CREEK COUNTY OSU EXTENSION — 224-2192

Sept./October 2007

AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service * Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources * Oklahoma State University

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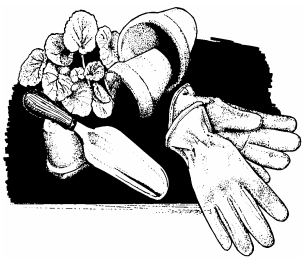
Points of Interest

OSU Fact Sheets are available on the internet at:

http://osuextra.okstate.edu/



The Scoop on Poultry Poop

Note: 7:00 p.m. at the Creek County Fairgrounds, Josh Payne, OSU Animal Waste Specialist, will be here to discuss using poultry litter for fertilizer.

He will discuss its value as a fertilizer compared to sack fertilizer, the benefits, regulations and permits, and incentives for you to use it.

There seems to be quite a bit of bad information out there. Hopefully, Josh will be able to clear it up.

I plan to have hamburgers that evening so call and let me know if you are coming by Friday, November 2, so I can have an accurate meal count. If you forget, come anyway, but try not to forget.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), used to be SCS, will be having a meeting September 18, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the Seminar Center of Central Tech, in Drumright.

The purpose is to get public input on their cost-share programs and see what the needs of Creek County farmers are. Currently, NRCS cost shares on Bermuda sprigging for example. Do we need to continue this or cost-share on something else?

Your input is important, so plan to come to Drumright.

LCP & LIP

LCP — Livestock Compensation Program is for feed losses — forage and other types of feed in the years of 2005, 2006, and 2007. You pick the year.

LIP — Livestock Indemnity Program is for actual livestock losses (death) due to disaster (floods, blizzards, etc.). The years covered are 2005, 2006, and 2007. Again, you pick the year.

Sign up periods begin September 10, 2007. You will sign up at the FSA office in Okemah and you can call them at 918-623-1090. Alan told me they plan to have someone in Bristow one day per week.

I have a copy of the FSA Fact Sheets on each program. If you want to look them over, come by the extension office.

OBI Bull & Heifer Sale Set for October 18

Cattle producers looking to improve herd performance should be putting pencil to paper now to determine the type of animals they want at the Oklahoma BEEF Inc. All-Breed Performance-Tested Bull and Replacement Heifer Sale in October.

Approximately 50 bulls and 100 replacement heifers will be available at the popular sale, scheduled to begin at noon on Oct. 18, at the OBI test station, eight miles west of Stillwater on Highway 51.

"If a producer uses a performance-tested bull with proven genetic evaluation, then the daughters of that bull will be genetically superior to their mothers and the result is

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OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE 8 DIVISION OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND NATURAL RESOURCES 8 OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

We're On the WEB!
Http://countyext.okstate.edu/creek/

WE DO SOIL
TESTING
And
SOIL TEST
INTERPRETATIONS

TAKE SAMPLE FROM 3 OR 4 LOCATIONS WITHIN TESTING AREA

TAKE SAMPLE FROM SURFACE AREA DOWN TO 6 INCHES

BRING 1 PINT OF SOIL

ALLOW 1 WEEK
TO 10 DAYS FOR
RESULTS

WE ALSO DO
WATER ANALYSIS

SAMPLE BOTTLES ARE PROVIDED

AND... WE DO
FORAGE TESTS
AND PLANT ANALYSIS

OBI Bull & Heifer Sale (Cont.)

improvement in the overall herd, which affects profit," said Bob Kropp, OBI executive secretary and Oklahoma State University professor of animal science.

Currently there are 39 Angus, nine Herford and two Simmental bulls consigned for the sale. The bulls will be auctioned first, then the replacement heifers.

Each bull sold through OBI undergoes a breeding soundness examination and is tested for brucellosis and tuberculosis or is from a certified-free herd. All bulls must index in the top 70 percent of their test group.

"OBI has been having bull sales since 1973," said Tim Stidham, OBI Test Station director. "With 30-plus years of feeding bulls, the dependability of our performance records is unmatched. OBI customers depend on the reliability of these bulls."

