaluation of temperament that is made electronically by measuring the speed at which the animal leaves the confinement of the chute. Exit velocity and pen scores were highly correlated. As pen scores increased, so did exit velocity. As pen score and exit velocity increased, health treatments costs and number of days treated increased, while average daily gain and final body weight decreased. As pen score increased, net profit per head tended to decline. Pen temperament scores and net profits per head were as follows: 1=$121.89; 2=$100.98; 3=$107.18; 4=$83.75; 5=$80.81. Although feed and cattle price relationships have changed since this data was collected, one would expect similar impacts from the temperaments of cattle under today’s economic situation.

“Heritability” is the portion of the differences in a trait that can be attributed to genetics. The heritability of temperament in beef cattle has been estimated to range from 0.36 to 0.45. This moderate level of heritability indicates that real progress can be made by selecting against wild cattle. Whether we are marketing our calf crop at weaning or retaining ownership throughout the feedlot phase, wild, excitable cattle are expensive to own and raise.
All meat products sold in retail markets will now have to be labeled as to the country of origin from which it came. The Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) provision is part of the 2008 Food, Conservation and Energy Act (aka Farm Bill). The new labeling rules have specific definitions as to which types of establishments are required to implement the new labeling rule. Retail outlets like grocery stores are generally the establishments affected. Processed foods and restaurants are exempt from COOL requirements. Only meat from animals born, raised and slaughtered in the U.S. may be labeled Product of U.S.A. Other products must identify the country or countries of origin which may include U.S. and other countries.

Meat packers are considered the originators of the origin claim but the interim final rule indicates that the slaughter facility “must possess or have legal access to records that are necessary to substantiate the origin claim.” “A producer affidavit shall be considered acceptable evidence provided it is made by someone having first-hand knowledge of the origin of the animals and identifies the animals unique to the transaction.” Records maintained in the course of normal conduct of business may serve as verification. Animals that are part of a NAIS compliant or other recognized official identification system may use the animal ID to verify origin claims.

Livestock producers can use a wide variety of herd or production records, feed purchases, animal health or vaccine purchases to document the normal level of production that would verify the origin of animals they sell. Producers should be prepared to provide an affidavit to the buyer stating the origin and the existence of such records. Producers should keep a copy of the affidavit noting the buyer and/or the date and location of the sale. COOL also covers meat from breeding animals which means that producers should keep records of raised animals used for breeding and should request an affidavit for any purchased breeding animals.

All animals in the U.S. as of July 15, 2008 are considered to be U.S. origin. It is important for livestock producers to document herd size and composition for these animals that are “grandfathered” in under this date. Young breeding females that may not be sold for several years may need this documentation to verify the status as of July 15, 2008.

Producers that purchase animals for the purpose of adding weight and value and then re-sell those animals, such as stocker producers, must maintain records to establish and identify who the animals were purchased from and who the animals were sold to. Commingling of animals creates a challenge but AMS has indicated that as long as a producer has records of purchases and sales that reasonably account for total animal sales, individual animals or subsets of animals need not be traced back to specific purchase group(s). Thus, animals purchased from a variety of sources arriving with affidavits that show that animals all have the same origin, can be commingled into different sales groups and sold with affidavits that verify the origin of the animals.

COOL is not a mandatory animal ID program but, depending on the flow of animals into and out of an operation, producers may find it advantageous to use a more detailed tracking system to account for sources and destinations of their animals. Of course, if a producer has animals with different origins, those animals should be segregated by origin group with appropriate records to account for each origin group unless they are part of a NAIS compliant or other individual animal ID program to track animals. As noted above, NAIS compliant animals may use the animal ID as verification of origin. Animals on hand as of July 15, 2008 are covered under the previously mentioned grandfather clause.
Reducing Cattle Transportation Losses

Kent C. Barnes, NE District Area Livestock Specialist

During the fall months, many calves are weaned. This process usually includes being loaded on trailers (trucks) to be moved to market or some other location for pasture.

Loading too few or too many animals on a trailer can result in injuries. Too many times, not enough thought and care is put into the trailer space requirements necessary to move a given number of cattle. Also, cattlemen tend to underestimate the stress and subsequent sickness that can be imposed on cattle when improperly loaded.

Every type and size of beef animal possible will be moved on every type and size of trailer imaginable. It is difficult for cattlemen to know what the "right fit" is. How many of my calves weighing about 450 pounds will fit in a 6' X 20' stock trailer? As a "rule of thumb" each square foot of trailer floor space can hold 65 pounds of calf (350—600lb. range) weight. Therefore, one could safely load and haul about 17 head in this example. Each calf requires 6.92 sq. ft (450 lb. divided by 65 lb. = 6.92) and in this particular trailer there are 120 sq. ft. available for hauling (120 / 6.92 = 17.33). With cows, 75 pounds per square foot can be safely hauled.

