From the Agents Desk.....

Glad to Be Here

I have talked with many of you by now, but I wanted to just take a few minutes to again introduce myself to you and give you a little more info on me and my family.

I was raised in the East End Community and graduated from Sheridan High School. I went to Southern Arkansas University and received my Bachelor’s Degree in Agricultural Science and then received my Master’s Degree in Animal Science from the University of Arkansas. After graduating with our Master’s Degrees, my wife, Serena, and I moved to Homer, LA where Serena served as the Dairy Manger for the Hill Farm Research Station.

I served as the County Extension Agent in Stone County (Mt. View) for two years and in Fulton County (Salem) for 5 years, and Montgomery County for the last 3 years.

I have been married to my wife Serena for 12 years and we have 4 children, twins Gavin and Gracie (7) and Miley (5), and Eva (1). Life is exciting around our home! Serena is a middle school teacher and she is from Wickes.

We are excited about being in Grant County. I am looking forward to meeting you and working with you. I am here to assist you anyway possible. Do not hesitate to call or come by my office to chat.

Pesticide Applicator Training

When: February 3, 2015
Where: Memorial Building, Sheridan, AR
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Cost: $10 to attend training
      $45 for a 5 year pesticide license

Federal law requires that a person who purchases or applies a restricted use pesticide must have a current pesticide applicator license and receive periodic pesticide safety training. If you wish to purchase and/or use restricted use pesticides must have completed this class and have purchased a license. Contact the Extension Office for more information.
Arkansas Beef Improvement Program Workshop

January 27, 2015 - 6:00 p.m.
January 29, 2015 - 6:00 p.m.

Memorial Building (located next to the Extension Office)
Sheridan, Arkansas

Dinner will be served each night and sponsored by Farm Credit of Western Arkansas.

This event hosted by the Grant County Extension Service and there is no charge.

Pre-registration is due by January 19, 2015.
Meals will only be guaranteed to those that pre-register.
To pre-register call the Grant County Extension Service at (870) 942-2231.

Workshop Participants Will Learn:

- To monitor cow-calf costs and returns
- To recognize calving problems and develop a herd health program
- To evaluate management practices to achieve production goals
- To create a grazing management plan to reduce hay feeding

SESSION OUTLINE

SESSION I—JANUARY 27

Cow-Calf Budget
Establish what an animal unit is and its purpose.
Monitor changes in herd composition.
Measure returns and direct costs per animal unit.

Beef Cattle Health
Learn about proper vaccination.
Learn about vaccine failure
What are metabolic diseases

SESSION II—JANUARY 29

Grazing Management
1. Grazing 300 days
2. Reduce hay needs.
3 Improve grazing efficiency.
Water Quality Stakeholder Forum

The UA Division of Agriculture’s Public Policy Center will host a forum Jan. 21 for community members to discuss water pollution issues specific to the Upper Saline River Watershed. Get engaged: Identify, discuss and prioritize local water quality concerns and who should be involved in addressing those issues.

The forum is an opportunity to discuss water quality problems you’ve noticed or are concerned about in the watershed, which includes Cleveland, Dallas, Garland, Grant, Hot Spring, Jefferson and Saline counties. Meet others who are interested in water quality and discuss future steps that community members can take to address or prevent water pollution in the area.

Forum to be held on: Jan. 21 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Where: Grant County Cooperative Extension Office
202 W Pine St, Sheridan, AR 72150

Counties in this watershed: Cleveland, Dallas, Garland, Grant, Hot Spring, Jefferson and Saline

RSVP by e-mailing publicpolicycenter@uaex.edu or by calling 501-671-2228. You can also contact the Grant County Extension Office for more information at 870-942-2231.
Construction of a Tire Drag to Aid Forage Establishment

Broadcast seeding is a popular forage planting method, but adequate seed-to-soil contact in pasture sod can be problematic. This can be remedied by scarifying the sod with a harrow or field drag. Many producers either do not have a drag, the drag is not easily transported or the drag is too heavy or aggressive for covering small-seeded forages. Homemade tire drags work well to scarify short sod, expose soil and improve stand establishment.