Bulls to be sold will be available for preview beginning at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 17, at the test station. The station also will host a morning social beginning at 7 a.m. on Oct. 18

Performance test results for bulls include: average daily gain; weight per day of age; adjusted 365-day weight; scrotal circumference; ultrasonic data for rib eye area, fat thickness and marbling; hip height; computation of performance ratios; and Expected Progeny Differences as provided by breed associations.

All OBI bulls are tested according to procedures recommended by the Beef Improvement Federation. Each bull developed at OBI is housed and fed in its respective breed barn. One ration is fed to all bulls throughout the 112-day test. Bulls of some breeds are fed using self feeders; other breeds are fed using fence-line bunks.

Update sheets and ultrasound data for the bulls will be available the week prior to the sale at http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/exten/OBI/ on the internet. The information also will be provided on-site the day of the sale.

Anyone seeking additional information should contact the OBI office at 405-744-9287.

Why not be pro-active with marketing strategy??

How many times have you heard it? I raise good cattle, but I just take them to town and I take what they give me! Many Oklahoma commercial cow calf ranchers do a great job of selecting, feeding, caring for, and taking to market top quality cattle, yet do very little, if anything, about promoting the products they sell. Perhaps most of us are not boastful by nature and hope that the quality of the calves we raise will speak for themselves. Nonetheless, doesn't it make sense that we would do everything in our power to assure that our calves bring top dollar at market time?

Recently I read of a commercial cow calf operator that promotes his calves. He is confident that his cattle are genetically sound and will perform well for the stocker operator or feedlot that purchases his calves. He preconditions the calves. They are properly vaccinated and weaned 45 days before he takes them to market. These management practices all have value to a potential buyer. Therefore, he makes certain that as many buyers as possible know when and where these calves will be offered for sale.

This producer keeps track of all of the previous buyers of his calves. He makes an effort to locate and contact other potential buyers of his weight and breed of calves. Then he composes a short letter telling them that he will be bringing his calves to XYZ Livestock Market on a given sale date. He will include information on the number, weight, breed makeup, and sex of the calves. He will also tell when the steers were castrated, implanted, and when the calves were vaccinated and which products he used. He makes certain that the buyers know that the calves were weaned on a certain date and how they have been fed since weaning. He includes data on previous calves (that have been evaluated in programs such as the O-K Steer Feedout) or closeout data from past buyers that fed out his calves. In other words, he is telling potential customers that they can buy his calves with additional confidence about their performance and their health. (cont.)

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Why not be pro-active with marketing strategy?? (Cont.)

Whether you participate in an organized Value-Added Calf program (i.e., one sponsored by pharmaceutical company of local livestock market) or whether you simply sell your calves on the regular sale date at the closest market, it makes good business sense to tell buyers that your good calves are available for sale. Don't just rely on others to tell your story. This fall promote the good quality, healthy cattle that you raise. They deserve it!!!

"Preg" Check and Cull Replacement Heifers Early

Many Oklahoma ranchers choose to breed the replacement heifers about a month ahead of the mature cows in the herd. In addition, they like to use a shortened 45 to 60-day breeding season for the replacement heifers. The next logical step is to determine which of these heifers failed to conceive in their first breeding season. This is more important today than ever before.

As the bulls are being removed from the replacement heifers, this would be an ideal time to call and make arrangements with your local veterinarian to have those heifers evaluated for pregnancy in about 60 days. In two months, experienced palpaters should have no difficulty identifying which heifers are pregnant and which heifers are not pregnant (open). Those heifers that are determined to be "open" after this breeding season, should be strong candidates for culling. Culling these heifers immediately after pregnancy checking serves three very economically valuable purposes.

1) Identifying and culling open heifers early will **remove sub-fertile females from the herd.** Lifetime cow studies from Montana indicated that properly developed heifers that were exposed to fertile bulls, but DID NOT become pregnant were often sub-fertile compared to the heifers that did conceive. In fact, when the heifers that failed to breed in the first breeding season were followed throughout their lifetimes, they averaged a 55% yearly calf crop. Despite the fact that reproduction is not a highly heritable trait, it also makes sense to remove this genetic material from the herd so as to not proliferate females that are difficult to get bred.