Typically, the weight of cattle being loaded is unknown. The above guidelines along with an estimated weight are helpful when planning transportation for cattle. In the end, the manager must observe the cattle on the trailer. When properly loaded, animals will fit easily into the compartment for hauling, but the entire area will appear occupied.

Trucking Tips
1. Use partitions to separate different classes and weights of cattle transported on the same trailer.
2. Make certain that the floor of the trailer provides cattle with good footing. This is important to reduce shrink and injury.
3. Check trailer load regularly during the trip.
4. Accelerate vehicle smoothly and avoid sudden stops.

Poultry Waste
Continuing Education Classes

Poultry producers and commercial litter applicators should mark their calendars for the following classes if they have not attended a three hour training during the 2008 year. The next training to be held in McCurtain County will be in the spring (March or April).

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
<td>LeFlore County</td>
<td>6:00—9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(918) 647-8231 for more info</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>Lincoln County</td>
<td>1:00—4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(405) 258-0560 for more info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>Adair County</td>
<td>9:00 a—12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(918) 696-2253 for more info</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 18</td>
<td>Rogers County</td>
<td>9:00 a—12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(918) 341-2736 for more info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 20</td>
<td>Delaware County</td>
<td>6:00—9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(918) 253-4332 for more info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>Mayes County</td>
<td>6:00—9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(918) 825-3241 for more info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 18</td>
<td>Haskell County</td>
<td>6:00—9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(918) 967-4330 for more info</td>
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Individuals needing the initial 9 hour training will have the following opportunities:

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<tr>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>Hughes County</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(405) 379-5470 for more info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Adair County</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(918) 696-2253 for more info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 7, 8, 9</td>
<td>LeFlore Co.</td>
<td>6:00—9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>(918) 647-8231 for more info</td>
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</table>

Producers needing to check on their hours or with other questions can contact the McCurtain County Extension Office at 580-286-7558.
It's time to consider fall weed control applications on pastures that may have become infested with species such as musk thistle, buttercup, red sorrel and curly dock. Every spring, we in Extension receive calls from livestock producers asking us how to get rid of these weeds. Usually when we receive the call, the plants are already at the flowering stage and are expensive and difficult to control. Our best advice at that time is to mow or spray these plants to keep them from going to seed and then treat those pastures the following fall or spring with an herbicide when they are easier to control.

Buttercups are a problem in cool-season grass pastures and easily recognized in early spring by their bright yellow flowers. There are several species of buttercups but all of them tend to emerge in the fall and overwinter as low growing plants that send up stems and flower in late spring. They are extremely difficult to control when they are in the flowering stage and producers who have observe them growing in their fields this past spring should consider a late fall herbicide application or a February or March herbicide application. These plants are a lot easier to control during these time periods. Herbicides that work well on buttercups include: fall applications of Grazon P+D or early spring applications of Grazon, Cimarron max, or Cimarron.

Red sorrel, smooth dock and curly dock are three cool season plants that are in the same family and are collectively called sour dock by producers in southeast Oklahoma. These plants tend to be problems in moist pasture situations and are extremely difficult to control when they send up their stems in the spring and begin to produce seeds. They tend to go un-noticed until seed head formation begins but by then, it is usually to late for chemical control. The best times to spray these plants are in November or early March on a day when daytime temperatures are expected to be above 60 degrees. Herbicides that work well during these two time periods include; 2,4-D, 2,4-D + Dicamba, Grazon P+D, and Cimarron Max.

Thistles are also a cool season weed that can become problematic in spring pastures. There are several species of cool season thistles that inhabit Oklahoma pasture with two of the worst being musk thistle and scotch thistle. These two thistles are considered noxious weeds and should be controlled when identified growing in a pasture. Most of the thistles that grow in Oklahoma pastures will emerge in the fall and overwinter in the rosette stage until late spring when they send up a stalk and initiate flower and seed production. These weeds are easy to control prior to the formation of these stalks but become harder to control the closer they get to flowering.

Herbicides that work well on thistles when they are in the rosette stage include 2,4-D, Grazon P+D, Cimarron Max, and 2,4-D + Dicamba. The best times to spray these plants are in November or early March on a day when daytime temperatures are expected to be above 60 degrees.

Cool season broadleaf weeds by their nature all tend to be easier to control when they are young and prior to their seed head development. It is easy for these weeds to go un-noticed during the winter and spring only to become a problem in late spring when they send up there reproductive stems and flowers. Producers who have had problems with these weeds in their pastures in the past, should consider checking these pastures for these winter weeds in Late October and Early November. If large populations are observed, plans should be made to spray these weeds in November or March when the plants are easy to kill. You local county extension office will be able to help you with plant identification and recommend the chemical control option that will work best for your management system.
What is a Reverse Mortgage?

