

What's Your Beef?

Howard County Beef & Forage Newsletter Summer 2008

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Upcoming Programs

The Southwest Research and Extension Center in Hope is conducting a program on Byproduct Utilization for Beef Production. It will be held **August 12 at 6:00 p.m.** at the Experiment Station. There is no cost for the program, but it is limited to the first 50 people that sign up. There will be a meal provided, sponsored by Livestock Nutrition Center and Farm Credit of Western Arkansas. Topics include:

- How to Approach Commodity Purchasing
- When Does Forage Quality Matter?
- Computer Assisted Diet Formulation

It sounds like a really good program, and I hope some of you will take advantage of this opportunity. You may pick up a brochure that has registration information in it. Registration forms are due **August 5, 2008.**



Johnsongrass Control Now Easier!!

Monsanto® got full Federal Registration for Maverick for Johnsongrass and sedges in Bermudagrass and Bahiagrass pasture and hay. Grass forage may be grazed immediately after application. **Do not** harvest for hay within 14 days of application. The recommended rate of use is 1.33 oz/A, and add 0.25% v/v surfactant. Spray Johnsongrass at about knee high or a little taller. After the Johnsongrass re-grows following the first cutting is a good time to spray; that keeps you from getting it out too early. The cost is approximately \$15-18/A. Application should be done with a boom sprayer, not a boomless one. No broadleaf control to speak of, but it is good on sedges although it will not eradicate purple nutsedge. It will give only 6 to 8 weeks' suppression on purple nutsedge.





Adventures in South America

As most of you know, I spent June in South America (Argentina and Paraguay). Both are very big agriculture countries; therefore, I got to see a wide variety of farms, agriculture schools and universities... and I learned a lot—not only about them but about myself as well!!!

First of all, I learned we take so many things here for granted. For instance, tractors—plain old tractors—not even the air conditioned, radio havin', spring-loaded seats kind...just a basic tractor. If I had to guess, I would say less than a third of the agriculture producers had one, and those that did were in row crops. I saw very few livestock operations with a tractor.

Another thing I think we take for granted are our fuel prices...don't get me wrong, I think they're getting out of hand, but compared to other parts of the world, it is still cheaper than what some people are paying—\$3.89/gal compared to over \$6.00/gal. We ain't got it so bad.

Last, but certainly not least, we take hot water for showers for granted. I tell you it isn't fun taking a cold shower in the winter time.

You know, going off like that to a different culture and different part of the world gets a person to thinking about decisions we make and patterns we have. I got to re-evaluate a lot of different things. I thought about mistakes I have made in the past and great accomplishments I've had in my life and found a pattern with my mistakes. It's not until you step back and look at all those mistakes collectively that you realize that they were the same mistake—different package. My greatest accomplishments have been those where I have struck out and tried something new or a new approach to doing something. Not that tried and true methods aren't good, but sometimes having an open mind and being creative and trying something new can get better than expected results too. Now, you are wondering where I am going with that... I think that sometimes in life we need to step back and take a look at what we are doing, how we are doing it, and sometimes why we are doing it that way. Sometimes, we get in a rut of doing things the same way it has always been done and don't question whether there might be a different alternative that could yield even better results.



Most of our South American counterparts in production agriculture have gotten very creative and learned to live with—and even utilize—what we would normally consider pests. Most all of the agriculture production is very low input; they put their emphasis on where they can get the most benefit. They emphasize herd health and nutrition. They didn't have the resources for extensive pasture management like we do—or even fences. Most of the cattle were tethered on the side of the road (that's one way to keep the roadways clean). They were then put up in small paddocks at night. The only problem with that is if a cow got loose and stepped into the road it became public property, and anyone could claim it. There weren't a lot of feedlots. Most all of the cattle slaughtered were grass fed, and you know, the flavor of the beef we ate wasn't bad. And honey, let me tell you, fire ants may be a nuisance, but they are nothing compared to the ants they have down there (see pictures). A colony of leaf cutter ants can defoliate an entire crop in no time. The other ant we saw (never found out the name for it) had huge

ant hills that were like concrete, you would literally tear your equipment up trying to knock one down. Anyway, I could make this whole newsletter about the adventures that I had south of the equator, but I won't. But would be glad to share stories and more pictures, if you are interested.



Common Questions I Get



Q. Will weed and brush control produce more grass?

A. Weeds and brush compete with more desirable vegetation for soil moisture, nutrients and space. Controlling weeds and/or brush does not guarantee increased production of more desirable plants. There must be at least a remnant seed stock of desirable plants remaining before treatment. Also, post-treatment management (grazing, maintenance treatments, etc.) must allow beneficial plants to recover and sustain production over time. If the area has had a history of abuse and overgrazing, this seed stock will not be present, and less desirable plants may flourish following treatment.

Q. Will using a little more herbicide than recommended improve control?

A. Increasing the amount of herbicide applied beyond recommended rates **will not** result in better control. In fact, increased rates may result in rapid defoliation but significantly less root kill, all at a higher cost. Recommended rates have been researched to achieve the best results at the least cost while protecting the environment. Read herbicide labels carefully and follow the directions explicitly. If you have questions, don't hesitate to call me.

Q. How long do herbicides have to be on weeds, before rainfall occurs, to be effective?

A. Two to four hours is plenty for **most** products. Farmers will not spray if it is going to rain the next day, so in the spring they never get to spray. If it dries on the leaf, chances are it will work. Metsulfuron and other sulfonylureas are probably most susceptible to wash-off, and Gramoxone is the least susceptible.

My FuNnYbOnE

Funny little thoughts to ponder

Do you know the difference between joy and happiness?
Happiness depends on what is happening around us. But true joy just bubbles up from inside and is constant regardless of our circumstances.

The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time.

Laughter dulls the sharpest pain and flattens out the greatest stress. To share it is to give a gift of health because, as someone pointed out, "Ulcers can't grow while you're laughing." Hunter Adams



Remember, you may be older today than you have ever been before, but you are younger than you will ever be again!

All meetings and activities announced in this newsletter are open to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally-protected status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (large print, audiotapes, etc.) should notify the county Extension office as soon as possible prior to the activity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherry Beaty". The ink is a light grey or blue color. The signature is centered on the page.

Sherry Beaty
County Extension Agent-Agriculture