

The Agriculture Newsletter

August 2014

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Howdy!

The middle of the summer is upon us and dare I say that the temperatures have been pretty mild this year, those of you out there in it everyday might disagree just a little bit, however!

I know this is a busy time for everyone, summers always are. I've seen some rice fields ready for harvest and lots of hay being cut, of course. Always nice to drive down the road and see production Agriculture at work.

On another note, there will be lots of great educational programs and opportunities coming up in the next few months. By the time this reaches you all we will have completed the annual Beef Cattle Short Course presented at Texas A&M and if you haven't had the opportunity to attend this, I highly suggest you mark your calendars for next year. It's usually always the first week in August and is a truly great experience to get up close and personal with some of the smartest and most innovative people in the cattle industry.

Also, the annual South East Texas Beef Cattle Symposium and Trade Show will be taking place this year at the Winnie Stowell Community Building in Winnie (look for flyer soon) on October 28th. We are bringing back some aspects from previous years, like the Hay Show, and I hope you all will get the opportunity to attend. If you are interested in the Free Hay Testing Campaign check the flyer in this newsletter for more information or give me a call. As always we will offer a few CEU's and a nice meal, can't beat that!

Lastly, I was talking with Bennett DeMoss of our local FSA office and he gave the reminder that the deadline for LFP (Livestock Forage Disaster Program) to cover drought related losses back to October 2011, is approaching soon. Contact Bennett if you have any questions over eligibility or to apply.

Hope you enjoy the contents of this newsletter and look forward to see you all around soon! Thanks,



HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS FOR LIVESTOCK OWNERS

In this area you almost hate to mention the word hurricane for fear of jinxing ourselves, but as the age old saying goes, it's better to be safe than sorry. The following article contains a few things to think about and consider no matter how large or small your livestock herd. Just like we are prepared to evacuate or secure our families and homes, we need to take the same steps to ensure that our herds will be taken care of. Many of these tips come from Dr. Jason Cleere, a Beef Cattle Specialist with Texas A&M, who gained a lot of experience in this area when he was part of the disaster recovery that took place after our last hurricane.

One of the first and most important things we can do is identify our herds. This includes branding, ear tags, etc. In the event that our herds are misplaced due to evacuation or flooding, a form of identification is the best place to start in order to return animals to their rightful owners and herds. Also, make sure your herds are up to date on vaccines. In cattle, blackleg, leptospirosis, tetanus, encephalitis. If you have a closed herd this may not be something you put much thought into as you generally aren't very exposed to disease, however in the event that our livestock are commingled we certainly up the risk for disease transmission.

Another key area in which we can be prepared is to have a basic vet and livestock supplies on hand. This includes things like tetanus vaccines, antibiotics, vet wrap, ropes, halters, feed and water buckets, and any additional supplies you think would come in handy. It may be difficult to get your hands on these kinds of things in the event that we do have a major storm like we have seen in years past.

Having a plan in place is also a critical component. Will you evacuate your herd? Do you have the means to transport the livestock safely? For some producers with large herds, evacuation may not be a possibility. If that is the case there are still measures you can take to help ensure the safety of your herds. First and foremost, don't enclose livestock unless you know that the structure is built to withstand strong wind and rain. If possible move herds to lots with thick stands of brush or trees that will provide natural cover, animals will seek this out on their own. If you have a low lying area, like near a river bottom, move those livestock to higher ground less prone to flooding. If that is not

an option make sure to leave all gates open to allow livestock to evacuate on their own in the event of flooding.

If you do have smaller herd numbers or the ability to evacuate make sure you are prepared for that as well, we all know the evacuation process is not an easy one either. Give the trailer you plan to use a once over before you load animals up and hit the road. Make sure all tires are in the best condition possible, if the trailer has gone unused for some time check for dry rot as well as loose, missing or rotted floor boards. The last thing we want to do is have an animal go down or become injured in the process of moving them to safety. Also, DON'T OVERCROWD. It would be a smarter and safer choice to leave animals behind rather than try and cram them onto a trailer. We all know what kind of things can go wrong in this situation.

Lastly, take a look around your place now. What things could be potentially hazardous in a situation with high wind speeds? Tin, fencing supplies, etc. can all be dangerous when wind speeds pick up and catapult them into the air. So, a little spring cleaning may be in order around the farm. Even though feed prices are a touch high, it certainly wouldn't hurt to stock pile about 2-3 weeks of feed in case of emergency. Remember, if we receive major damage from a storm that could mean weeks without access to feed or other necessary supplies.