2) Culling open heifers **early will reduce summer forage and winter costs.** If the rancher waits until next spring to find out which heifers to not calve, the pasture use and winter feed expense will still be lost and there will be no calf to help eventually help pay the bills. This is money that can better be spent in properly feeding cows that are pregnant and will be producing a salable product the following fall.

3) Identifying the open heifers shortly after (60 days) the breeding season is over will **allow for marketing the heifers while still young** enough to go to a feedlot and be fed for the choice beef market. The grading change of several years ago has a great impact on the merchandising of culled replacement heifers. "B" maturity carcasses (those estimated to be 30 months of age or older) are very unlikely to be graded choice. As a result, the heifers that are close to two years of age will suffer a price discount. This price discount from yearling heifer to commercial cull cow is increasing.

Currently non-pregnant, yearling 850 pound heifers (shortly after a breeding season) are selling for about $102 per cwt. Therefore an 850 pound, culled replacement heifer is worth about $867. Non-pregnant two-year old cows are selling for about $65 per cwt. Open two-year old cows (those that could have been identified shortly after the breeding season) that weigh 1000 pounds would only sell for about $650 next spring.

The average expense for owning the cow is about $1 per day. So the total loss of keeping the open heifer would be about $200 in feed and forage and another $217 in lost value. The grand total expense for not culling open replacement heifers in today's market is about $417 per head. Therefore, it is imperative to send heifers to the feedlot while they are young enough to be fed for 4 to 5 months and not be near the "B" maturity age group.

Certainly the percentage of open heifers will vary from ranch to ranch. Do not be concerned, if after a good heifer development program and adequate breeding season, that you find that 10% of the heifers still are not bred. These are the very heifers that you want to identify early and remove from the herd. It just makes good economic business sense to identify and cull non-pregnant replacement heifers as soon as possible.

PLANTING TIME

This is the time of year to plant some clover, fescue, ryegrass and wheat.

To be successful with clover, ryegrass and fescue, you need to have standing forage short. If it is tall, it will likely shade the new seedling and kill it. Wheat is the same, but broadcasting wheat on top of the ground doesn't work well because the seed is so big. Wheat needs some soil cover.

Wheat should be planted at a 60 to 80 pound rate per acre for pasture. Double the seeding rate if you are broadcasting.

Ryegrass should be planted at a 35 pound per acre rate. If you already have ryegrass, a 10 pound per acre rate is good insurance for a stand.

Fescue shouldn't be forgotten. It is a good cow forage. The use of "novel endophyte" fescue removes the problems associated with fescue and makes an excellent forage. Fescues are perennials, which makes them cheaper over the long run. Plant 20 to 25 pounds per acre. Broadcast rate is a 50% higher rate.

Arrowleaf Clover (Trifoliium vesiculosum) — Arrowleaf clover is a relatively late-production, cool-season annual clover that produces most of its growth during April and May. Arrowleaf clover plants typically mature during late-June through July. If conditions are favorable during early-fall, some growth may be available for grazing in late-fall or early-winter.

Arrowleaf clover is not adapted to calcareous or wet soils and has some degree of drought tolerance. Arrowleaf clover is generally high in digestibility and superior to that of crimson clover at all stages of maturity. Bloat potential with arrowleaf clover is low and is a good choice for pasture mixes where adapted. When arrowleaf clover is kept grazed to a height of 3 to 4 inches during spring, livestock may continue to graze until early-June or later. If a hay crop is desired, grazing should be terminated in early-to mid-May. This allows the clover a chance to regrow before cutting and may reduce some of the problems associated with making hay during the typically rainy May weather in Oklahoma.

With proper grazing management, arrowleaf clover is an excellent reseeding annual due to the high percentage (70 to 90 percent) of hard seed produced. If managed for reseeding, the arrowleaf clover stand may remain viable for many years.

Red Clover (Trifolium pratense) — Red clover is a short-lived perennial with an upright growth habit that may be used as pasture or as a hay crop. Due to a long-growing season, red clover typically is the highest yielding clover in areas of adaptation. Red clover is typically planted during September through early-October or March through April, at six to eight lbs./acre in drill rows or 12 to 15 lbs./acre broadcast. Soil pH should be above 5.5 for maximum production.

