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The McCurtain County Cattleman’s Association will meet Thursday, May 7th, at the Kiamichi Technology Center in Idabel. The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m.

The speaker for this quarters meeting will be Doug McKinney who is the value-added beef specialist at Oklahoma State University. Doug was raised in northeastern Oklahoma near Porter. Prior to his current position, Doug served as an Agriculture Extension Agent in Carthage Texas for eleven years. As a county agent, Doug experienced success developing value-added programs for producers in East Texas, including special sales, pre-conditioning programs, source and age verification programs, quality sources, and marketing cooperatives.

Doug will be presenting a program on maximizing value of cattle with emphasis on:

- Capturing value and avoiding discounts in today’s cattle market
- Preconditioning programs
- Source and Age Verification
- Natural Beef and Branded Beef Programs
- Taking advantage of value added opportunities and where are the markets

This should be a timely presentation that would benefit all of our county ranchers and all cattleman are invited to attend.

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

In addition to the educational program, we will also be recognizing one of our county’s graduating seniors as this year’s MCCA Scholarship recipient.

Clarification of Recent News Article on Cattle Prices

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Farm Equipment Operator Training Set

The McCurtain County Extension Office will be offering a Farm Equipment Operators training Monday, June 1st and Friday, June 5th at the HCE Building at the fairgrounds. This program will be offered for all individuals ages 13 and over.

More information on this program can be found on page four of this newsletter.

MCCA Meeting Set

Education Program on Maximizing Cattle Value

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Breeding Soundness Exams for Bulls are an Important Investment

Dave Sparks, DVM, Area Food-Animal Quality and Health Specialist

Breeding Soundness Exams (BSE) for bulls are an important investment. When everything appears normal, you should do exams on all bulls in your herd, regardless of age or past history, 30 to 60 days before the onset of breeding season. The truth is that while there are very few sterile bulls, there are a lot of poorly fertile bulls, one count suggests in excess of 20%, and it is these poor breeders that the exam is designed to locate and eliminate. Unfortunately many poorly fertile bulls are not identified until after the end of breeding season when a high percentage of cows fail to become pregnant.

The BSE will start with a thorough physical exam. A breeding bull is only as good as his general health. Special attention will be paid to feet and legs, with the veterinarian watching the bull move. The bull can’t detect cows in heat if he can’t keep up with the herd as it moves around the pasture, and he can’t breed cows unless his hind limbs are strong enough to carry his weight. Bulls locate cows in heat by sight rather than by smell so he has to have normal eyes to be effective. The bull should receive a body condition score of at least 5, with 6 being better. A bull with a body condition score of 4 may look acceptable now, but he is likely to get thin enough towards the end of the breeding season to affect his breeding performance. His teeth should be examined also. If he doesn’t have enough teeth left to maintain his body condition at a time of hard work he will not be acceptable. A normal sheath should point at the ground between the bull’s front feet. If it is excessively pendulous or points straight down the bull will be predisposed to injury.

It is important that the bull’s penis be fully extended so that it can be examined. Several conditions may involve the penis. Persistent frenulum is an attachment of the penis to the sheath that prevents extension. It can be easily corrected, but since it is inherited, the bull probably shouldn’t be used as a breeder if his sons are to be saved as prospective sires. Other less common maladies of the penis or sheath may be discovered by the veterinarian during the breeding soundness exam. Both testicles should be palpated. Asymmetry might suggest inflammation, degeneration, neoplasia, or hernia. The measure of scrotal circumference is part of the BSE. Scrotal circumference varies with the breed and age of a bull. The most significant testicular growth in a bull occurs in the ages of 6 to 36 months. Selection of potential herd sires is often done at 12 to 14 months and is based on scrotal circumference. Various breed associations and bull sale organizations have developed guidelines for the minimum SC of bulls at different ages.

Rectal palpation is required to examine the accessory sex glands, which are located inside the pelvis. The prostate, ampullae, and seminal vesicles all have roles to play in the storage and delivery of sperm cells. Softness or swelling of any of these glands may indicate a breeding problem.

