

Livestock and Forage Production News

Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service
P.O. Box 6896 - Pine Bluff, AR 71611 – Phone: 870-534-1033

Volume 5, No. 3

Visit our website: www.uaex.edu

October 16, 2008



IN THIS VOLUME

JCCA MEETING

-October 20

BANGS VACCINATION

-November 6

PESTICIDE COLLECTION EVENT

-October 27

PRIVATE APPLICATOR TRAINING

-November 7

Contact:

Don Plunkett
CEA-Staff Chair
dplunkett@uaex.edu

Brad Phillips
CEA-Agriculture
bphillips@uaex.edu

JCCA MEETING

Dr. Tom Troxel and a Chili Cook Off to be featured at the October JCCA Meeting. The Jefferson County Cattleman's Association will hold their bi-monthly meeting at **7:00 p.m. on Monday, October 20th**. Dr. Tom Troxel, Section Leader for UA Cooperative Extension Livestock and Forages, will be the guest speaker, discussing his BQA Refrigerator Demonstration. This demonstration is set up to monitor the temperature of refrigerators used to store bovine vaccines. Results of the temperature data are used to educate producers on the critical temperature range for vaccine storage and the potential need for refrigerator adjustment and/or maintenance. The demonstration has been conducted with a few producers in the county. Dr. Troxel will also discuss the Extension Livestock and Forages staff, current research, and current Extension programs being offered to producers should time and interest allow.

The annual chili cook-off will also be held at this meeting starting promptly at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service office at 500 Idaho Street in Pine Bluff. Call the Extension office for directions or information on this meeting at **870-534-1033**.

BRUCELLOSIS (BANGS) VACCINATION PLANNED

The Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service and the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission will conduct **brucellosis vaccinations free of charge on November 6, 2008**. Heifer calves, 4–12 months of age, are eligible for this vaccination program. For safety of the vaccinator as well as the cattle, adequate catching and holding facilities are required.

Interested cattle producers must **complete the enclosed card and return** to the Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service on or before **October 29, 2008**. Complete directions to the farm, phone number where you may be reached, and number of animals to be vaccinated are required. Please always plan for the vaccinator to be ahead or behind schedule.

For more information on the brucellosis vaccination program, contact the Jefferson County Cooperative Extension office at 870-534-1033.

JEFFERSON COUNTY TO HOLD PESTICIDE COLLECTION EVENT

Jefferson County producers will have the opportunity to dispose of their outdated and unused pesticides during a collection event on **Monday, October 27**. The event will

take place at the **old Co-op Cotton Gin in Sherrill**. The pesticide collection is free and is made available through funding from the *Arkansas Abandoned Pesticide Trust Fund*. Products that will be accepted are outdated, discontinued or unwanted agricultural pesticides. These pesticides may include older products that are more toxic, such as arsenicals, DDT, silvex, heptachlor, dieldrin, lindane and toxaphene.

Many old pesticides cannot legally be used or disposed of through usual means, such as landfills. If you have pesticides that fall into this category, plan on bringing your pesticides to this event. The purpose of this collection is to promote a safer and cleaner environment by reducing the amount of pesticides that could potentially contaminate the drinking water, groundwater, streams, rivers and lakes across the state.

If you're interested in bringing your pesticides to the event, contact the Jefferson County Farm Bureau office at (870) 535-1616 to pre-register. Any identifying information, such as name and address, will be removed from the registration form so that anonymity may be provided. Contact your county agent at (870) 534-1033 for information on safely transporting your chemicals to the event location.

PRIVATE APPLICATOR TRAINING (PAT)

A Private Applicator Training will be conducted at the Jefferson County Cooperative Extension office on **Friday, November 7, 2008. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.** A private applicator license (or direct supervision by someone with a license) is required to purchase restricted-use pesticides. The EPA and the Arkansas State Plant Board deem pesticides posing special risks to humans and/or the environment as restricted-use pesticides. The Cooperative Extension Service provides only the training, known as certification or recertification, needed for your license. The Arkansas State Plant Board is responsible for issuance of license and pesticide regulations. For more information about the PAT, please contact the Jefferson County office at (870) 524-1033.

FERTILIZER COST WENT UP AGAIN – NOW WHAT?