Red clover may be successfully grown in mixtures with bermudagrass or tall fescue and indications are that red clover may also be established in stands of Old World bluestem.

Red clover is not as long lived as is alfalfa; however, stands of red clover may be maintained for many years by reseeding with 2 lbs. of seed/acre every two to four years.

White Clover [Ladino] (Trifolium repens) — White clover is a perennial legume common across most of the southern areas of the United States. Common white clovers are of shorter stature and do not exhibit the larger leaf of the taller ladino varieties. White clover requires good soil moisture and is not productive under droughty conditions.

White clover is often planted at three to four lbs./acre into existing tall fescue or bermudagrass stands. Best production will be obtained on fertile, well-drained soils if rainfall is favorable. White clover will tolerate wet soil conditions better than most legumes. Because it is often found on wetter sites, white clover may survive a dry spell during the summer months better than other forage legumes. (cont.)

White Clover (cont.) — White clover does not exhibit the same erect growth habit as red clover and mixed grass-clover stands should be grazed fairly close to prevent competition for sunlight from becoming a limiting factor in white clover production. While cattle are grazing pure stands of white clover, bloat potential may be reduced by including free-choice access to grass hay. As with red clover, broadcasting one to two lbs. of seed/acre in the fall or winter may be necessary to maintain a stand for several years.

Legumes in Grass Pastures — Many legumes may be successfully established into grass pastures. One popular strategy is to sodseed (no till) cool-season annual legumes into bermudagrass pastures. The bermudagrass must be carefully managed to ensure that a minimum amount of residue remains at the time of establishment. If the bermudagrass canopy is not removed, emerging legume seedlings will not be able to compete for sunlight and become established. Forage canopies may be removed by grazing (recommended) or by mowing. Proper use of a cool-season annual legume in bermudagrass will provide forage of high nutritive value during the late-winter and early-spring and the legume will serve as a source of nitrogen for early bermudagrass growth. This may help reduce the requirement and expense of nitrogen fertilizer.

Another popular strategy for utilizing legumes in a grass pasture is to mix red or white clover into a tall fescue or other cool-season grass pasture. The tall fescue has a negating effect on the bloating potential of legumes, and legumes may play a role in reducing the effects of fescue toxicity. A higher level of management is required for this type of program, but the effort may result in improved animal performance and reduce the need for nitrogen application.

Legume species	Growth habit	Seeding rate[1] lbs./acre	Planting date	Production period [2]	Minimum Precipitation [3]	Inoculum type
Alfalfa	Perennial	8-20	Aug-Sept, Mar-April	Mar-Nov	18	A
Annual medics	Annual	6-8	Sept-Oct	April-June	22	N
Arrowleaf clover	Annual	8-10	Sept-Oct	Mar-July	28	O
Austrian Winter Peas	Annual	30-40	Sept-Oct	Mar-April	26	C
Berseem clover	Annual	10-20	Sept	Nov-Dec, Mar-June	30	R
Birdsfoot trefoil	Perennial	4-8	Aug-Sept	April-Oct	26	K
Cicer milkvetch	Perennial	20-25	Mar-April, Sept-Oct	May-Sept	18	[4]
Cowpeas	Annual	40-100	May-June	June-Sept	30	EL
Crimson clover	Annual	20-30	Sept-Oct	Nov, Mar-April	28	R
Hairy vetch	Annual	20-25	Sept-Oct	Mar-May	20	C
Korean lespedeza	Annual	20-25	Mar-April	July-Sept	30	EL
Common lespedeza	Annual	20-25	Mar-April	July-Sept	30	EL
Red clover	Perennial	6-15	Sept-Oct, Mar-April	April-July	30	B
Rose clover	Annual	10-15	Sept-Oct	Mar-May	20	WR
Sainfoin	Perennial	35-40	Mar-April	Mar-June	18	F
Subterranean clover	Annual	10-20	Sept-Oct	Nov-Dec, Mar-May	30	WR
Sweetclover	Biennial	10-15	Sept-Oct, Mar-April	May-Aug	16	A
White (ladino) clover	Perennial	3-4	Sept-Oct, Mar-April	Mar-June, Oct-Nov	30	B

1 Use the lower seeding rate when using drills that place seed in contact with the soil.

2 Production period may be longer with high levels of precipitation during summer months.

3 Minimum average inches of precipitation required for satisfactory production.

4 Astragalus Spec. 1 type inoculum.

Is Multi-Species Grazing a Peek at the Future?