The semen evaluation portion of the BSE consists of obtaining a sample and examining it microscopically. The best way to obtain a sample is with the use of a teaser cow and an artificial vagina. Bulls usually must be trained to this procedure, however, so it is not practical for doing a BSE on a range bull. Electro-ejaculation works well also, and newer ejaculators are much improved. The newer models cause less stimulation to the nerves of the hind limb, making collection less stressful to the bull. Computerized controls apply only as much stimulation as is required in an increasing pattern. This eliminates operator error and leaves the technician with both hands free to collect the sample. Once the sample is obtained care must be taken to keep it warm until it can be examined and it should be checked as soon as possible, as sperm cells are very subject to cold shock. Too much exposure to the atmosphere, especially on a cold day, can make a good bull look bad. The Society for Theriogenology has established standard thresholds for acceptable levels. The bull must exhibit 30% or greater cell motility, 70% or greater normal morphology of cells, a scrotal circumference acceptable for his breed and age, and a satisfactory physical and reproductive tract examination. Bulls must pass all four criteria to pass the BSE. Bulls are considered acceptable (should be a good breeder), deferred (did not pass but problem may be resolved over time), and unsatisfactory (did not pass and has a non-resolvable problem).

In some cases bull breeding soundness exams can prevent the catastrophic loss of a calf crop. In all cases they can increase profitability by producing more pounds of calves to walk up the ramp on shipping day, and by cutting unnecessary purchase and maintenance costs of bulls. Today’s production costs are increasing steadily, and producers are trying to stretch limited income to cover these costs. Bull breeding soundness exams are low cost inputs with big returns. Though it varies from area to area, most veterinarians charge between $25 and $40 per bull for breeding soundness exams. One figure computed for cow herds nation-wide suggests that breeding soundness exams can increase cow herd income by $17.00 per cow. Isn’t it time to quit leaving these dollars lying on the table?

Don’t Let One Bad Apple (Calf) Spoil the Whole Barrel

Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

South Dakota State University researchers examined the cause of a scours epidemic in one spring calving herd. Results of the retrospective, record-based investigation suggested that introduction of foster calves was associated with the calf scours outbreak. The calf scours epidemic was clearly in swing by the 45th day of the spring calving season and first cases of the epidemic were observed between the 31st and 40th days (April 5 through April 14).

Prior to April 5, no scours cases had been observed, despite 39 calves being born. Following April 5, records indicated there was the introduction of at least 2 foster calves. The outbreak commenced shortly after the introduction of foster calves. Foster calves can introduce pathogens to a herd, and can shed calf scours pathogens in their feces even when feces appear normal. Because of this risk, the introduction of foster calves is not usually recommended. If introduced into a herd, foster calves (with their foster dam) should be isolated from the remainder of the herd until all calves are at least 4 weeks old. At that time, it is generally regarded as safe to commingle foster calf pairs with the remainder of the herd. Source: W. B. Epperson. 2003 South Dakota Beef Report.
Livestock

The Third Stage of Calving: Shedding of Fetal Membranes

- Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

The process of “calving” or parturition in beef cattle is defined by three stages. Stage I occurs about 4 to 24 hours prior to calving. The major event during stage I is the dilation of the cervix. Stage II occurs in about 30 minutes in adult cows and about 1 hour in first calf heifers (when all goes well) and is the time when the calf passes through the birth canal and is delivered into the world. The third stage of calving is the shedding of the placenta or fetal membranes. In cattle this normally occurs in less than eight to 12 hours. The membranes are considered retained if after 12 hours they have not been shed. In some rare cases, the entire placenta is held in the uterus so there is no exposed portion. This condition may go unnoticed until the cow shows an abnormal uterine discharge or an odor characteristic of tissue degeneration.

Years ago it was considered necessary to remove the membranes by manually unbuttoning the attachments. Research has shown that manual removal can be detrimental to uterine health and future conception rates. When a cow calf operator notices a cow that “did not clean” in 12 hours after calving, close observation is suggested. If the cow shows any signs of ill health, such as droopy ears, lethargic behavior, or poor appetite, this may indicate that an infection of the uterus has begun. Contact your veterinarian for the proper management of the retained placenta. Administration of antibiotics usually will help against infection and the placenta will usually slough in four to seven days.