Bill Burton, NE District Ag Economist
Many older celebrities are touting the advantages of Reverse Mortgages on TV and Radio ads, but what are they really?

A Reverse Mortgage is a loan against your home’s equity that can allow you to convert it into tax-free income. The loan does not need to be repaid until you no longer live in your home. Lenders make the loan after looking at your age and the amount of equity you have in your home. Once you are no longer living in your house, the lender will be paid back (principal and interest) usually from the sale of your home.

The main eligibility requirements are:

1. Borrower and spouse must be at least 62 years of age,
2. Property must be the borrowers principal place of residence,
3. Borrower must have equity in the property,
4. Must use the proceeds from the loan to pay off any existing mortgages.

The remaining funds can be used in any way you wish. The money can come to you in a lump sum, monthly payments or you can take the money as you need it. You still own your home and it is possible to pass in along to your heirs through a will. If this is your desire, other funds from your estate will need to be utilized to pay off the Reverse Mortgage. The amount of the loan may not be as great as some might have in mind. The Federal Housing Authority website provides the following example. 9% interest rate and a $100,000 qualifying home. A 65-year old could borrow up to 22% of the homes value; a 75-year old could borrow up to 41% and an 85-year old could borrow up to 58%.

A couple of websites that can assist potential borrowers with mortgage calculators are AARP at www.rmaaarp.com and the National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association at reversemortgage.org. Anyone interested should consult your tax advisor before signing any paperwork.

Reducing On - Farm Fuel Use

Randy Taylor, State Extension Agricultural Engineer
High fuel costs have gotten the attention of farmers in Oklahoma. While there are some little things that farmers can do to reduce fuel use, large reductions in fuel use will require bigger steps.

Tire Inflation Pressure
Tire inflation pressure is one of the major items affecting tractor performance. Making sure that inflation pressure is correct is a fairly simple item, but it could provide improved performance in most conditions.

The correct inflation pressure depends on the tire size, the weight on the tire, and the configuration (single, dual, triple). The most important factor is making sure the tire has enough air pressure to support the weight on it. How do you determine the correct inflation pressure? The answer is a load - inflation table. These can be obtained from most tire or equipment dealers. As you might expect, larger tires can support similar weight to a smaller tire with less air pressure and the correct inflation pressure for duals is less than that for singles.

Tractor Weighting
Tractor weight will have a big influence on performance and efficiency. Naturally a tractor needs enough weight to gain traction, however extra weight just means you have to haul it around. How much weight is needed? The answer to this really depends on the tractor’s primary use. The best way to explain tractor ballasting is that weight will determine how much you can pull and power will determine how fast you can pull it. Thus a tractor that is primarily used for tillage should weight more than one that is primarily used to pull a drill. In reality, our tractors are used for many tasks so they should be set up for the primary activity. A good rule of thumb is to have 120 - 135 lbs per PTO horsepower. This can result in a large range of weights and should be fine tuned based on the type of tractor (2WD, MFWD, 4WD).

Trips Across the Field
While adjusting tire pressure and tractor ballast may save fuel, these savings are generally small (<5%). Major reductions in fuel use will require more significant changes in farming practices. The obvious method is to reduce the number of trips across the field. If you are making 3 - 4 tillage passes, try to get by with 1 - 2 less. However, you need to make sure you are still accomplishing your goals (seedbed preparation, weed control, etc) for your production system.
Join The
McCurtain County Cattleman’s Association

Membership Benefits Include:

Regular meetings with opportunities to meet and fellowship with fellow cattle producers
With Meals provided at the meetings

Educational programs provided by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
on current topics related to the Beef Industry

Scholarship opportunities for member children who are graduating seniors

Opportunity to support beef exhibitors and 4-H & FFA programs at the county fair

MCCA Membership Application

Name: ___________________________________________ Date: ______________________
Immediate family members to be included with membership:
____________________________________________________________________________
Company/Ranch Name: __________________________________________ City: ___________ Zip: _______
Mailing Address: ___________________________________________ City: ___________ Zip: _______
Phone: __________________ Email: _______________________________
Ranch Website (if any) ___________________________________________

In the box provided, please draw a sketch of your ranch brand(s):
Check for brand location: _____ Left Rib _____ Left Hip
_____ Right Rib _____ Right Hip
Other (tell where) __________________________

Is your brand registered with the OCA: _____ Yes _____ NO

MCCA Dues are $20 and include spouse and immediate children 18 and younger and children enrolled in college.
Submit dues to MCCA Treasurer, Susan City at HC 73 Box 194, Haworth, 74740