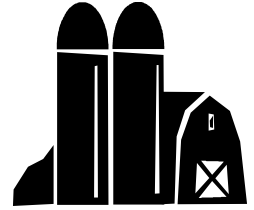




# Garfield County Agriculture Newsletter



## Winter Edition 2008

### RAMP STRIP FIELD TOURS

Ramp Strip Field Tours will be announced at short notice (end of January, first part of February) based on the end of dormancy and growing conditions of wheat plants. Tours will be held on location of the strips.

### OKLAHOMA NO-TILL CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 11 & 12, 2008 CLARION HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER OKLAHOMA CITY

This No-till conference is designed to bring the latest developments in No-till cropping systems to interested farmers and ranchers from Oklahoma and surrounding states. Contact the Garfield County OSU Extension Center for registration information and detailed schedules.

### GRAIN SORGHUM PRODUCTION MEETING 8:30 A.M. JAN. 30, 2008 WEST ROOM, HOOVER BUILDING

Production topics including planting information, herbicide selections, and fertility issues will be discussed in addition to reviewing the past years field trial results and the economics of grain sorghum will be addressed by:

Jeff Dahlberg,  
Research Dir. National Grain Sorghum Producers

Rick Kochenower  
OCES NW Area Agronomist

J C. Hobbs  
OCES NW Area Economist

Roger Gribble  
OCES NW Area Agronomist

For more information or to RSVP, call the Garfield County OSU Extension at 580-237-1228.

### SENSORS FOR CROP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE 8:30 A.M. JANUARY 17, 2008 PAYNE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

The use of sensors for crop management decisions is becoming more popular and more economical. The objective of this conference is to increase the use of sensors by increasing the knowledge of sensors by those making crop management decisions. Participants will have the opportunity to hear from and interact with the pioneers of Ag-technologies to determine where technology adoptions can be made in their operations. For Pre-registration information and details about the conference, contact the Garfield County OCES.

### CONSERVATION TILLAGE 101 WORKSHOP FEBRUARY 15TH GARFIELD COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS PAVILION

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Conservation Tillage 101 Conference will be held **8:30 a.m. Friday February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the Garfield County Fairgrounds Pavilion**. This years Conference should be valuable to all producers regardless of the amount of implementation of Conservation Tillage practices producers have implemented in their operations. Soil science and soil fertility issues, Nitrogen contributions from crop rotation, planning for and adopting agriculture technology, evaluating economics of conservation tillage operations, and herbicide considerations when incorporating crop rotations are topics that will be featured. The Conference will conclude with a producer panel consisting of farmers at various stages of implementation of conservation tillage practices.

This Conference will feature Agri-Services booths from across NW Oklahoma and will have sponsored refreshments and noon meal. CEU's will be earned by those attending the conference as well. Contact Garfield OCES for details regarding this innovative event. Pre-registration is not required but suggested.

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: BE PREPARED FOR CALVING SEASON

GREG HIGHFILL, OCES AREA EXTENSION LIVESTOCK SPECIALIST

Over 75% of calf mortality occurs at birth and within the first two weeks of life. Delivery of a live calf has become a greater challenge with the use of larger beef breeds and cattle with larger birth weights. Adequate supervision at calving has a significant impact on reducing death loss. On most ranches, supervision of the first calf heifers will be best accomplished in daylight hours. The easiest and most practical method of inhibiting nighttime calving is by feeding cows in the late evening (after 5pm). Studies indicate that under range conditions, feeding at dusk should cause 70-80% of cows to calve in the daytime hours. A healthy calf starts with a well-fed cow. Thin cows are weak during labor, give less colostrum, have non-vigorous calves and are slower to rebreed.

### When to Help

The next issue facing the ranches at calving time is the amount of time heifers or cows are allowed to be in labor before assistance is given. Traditional textbooks stated that "Stage 2" of labor lasted from 2 to 5 hours. "Stage 2" is defined as that portion of the birthing process from the first appearance of the water bag until the baby calf is delivered. Newer data from Oklahoma State University and the USDA station in Montana clearly show that Stage 2 is much shorter, lasting approximately 60 minutes in first calf heifers and 30 minutes in mature cows. In these studies, heifers that were in Stage 2 of labor much more than one hour or cows that were in Stage 2 much more than 30 minutes definitely need assistance. **Rule of thumb:** If reasonable progress stops after the feet or water bag appear, assistance may be indicated. Examination for malpresentation is not detrimental if done in a quiet, sanitary manner. If you cannot safely deliver the calf, it is time to call the veterinarian. Research information also shows that calves from prolonged deliveries are weaker and more disease prone. Females with prolonged delivery take longer to rebreed.