Cattle Feeding Not Profitable

- Bill Burton, NE District Ag Economics Specialist

All of 2008 and 2009 so far have not been kind to cattle feeders in the US. There have been significant losses posted in the first quarter of this year due to low fed cattle prices and high feeding costs. The only positive sign so far, is the amount feeders are losing per head is declining. Steers sold in the first quarter of 2009 lost an estimated $160 per head while similar steers in January were losing almost $230 per head. These losses are expected to continue through the summer months.

The Livestock Market Information Center estimates the average feedlot returns based on feeding out a 750-pound steer placed in a Southern Plains commercial feedlot, including all production costs incurred by the cattle. They estimate that this January loss matches the record loss and their estimates go back to the mid 1970’s. The current loss of $160 per head is roughly equal to the losses posted in the first quarter of 2008.

The question that is very difficult to answer is how long will people continue to place cattle in the feedlots while losing this much money. The result should be either higher retail prices or lower calf prices, or both. The chance of consumers being willing to pay more for the steaks and hamburger that they purchase is slim leaving lower calf prices as the likely result.

McCurtain County Cattleman’s Association Membership Application

Name: ___________________________________________ Date: __________________

Immediate family members to be included with membership: __________________________________________________

Company/Ranch Name: __________________________________________________________________________

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 Citty at HC 73 Box 194, Haworth, 74740
What You Should Know About Sprigging Bermudagrass

First of all, should you even plant Bermuda on this soil? Bermuda does not do well on deep sugar sands. Likewise, it does not do well on shallow upland clay soils. You might consider a different forage species if the soil is not suited to Bermuda grass production. Visit with your local county educator about the species that might work best on your soil.

How much will it cost me? It’s difficult to quote a cost when prices may vary from one area to the next, but as a good guess sprigs are going to cost from about $1 to $5 dollars per bushel depending on variety. Sprigs should be planted from 20 to 30 bushels per acre. Sprigging cost can run from $30 to $60 dollars per acre. It’s easy to see that to plant an acre of sprigs can run close to $100 per acre, even before the needed fertilizer is applied and the cost of working up the ground is calculated.

When Should I sprig? Oklahoma State University has for many years suggested planting Sprigs in February and March. In recent years it seems however that most sprigs get planted in April, May and June. Recent Research and Demonstration trials in Pittsburg County have shown that sprig survival and first years ground cover are better when sprigs are planted in January, February, March and April than were sprigs planted in May and June.

How much Fertilizer should I put down? It’s the same answer we always give, take a soil sample and follow the recommendations for Bermuda establishment. pH, phosphorus and potassium levels should be fixed prior to planting. Only 30 to 40 units of nitrogen (65 lb. to 85 lb./ac of urea) should be applied at planting. More is not better. If too much nitrogen is applied at planting, weedy grass will compete with Bermuda grass growth. Once sprigs are up and the runners are 6 to 8 inches in length, apply another 50 units of nitrogen (150 lb/ac of ammonium nitrate) top dressed. If the NRCS is cost sharing on the establishment, fertility recommendations will be made for just establishment and will be less fertilizer than we would recommend for a production system. Let your County Educator know that it’s cost shared when you bring in your soil sample.

What kind of seed bed do I need? A firm fine seed bed will be best for sprig survival. If it is too cloudy, we won’t get good sprig to soil contact and the sprigs may dry out and die. If the soil is too fluffy, it will crust over after a rain and the shoots will have a hard time pushing through the crust. Sprigs should be planted about 2 inches deep in moist soil. Rolling the ground with a culti-packer after sprigging will improve sprig to soil contact.

What do I do about weeds? Broadleaf weeds should be sprayed when sprig runners are 6 to 8 inches long with ½ to ¾ lb per acre of the active ingredient of 2,4-D. Weedy grasses should be flash grazed or mowed any time the weedy grasses get tall enough to shade the emerging Bermuda shoots.