Tire drags have many advantages. They make use of salvaged tires, they are inexpensive, and the tires flex over or around rocks, stumps, trees, etc. Our tire drag is constructed with salvaged 10- to 14-ply road grader tires; however, the drag can be sized to match the tractor or ATV to be used to pull the drag. 3

The tires are cut in half vertically down the middle of the tread to make a “cut side” and a “slick side.”

This makes the drag more versatile for variable field conditions. The “cut” side is more aggressive for heavy sod conditions and the “smooth” side can be used to smooth and firm tilled seedbeds or in thin sod pastures.

A heavy ply rating is needed so the cut tires hold shape and do not fold up when in use. The cut tires are laid out in a six-tire pyramid formation with one tire in the front, two tires in the middle and three tires on the end. The drag width using road grader tires in this formation is approximately 13 feet. Only use bias-ply tires. Steel-belted tires should be avoided because sharp wires protrude and can cause injury.

Drill a ½” hole through the tire tread and insert an eye bolt, leaving the “eye” on the outside of the tire. A thin piece of metal, approximately 2” x 4”, is used on the inside of the tire as a washer to prevent the eye bolt from pulling through the tire. (Con’t on next page)
Large snap-rings are used to connect the tires. Snap-ring connectors allow each tire to flex independently and follow the ground contour. Snap-rings also allow the drag to be assembled or disassembled as needed. A piece of pipe, used for a pull bar, is then placed horizontally between the tires and the machine that will pull the drag. Chains are welded to the pull bar, and snap-rings are used to connect the chains to the eye bolts of the tires. The first and second rows of tires are attached to the pull bar to keep the drag in line when turning. Chains are welded to the front side of the pull bar for connecting the drag to the tractor or ATV. A portable tire drag is a durable, economical and effective tool for preparing pasture sod for broadcast seeding small-seeded forages.

Snap-ring connectors allow the drag to be assembled or disassembled as needed.

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Make Pre-Breeding Vaccines a Priority

A healthy cow is essential for reproductive success. The earlier a cow can become pregnant during the breeding season, the earlier she will calve the following year, and an earlier calving date usually corresponds with a more valuable calf at weaning. Vaccinating the whole herd this time of year will not only protect the cows against reproductive diseases prior to the breeding season but will also provide protection to the springborn calves against potential disease risks. Selecting the correct vaccines is a critical element in developing a herd health program.

Although herd health needs may vary among operations, there are a few standard vaccines that will protect against reproductive loss and poor efficiency in a cow herd that should be included for most herds. For cows and bulls, vaccinate with:

- 4or 5way viral vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV)
- Leptospirosis
- Vibriosis
- 7way clostridial (Blackleg)

Another focus for the vaccination program should be to limit overall calf illness. Some operations should give consideration to the case history of diseases in the herd. If your herd has encountered problems with pinkeye, calf scours or respiratory pneumonia in the past, there are vaccines for these problems that will help limit future outbreaks. However, the standard annual vaccines recommended for calves should include:

- 4or 5way viral vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV)
- 7way clostridial (Blackleg)

If you plan to vaccinate replacement heifers, then consider:

- Brucellosis (Bang’s) vaccine between 4 and 12 months of age
- 4or 5way viral vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV)
- Leptospirosis
- Vibriosis
- 7way clostridial (Blackleg)

Your vaccination program should be viewed as an important part of an effective health management plan that would also include proper nutrition, parasite control and a simple biosecurity plan for your operation. The objective is to maintain a high level of herd immunity to minimize disease outbreak and improve profitability for the operation. Since vaccine needs vary from herd to herd, consider visiting with your herd veterinarian to get input regarding vaccine selection for your operation.

One concern that some producers may question: Is the cost of implementing a vaccine program justified? You should consider that avoiding a potential health disaster in your cattle operation easily validates the cost. Keep in mind the motto: “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” In other words, the expense of a disease outbreak will far exceed the cost of disease prevention.