### Care of Newborn

Delayed passage through the birth canal in

the face of a faltering placenta compromises oxygenation of the calf. The calf is able to breathe before full delivery; however, expansion of the chest is restricted by the narrow birth canal and uterus contractions. As the head is delivered, clear the nostrils of mucus and apply cold water to the head.

When the calf is completely delivered, primary attention is directed toward establishing respiration. Mucus the nose and fetal fluids should be expressed from the nose and mouth by external pressure of the thumbs along the bridges of the nose and the flat fingers underneath the jaws, sliding from the level of the eyes toward the muzzle. The practice of suspending the calf by the hind legs is seldom advised. Most fluid expelled is probably from the stomach and the weight on the diaphragm makes expansion of the lungs difficult. The most effective way to clear the airway is by suction. Brisk rubbing of the skin or tickling inside the nostril with a piece of straw also has a favorable effect. Intake of colostrum (first milk after calving) is vital for the transfer of passive immunity (to enhance disease protection) from the dam to the calf. Maximum absorption occurs between 2-6 hours of age and is virtually over at 24 hours. Getting calves to suckle within the first few hours of life should be encouraged and assistance given if feasible.

### Have a Plan

Before the spring calving season even begins is a good time to put together the supplies and equipment that will be needed to assist heifers and cows that need help at calving time. Check your facilities. Before calving season starts, do a "walk-through" of pens, chutes, and calving stalls. Make sure that all are clean, dry, strong, safe, and functioning correctly. This is a lot easier to do on a sunny afternoon than a cold dark night when you need them. Prepare a written plan of action. Develop a plan of what to do, when to do it, who to call for help (along with phone numbers), and how to know when you need help. Make sure all family members

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## CAN YOU AFFORD TO TOPDRESS WHEAT DUE TO HIGH FERTILIZER PRICES

**J C. HOBBS, OCES AREA AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS SPECIALIST**

In August, I addressed the issue of whether or not a wheat producer could afford to apply fertilizer given that fertilizer prices were quite high. Recently another issue has risen concerning whether or not to topdress wheat since fertilizer prices are still high. There are several key points to consider when making the decision to topdress which include moisture, existing fertility in the field, ability to get the material applied in a timely manner, and the expected price of wheat at harvest. This article only examines the cost of nitrogen in a fertilizer blend compared to the price of wheat. As of the writing, the Kansas City Board of Trade July 2008 hard red winter wheat contract has been trading above \$8.00 per bushel since December 19, 2007.

At this stage in the wheat decision process, most wheat production costs are fixed or in other words will not change. Whether or not to topdress then comes down to whether the costs of applying additional fertilizer will result in a yield increase that more than covers these costs. A simple method that can be used to answer this question is a partial budget analysis. Simply identify the added costs, reduced costs, added returns, and/or reduced returns associated with this decision. In this case, added costs would include the cost of fertilizer and its application which could include some interest charges if money is being borrowed to finance the purchase and added returns would be the additional yield times the wheat price; and with this analysis, no reduced costs or reduced returns are expected.

A rule of thumb supported by OSU research is that 2 pounds of nitrogen are needed to produce a bushel of wheat. Therefore, to determine whether or not it is economical to apply topdress fertilizer, simply compare the cost for the 2 pounds of nitrogen needed to produce a bushel of wheat. If it costs 50¢ for 1 pound of nitrogen from a particular fertilizer type then it takes \$1.00 to yield a \$7.00 bushel of wheat or roughly a 600 percent return to the

fertilizer investment. Should it cost 75¢ for 1 pound of nitrogen from fertilizer, then it will cost \$1.50 to get a bushel of wheat and at the same price per bushel the return is 367 percent of the investment. If wheat is only worth \$6.00 per bushel and nitrogen is costing 75¢ per pound, then the return is 300 percent to the investment. In conclusion, wheat prices can fall to historical average levels and it will continue to be advantageous to apply a topdress fertilizer.

Wheat prices will remain volatile between now and harvest. I am projecting that wheat prices in central Oklahoma will be about \$7.00 per bushel in June. If an above average U.S. winter wheat crop occurs, wheat prices could go as low as \$6.00 per bushel. The outlook for wheat prices after harvest also continues to remain strong. Therefore the decision to topdress goes beyond just the cost of fertilizer and its application.