Contact your local County Extension Educator for more in-depth information on sprigging Bermudagrass.

Forage and Crops

Farm Safety

Farm Equipment Operator Training Set For June

The McCurtain County Extension Office will be offering a Farm Equipment Operators Course during the first week of June. The primary objective of this course is to meet the educational requirements for 14 and 15 year old youth set by OSHA to operate farm machinery.

While the 14 and 15 year olds will receive certification, the course is open to all individuals ages 12 and up who would like to be safer operators of farm equipment. Youths younger than 14 who complete the course will be presented their certification when they reach their 14th birthday.

According to the Department of Labor, all equipment operators who have not reached their 16th birthday must participate in 24 hours of training to be eligible to work on farms. Youth working on farms owned by their parents are exempt from this regulation. However, this would be a valuable course for all youth planning to go to work this summer. In addition, the course may also be of interest to small landowners who may have purchased a new tractor or other farm machinery in recent years and wish to have professional training in it use and the dangers of it’s misuse.

Cost of the course will be $10.00 to cover materials and snacks.
Trees and Shrubs
Prune and feed azaleas immediately after blooming.
Insect Alert: (EPP-7306)
- Bagworms on juniper and arborvitae. (Late May)
- Elm leaf beetles and larvae on elms. (Late May)
- Mimosa webworms on mimosa and honeylocust.
- Lace bugs on sycamore, pyracantha and azalea.

Soak new transplants and newly planted trees unless rainfall is abundant.

Pine needle disease treatments are needed in mid-May. (EPP-7618)

Turfgrass
Cool-season lawns can be fertilized again. If you did not fertilize cool-season grasses in March and April, do so now.
Warm-season lawns may be fertilized again in May. (HLA-6420)
Seeding of warm-season grasses such as bermudagrass, buffalograss, zoysiagrass and centipedegrass is best performed in mid-May through the end of June. The soil temperatures are warm enough for germination and adequate growing season is present to promote winter hardiness.
Dollar spot disease of lawns can first become visible in mid-May. Make certain fertilizer applications have been adequate before ever applying a fungicide. (EPP-7658)
Nutsedge plants become visible during this month. Post-emergent treatments are best applied for the first time this month (HLA-6421). Make certain warm-season grasses have completed green-up.
The second application of pre-emergent annual grass herbicides can be applied in late-May or early June, depending upon timing of first application (HLA-6421). Check label for details.
Vegetative establishment of warm-season grasses can continue. (HLA-6419)

Flowers
Annual bedding plants can be set out for summer color.
Plant summer bulbs such as cannas, dahlias, elephant ear, caladiums and gladiolus.
Shake a leaf over white paper to look for spider mites. If the tiny specks begin to crawl, mites are present.

Water Gardens
Clean out water garden and prepare for season. Divide and repot water garden plants.

Begin feeding fish when water temperatures are over 50°F.

Fruits and Vegetables
Plant watermelon, cantaloupe, cucumber, eggplant, okra, sweet potatoes, etc.

Fruit spray programs should be faithfully continued during the next several weeks. (EPP-7319).
Late May is the best time to control borers in the orchard. Check for label recommendations and controls.

Controlling Ants in the House

George Driever, Ph.D., Area Pest Management Specialist

With the warming weather, many of us are starting to see ants in the kitchen and bathroom. Primarily, the ants are looking for a source of water, but they will also eat anything edible they can find. While the impulse is to get out the can of insecticide and spray the little critters, this will only kill the ones you can see and not reduce the colony at all. The only way to really stop them in the house is to kill the queen.