Remember, when we choose to become livestock owners we took on the responsibility of maintaining their health and well being. These are a few steps you can take to ensure that you will be at least some what prepared in the event of an emergency. For more information or to find additional tips about hurricane awareness and preparation visit the Texas Extension Disaster Education Network at <http://texashelp.tamu.edu/>.



"Agriculture . . . is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals and happiness."

- Thomas Jefferson

2014 Southeast Texas Hay Testing Campaign

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Hay Show and results of Hay Testing Campaign will be held in conjunction with the

Southeast Texas Beef Cattle Symposium and Trade Show

October 28, 2014

Winnie Stowell Community Building

**FREE HAY
TESTING!**

Hay Classes

- ▲ Bermudagrasses
- ▲ Other Warm Season Perennial Grasses
- ▲ Warm Season Annual Grasses
- ▲ Cool Season Annual Grasses



Hay Samples may be dropped off at the following locations:

Jefferson County AgriLife Extension Service
Doguet's Feed and Pet Center
Jefferson County Precinct 1 Service Center
Jefferson County Precinct 2 Service Center
Jefferson County Precinct 4 Service Center
Hamshire Fannett Ag Science Building

*All samples must be marked with name, contact information, what type of hay and if it was grown or purchased. *



Hay Samples must be submitted by Friday, September 19th.

For more information call 409-835-8461

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

STUDY: ECONOMIC CHALLENGES PERSIST FOR CATTLE PRODUCERS LOOKING TO EXPAND HERDS

High cattle prices, availability of replacement cows persist

Writer: Blair Fannin, 979-845-2259, b-fannin@tamu.edu

CORPUS CHRISTI – Texas cattle producers looking to restock herds may choose to examine all options as financial dynamics have changed due to historic high cattle prices, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economists.

A recent Financial and Risk Management Assistance report outlined several factors for South Texas cattle producers to consider when purchasing replacements. The publication was compiled by Corpus Christi AgriLife Extension economists Mac Young and Dr. Levi Russell; Dr. Joe Paschal, AgriLife Extension livestock specialist, Corpus Christi, and Dr. Steven Klose, AgriLife Extension economist, College Station, also served as co-author.



The Financial and Risk Management Assistance program, commonly referred to as FARM Assistance, is a computerized decision support system developed to perfect methods in risk and decision making for farmers, according to AgriLife Extension economists.

The economists used a 200-head herd in South Texas as a case study. Costs and returns on management practices were typical of the area. These may and can vary by operators. Ten-year averages were used to analyze and compare net cash farm income. Open heifers, bred heifers, young pairs, old pairs and open cows were evaluated to see which types would generate the most net income.

“As we move forward, higher feeder and replacement cattle prices in 2014 will have a significant impact on the short- and long-term profitability of cattle operations in South Texas,” Young said.

Current cattle prices, including replacements, are averaging 20 percent more when compared to July 2013 prices, the report notes. Availability of young pairs and open cattle will continue to be a challenge for cattle producers looking to rebuild or expand herds, the economists noted.



“Depending on the availability and price of quality replacements, more than one stocking strategy may have to be used to rebuild a herd,” Young said. “In fact, it would be wise to revisit these and other options prior to purchase to re-evaluate them as conditions change in the future.”

Based on current 2014 market prices and conditions, restocking with older open cows may be the most profitable strategy at present time, according to the study. Prices for open cows in the past year have not increased in proportion to other replacement females, but availability may be an issue due to previous culling, Young said. Average 10-year cash farm income per cow was \$377 for open cows, while olderpairs generated \$341, young pairs \$275, bred heifers \$346 and open heifers \$209.

“Bred heifers and older pairs also may offer more profitable strategies than young pairs or open heifers,” Young said. “The lower the initial capital outlay to repurchase cattle, and the availability of a calf to sell the first year, improves net cash farm income for bred heifers and pairs. Open heifers may be the least profitable way to replace due to not having a calf to sell in the first year and additional development costs.”

Young said in evaluating these restocking options, the important point to consider is the order or rank in terms of net cash farm income, not the actual value. In previous FARM Assistance studies, bred heifers and older pairs were more financially profitable than open cows.

Paschal emphasized that restocking considerations need to include more than the age and pregnancy status of the replacements. Additional management costs for extra feed and health, and death and replacement losses need to also be considered.

“In this analysis, open cows are now the most profitable,” Young said.

According to the study, actual results will likely vary by producer, management practices, forage conditions, and cattle markets. The culling and calving rates used in the study may or may not reflect actual practices.

“For example, younger females may have been culled too heavily and older females not heavily enough,” Young said. “Additionally, the availability and quality of females by class may be an issue. This analysis should be used only as a guide in evaluating restocking options, and it should be remembered that the best restocking scenario may change from season to season.”

To view the report, visit <http://farmassistance.tamu.edu>.