John Jennings, Professor-Forage

Between June and August, the cost of urea fertilizer increased 30–40% after an already hefty jump from December, 2007. All other fertilizer nutrients have followed the same trend. The cause is intermingled in global competition, fuel costs and probably other factors. The end result is the same – even though proper fertilization is important for good forages, the cost is becoming unmanageable for many producers. So what are the options to feed your livestock? I'll discuss some low-input and higher input options to provide a list of realistic practices to consider.

The basic management tool for fertilizing – or not fertilizing – pastures is a soil test. Think of it as a fuel gauge for forages. Fields running on empty, so to speak, need more attention and also more expense than those with higher fertility levels. Knowing the fertility level and productivity potential allows you to decide whether or not that field is worth fertilizing. Shallow, rocky ground will not produce high yield even with fertilizer. So, you might decide against spending money on it versus a more productive field.

Think about the fertilizer value of hay. Yes, hay contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium that can be converted back to serve as low-level fertilizer. Based on forage tests conducted by the University of Arkansas, one 4x5 round bale of Bermudagrass hay contains about \$35 worth of fertility. Rather than feeding hay in one spot all winter, allowing nutrients to stack up, consider moving hay feeding rings across a field to spread the nutrients. Unrolling hay as it is fed is another option to spread nutrients. Some producers have used this method successfully to slowly build up fertility in "poor" fields.

Try to make livestock recycle nutrients. About 90% of the fertilizer nutrients in grazed forage are returned to the soil through manure and urine. By rotating livestock every few days, those nutrients can be spread across pastures to improve uniformity

of fertility, which also improves forage growth. A fairly quick pasture rotation, using four to six pastures, also lets the grass rest longer and grow more before being grazed again, which makes fertilizer more effective since healthy forages use nutrients more efficiently.

Fields that are fertilized probably don't have the same fertility profiles. By using the soil test information, you can determine which nutrients are needed or not needed. In the past, triple 17 or triple 19 fertilizers were standard pasture fertilizers, whether or not the pasture needed all the nutrients they contained. Now, phosphate costs over \$1 per unit and potash is \$0.80 per unit. An application of 250 pounds per acre of triple 17 fertilizer on a field not needing phosphorus wastes nearly \$45 per acre. Fertilizer costs too much to take the easy route, just applying triple-something fertilizers without knowing the soil fertility levels.

Poultry litter can be a very valuable fertilizer – some times. The value depends on the distance the litter is to be hauled and whether or not you need nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. For example, the total value of N, P₂O₅ and K₂O in one ton of good broiler litter is over \$150 compared to the cost of those nutrients as commercial fertilizer. But, if your soil fertility is high and the phosphorus and potassium are not needed, then the litter is worth only about \$30 per ton for the nitrogen. This takes into account that about 60% of the nitrogen in poultry litter is available to the pasture. Litter is notoriously variable in nutrient content, so it is wise to get a nutrient analysis in order to know what you are applying.

Culling unproductive livestock should be considered. It costs more now than ever to keep cows that aren't having a calf every year. Keep calving records and weaning weight records for every cow. Cull those that don't have a calf first; then, consider which of those not raising a good calf should go next. Getting the stocking rate in line with the forage production you can afford is important. If you start overgrazing with less fertilization, calving rates may drop over time, taking calf-crop income with it.

Planting clover and legumes helps provide forage without adding nitrogen fertilizer. This is where soil tests are valuable again. Some legumes will grow on low-fertility sites, and others need high soil fertility. Lespedeza is commonly grown with fescue and does well on low-fertility soils. It makes good summer forage for goats, sheep and cattle. Crimson clover, hairy vetch and arrowleaf clover will grow well on medium-fertility soil. White and red clover need medium-to-high fertility, and alfalfa needs the highest fertility of the legume species grown in Arkansas. Legumes can be planted in October or in February.

For Bermudagrass sod, October is the preferred planting time, but legumes can be planted in fescue in fall or late winter. Legumes provide a fairly long grazing season (depending on the species) and much of the nitrogen provided will cycle through the grazing animals back onto the field. This makes rotational grazing valuable again. Many of the practices outlined here mesh well together but can be implemented one at a time.