Most of the ants that come in the house are the odorous house ants. These ants will make a home in the walls, under window sills, in racks or in many places outside. Carefully sealing cracks around windows, trim moldings and counters will slow them down but the colony will have to be killed to stop their entry. The best, but slowest way to kill the colony is to use baits that will attract a large number of ants. They will take the poison back to the colony and will poison the whole nest. Place the baits next to the trail and the ants will do the rest. There are many different brands of baits, but in my experience, not all work. The faster killing baits are Combat Quick Kill and the Raid Ant Bait II. The Combat Gel and the Terro Ant Killer also work well, but slower. The Terro product uses boric acid in a sugar syrup base, so is safe around food and children. However all precautions should be taken when using any pesticide to be sure that children and pets do not have access to them. If the ants are coming in from outside then the area around the window, down the wall and about two or three feet of ground should be sprayed with a product such as Spectracide Triazicide, Ortho Home Defense System or Bayer Advanced Lawn and Garden Multi Insect Killer. A barrier around the house and a few feet up the wall with one of these products will stop the ants and most other insects. Sevin can be prepared and poured in the nest of the colony if it can be located.
Poultry producers and litter applicators should mark their calendars for the following classes. These are dates for the first seven months. Producers operation breeder house operations should make it a priority to attend the spring meeting as we have worked to get an excellent speaker from the University of Arkansas to come down and speak on breeder house management. More than likely, our fall meeting will be a general topic or of more interest to broiler producers.

Producers should also try to attend 3 hours of training each year rather than 6 hours one year and skipping a year. In order to take 6 hours in the same year, you will be required to attend sessions with different topics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 30</td>
<td>Adair County</td>
<td>On-Farm composting, Vegetative Buffers to reduce emissions, Weed ID and the Effects of Overgrazing</td>
<td>Jun. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>Idabel</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>McCurtain County Extension Office, Courthouse Initial 9 Hour Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 4</td>
<td>Poteau</td>
<td>9 a.m.—Noon</td>
<td>Breeder House Management, Vegetative Buffers to Reduce Emissions, Subsurface Technology for applying litter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Producers needing to check on their hours or with other questions can contact the McCurtain County Extension Office at 580-286-7558. However, the Department of Agriculture is the only organization that can determine if producers are within compliance or not. The Extension Service can only confirm that you have attended the training.

### Miscellaneous

#### Comments on Swine Flu

- Dr Dave Sparks, DVM, Area Food Animal Quality Specialist
- Seasonal influenza vaccine will not provide protection against the H1N1 virus.
- Anti-viral drugs are effective in treating illness caused by the H1N1 virus.
- The CDC has not recommended that people avoid travel to affected areas at this time.
- Persons with febrile respiratory disease should stay home from work or school to avoid spreading infections.
- Swine influenza H1N1 is a pig/pork problem in name only. The CDC has found no evidence to indicate that any of the illnesses resulted from contact with pigs. They caution that this is a contagious virus that is spread from human to human by direct contact.
- According to the CDC this type of virus is not spread by food. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.
- Spread from humans to animals is possible but at this time no such cases have been reported. However according to OSDH veterinary surveillance is being heightened concurrent with increased human monitoring.

You might also want to visit the websites of the Oklahoma State Department of Public Health and the national Center for Disease Control for more information on this subject.
Poultry Waste Management Training

3 hours of Annual Continuing Education Units (CEU)

McCurtain County
Kiamichi Technology Center
Idabel, Oklahoma

Topics:

Breeder House Management
Dr. Keith Bramwell, U of A

Vegetative Buffers to Reduce Emissions from Poultry Houses
Dr. George Driever, OSU

Scenarios that Alter Poultry Litter Nutrient Availability from the Norm
Dr. Jason Warren, OSU

June 4, 2009
6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

TO REGISTER:
Contact Brad Bain by calling him at the number below

Call: (580) 286-7558

Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.
UPCOMING EXTENSION SPONSORED EVENTS

May 7    MCCA Meeting, Maximizing Cattle Value, Kiamichi Tech Center
May 12   Initial 9 Hour Poultry Waste Mgmt. Training, Extension Office Conference Room
June 1   Session I, Farm Equipment Operator Training
June 4   3 Hour Poultry Waste Update Training, Kiamichi Tech Center
June 5   Session II, Farm Equipment Operator Training

The McCurtain County Ag-Line Newsletter is published by:
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