Oklahoma has been cattle country longer than anyone alive today can remember. Today, however, meat goats, while still a small player, have become the fastest growing livestock species in Oklahoma and nationally. For several years some of the more innovative ranchers have used goats to control or eliminate unwanted plant species in their pastures with little or no thought to the profitability or marketability of the goats. The idea was to save on mechanical or chemical weed and brush control. With the current high value and demand for goat meat ideas are shifting from "brush goats" to "meat goats", even when they are the same goats.

The old thought that a goat can eat anything including tin cans is not accurate, but it is true that they prefer to eat weeds and brush and will usually eat grass only when all the forbs and browse is gone. This suggests that with today's high input costs for land and forage, two income streams may be better than one. Goats and cattle can each utilize the grazing that is wasted by the other with very little direct competition. Perhaps we need to be managing pastures to preserve a balance of species instead of trying to "clean out" weeds and browse.

Another interesting aspect of multi-species grazing is that while the internal parasites of goats and cattle are closely related, they are different enough that each is a "dead end host" for the other's worms. Although this is widely accepted, no one has known to what degree this impacts production.

To try to learn more about these questions, a two year, on-farm study was undertaken by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service this summer at Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Approximately 200 acres of mixed native range was divided into 3 portions and stocked with cattle only, goats only, and cattle and goats mixed. Stocking rates were determined by the area agronomist using an equivalent forage availability per pound of live animal weight and production estimates from the NRCS web soil survey. We will be looking at financial impact, parasite impacts, and the impact on the range. A Field Day has been scheduled for October 20, 2007 at the Bill Fesler ranch east of Bartlesville to share the findings from the first summer with all who are interested.

Is the popularity of goat meat and the high prices for goats here to stay? It is hard to accept, because most of us lifetime beef eaters would rather fight than switch. Consider, however, that goat is the most consumed meat in the world, and multi-cultural consumers, notably Middle Eastern, Hispanic, and Caribbean Island, are the fastest growing sectors of the U.S. population and have the fastest growing spendable incomes.

As production costs continue to rise, efficiency becomes more important. Can cattle producers afford to continue seeing weed and brush control as an expense when it can be a source of income? Make plans to attend the Field Day on October 20 and find out.

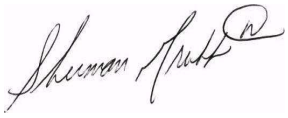
Fenceline Weaning

Spring calving herds across the Midwest and Southwest will soon be planning to wean the calves. Some producers may wean the calves from young or thin cows during September in order to regain some body condition before winter adds to the nutrient requirements. However, many herds will wean at the more traditional times of late October to early November.

Methods to reduce stress on the calves have become of great interest to producers. Therefore, weaning strategies have been studied in recent years.

California researchers weaned calves with only a fence (Fenceline) separating them from their dams. These were compared to calves weaned totally separate (Separate) from dams. The Separate Calves could not see or hear their dams. Calf behaviors were monitored for five days following weaning. Fenceline calves and cows spent approximately 60% and 40% of their time, respectively within 10 feet of the fence during the first two days. During the first three days, Fenceline calves bawled and walked less, and ate and rested more, but these differences disappeared by the fourth day. All calves were managed together starting 7 days after weaning. After two weeks, Fenceline calves had gained 23 pounds more than Separate calves. This difference persisted since, after 20 weeks, Fenceline calves had gained 110 pounds (1.57 lb/day), compared to 84 pounds (1.20 lb/day) for Separate calves.

There was no report of any differences in sickness, but calves that eat more during the first days after weaning should stay healthier. A follow-up study demonstrated similar advantages of fenceline contact when calves were weaned under drylot conditions and their dams had access to pasture. To wean and background, even for short periods, fenceline weaning should be considered. Source: Price and coworkers. Abstracts 2002 Western Section of American Society of Animal Science.



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