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or helpers are familiar with the plan. Talk to your local veterinarian about your protocol and incorporate given suggestions.

### **Prepare a "Calving Kit"**

The stockman should always have needed calving items on hand including: disposable obstetrical sleeves, non-irritant antiseptic, lubricant, obstetrical chains (60 inch and/or two 30 inch chains), two obstetrical handles, mechanical calf pullers and injectable antibiotics. Lubrication is often needed during the examination or delivery. Many products work well including non-detergent soap in warm water. Don't forget the simple things like a good flashlight, extra batteries, and some old towels or a roll of paper towels. It may be helpful for you to have all of these supplies packed into a 5 gallon bucket to make a complete OB kit that can be grabbed at a moments notice.

On behalf of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, have a safe and Happy New Year.

## THOUGHTS FROM THE AG AGENT

Many things look very positive for producers as we begin the year of 2008. Our moisture situation is good to excellent across Garfield County and even though the winter wheat crop got off to a less than stellar start, for the most part, it looks better than most had anticipated. Concerns about seed test weights, germination and vigor of seed wheat seemed to have worked themselves out. Grains in general are higher priced than we have ever seen giving producers the opportunity to offset the increases in inputs they are also experiencing. Grain producers are all flinching at the thought of the Nitrogen cost for the upcoming topdress and fertilizer season. Unfortunately Nitrogen, like grains are at all time highs. In this newsletter, I have included a couple of very thought provoking articles regarding nitrogen, the importance of timely applications as well as the impact on profitability that nitrogen will have on your farm this year. It appears to me that this year maybe as important as any to monitor infestations of grass and broadleaf weeds and prevent them from using the nitrogen reserves that we prefer be available for the grain crops we choose to grow.

This past fall, RAMP strips were put into fields across Garfield County by Area Agronomist Roger Gribble, myself and a Graduate student in the Plant and Soil Sciences Department at OSU. These strips are variable rates of nitrogen that are applied in the fall where by every ten foot the applicator changes the rate of nitrogen being applied ranging from 0 pounds up to 170 pounds applied. In a 100 foot Ramp Strip the nitrogen rate will adjust 10 times with 10 different nitrogen rates being placed on the crop to determine where optimum utilization of Nitrogen occurs for that crop environment. In crop production, there is a point at which the plants are only able to use so much nitrogen based on environmental conditions such as moisture and soil moisture availability, sunlight, temperature and competition for these growing factors. By using Greenseeker technologies (developed by OSU Soil Scientists), on the RAMP Strip we can accurately predict crop yield potential and the nitrogen needed to fulfill the requirement to achieve that potential.

There are 8 locations with RAMP Strips spread across Garfield County, so if you begin to notice an unusual strip pattern of dark green in a neighbors field it could be one of our RAMP Strips. We will be having field tours at these locations later in the growing season, please find time to

attend one of these tours and learn even more about how this technology might improve you Nitrogen use efficiency. Thanks to the cooperating producers for allowing us the opportunity to demonstrate this technology!

As you are evaluating and observing wheat the remainder of this winter and as it begins to come out of winter dormancy, don't forget to be vigilant with regard to insects. Apparently the recent warm weather has spawned some aphid activity in the county's south and west of Garfield County. Certainly if our weather patterns begin to warm up and dry out conditions favorable for greenbug problems could present themselves. Don't forget about the greenbug decision tool "Glance and Go" if in fact greenbugs become an issue to make the most economical decision possible.

It appears that some of the rust we saw from the juvenile fall wheat growth is going to survive the colder December temps we experienced to be able to shed rust spores into warmer spring time winds. Certainly diseases in wheat like leaf rust played a role in decimating last year's crop. Let's not allow a repeat performance from these wheat diseases, there are economical crop protection agents that can prevent this from happening.

Call or come by the Garfield County OCES Center, I certainly look forward to meeting and visiting with you if I haven't had the chance already!

Please Support Garfield County Youth Agriculturists at this year's Spring Livestock Shows:

Garfield County Spring Livestock Show—Feb. 21-23  
NW District Jr. Livestock Show, Enid—Feb. 27-March 3  
Oklahoma Youth Expo, Oklahoma City—March 10-20

Wishing You and Yours a Great Agriculture Year!

Jeff Bedwell,

Garfield County OCES Educator for Agriculture & 4-H