PROPOSED CHANGES IN TEXAS TRICH REGULATIONS

Texas A&M University Beef Cattle Browsing Newsletter, Dr. Steve Hammack.

The Texas Animal Health Commission has proposed changes to the rules for trichomoniasis testing as follows:

- Add testing requirements for a herd of origin when a bull from the herd is sold and subsequently found to be infected with Trich.
- Require testing when a bull is separated from its unit of origin, such as when a bull is found on property not owned by the owner/caretaker of the bull (stray), and that bull is found to be infected with Trich. Under the proposal, the pasture (unit) of origin, and pasture where the stray Trich bull was located will both be placed under hold order, and any additional bulls located there must be tested for Trich.
- Allow TAHC to evaluate the effectiveness of a herd control plan for an infected herd leading to the possible continuation or disapproval of the herd plan based on the progress or lack of progress made in controlling the disease within the herd.
- Finally, the proposal would require herds enrolled in the Trich Herd Certification Program to have perimeter fences that are adequate to prevent the ingress or egress of cattle.

More information can be accessed at <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/regs/proposals.html>

Man of the Year in Texas Agriculture Award

For the past 50 years the Texas County Agricultural Agents Association has awarded a Man of the Year in Texas Agriculture Award to individuals in recognition of their outstanding leadership in agriculture, agribusiness and their support of the educational program efforts of the County Extension Agents of Texas. Their unselfish service has contributed to improving the economic well-being and quality of life in their community, our state and our nation.

A huge "Congratulations" is in order to **Toni Carter Spencer** as she was one of eight recipients of the 2014 Man of the Year in Texas Agriculture Award.

Next time you visit Toni at M&J Fertilizer make sure to thank her for all of the hard work and dedication she has provided to the agriculture industry and the people in our community over the years.

  **CONGRATULATIONS**  

Commissioner Staples Announces Texas Beef Producers Approve Measure to Establish Beef Checkoff Program in Lone Star State (7/2/2014)

AUSTIN - The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) today announced Texas beef producers have voted to establish a state-level Beef Checkoff program, which was approved by a wide margin of 66.7 percent of voters. Overall, 33.3 percent of voters opposed the measure. TDA conducted this referendum upon petition by cattle industry organizations under the authorities designated by the Texas Legislature.

"Texas is the largest cattle producing state in the nation, and our beef is among the highest-quality in the world," said Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples. "As Texas ranchers continue to grow and raise the bar to meet consumers' tastes and preferences, it is my hope these funds will be used in a manner to enhance our producers' profitability and sustainability of food production. The Lone Star State is a national leader in agriculture, and I'd like to keep it that way."

Passage of the referendum establishes a producer-funded program without the use of tax dollars. The Beef Checkoff program will research ways to continue improving Texas beef quality, as well as educate prospective consumers of Texas beef around the world. Texas beef producers will pay a refundable assessment of no more than \$1 per head of cattle they sell. Collection of the assessment will begin on Oct. 1, 2014 and continue until the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas (BPRCT) notifies cattle collection points to cease collection.



"I am proud of my fellow Texas cattlemen and women for standing up for our future," said Coleman Locke, BPRCT chairman and Brahman cattle producer from Hungerford. "As a life-long Texas cattleman from a long line of ranchers, I was confident our industry's consumer-focused heritage would result in this decision to invest in our future. Our future success depends on our ability to meet the needs of consumers and reach those individuals with the facts about the quality product we produce, which is exactly what this program will accomplish. I look forward to working with those who supported and opposed this election to earn their confidence in their investment."

Voting on the measure took place June 2-6, 2014. Beef producers, regardless of age, who owned cattle in Texas between June 6, 2013 and June 6, 2014 were eligible to vote in the election. The Beef Checkoff program will be used for the promotion, marketing, research and educational efforts of beef and beef products for prospective consumers of Texas beef around the world.

As required under the Texas Agriculture Code, TDA conducted the referendum following a petition from cattle industry organizations on behalf of their members. After cattle owners voted, a canvassing committee of representatives from TDA and the Texas Secretary of State counted the votes. TDA conducted an eligibility audit of voters, which confirmed the vote results.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Southeast Texas Beef Cattle Symposium and Trade Show

Tuesday, October 28, 2014

Winnie Stowell Community Building

225 South Park Street

Winnie, Texas

- CEU's
- Meal
- Hay Show—free to have hay tested
- Trade Show

Jefferson County CEU Re-Certification Program

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Ford Park in Beaumont

- **5 hours** of CEU's for Private, Non-commercial and Commercial applicators
- Meal included in registration
- Pre-Registration Required

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Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners' Courts of Texas cooperating.