Upcoming Events

Fall Forage Demonstration at SWREC - planting in Mid-September, mid-October and harvest December, February, March and May, tentatively.

Arkansas Forage and Grassland Conference at Crossroads Cowboy Church in El Paso, AR - 9:00 a.m. Friday, October 28.

Pesticide Applicators’ Training - I must obtain my license to teach it first. I may work with neighboring counties for these upcoming seasons but, no need to worry, it is on my agenda. We will plan the first one sometime in November.

Four States Cattle Conference at Texas A&M University - Texarkana - December 13. Pre-registration is encouraged. Tickets will be around $30 for individual, and $50 for a couple; and $45 single at the door, and $65 couple at the door.

Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference, Savannah Georgia, January 5-8, 2017

Please call if you are interested or need more information about any of these events.

County Extension Council Top 6

Most of my Agriculture Committee and County Extension Council members were in the hay field during our annual meeting. So I wanted to include the main topics we discussed and what issues I plan on addressing in the upcoming year. If you have any advice, concerns or comments about these topics or even suggestions for other topics, please, PLEASE, contact me. I am here for YOU, the producers, and I want to make sure I am providing you with information that is beneficial to you and your operation.

- Planning for flood or drought
- Low stress handling of livestock
- Breeding soundness evaluation
- Pond management
- Specific pests common to SWAR
- Agriculture in the classroom

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Wet Weather

Water Levels are growing in Arkansas farm fields. Rainfall from the weekend of August 12 ranged from 0.7 inches at Pine Bluff, to 7.71 inches at Ravenden Springs. The official record for Nashville, by SWAR Radio was 3.47 inches for those three days. My personal rain gauge on the east side of town collected a bit more than that, at over 4 inches. This unusually heavy rainfall, while it could be a blessing, is becoming a burden on our crops and farmers. Among the many inconveniences of this rain is not being able to spray for the army worms that are eating away at our crops and pastures. Another is the increased susceptibility of foot rot, especially with this kind of slow soaking rain. It allows areas to stand in water, instead of flash flooding type rains that keep water moving. For hay, of course it’s a waiting game until the ground is dry enough to harvest.

Army worms: Unfortunately, this slow steady rain is only fueling the pests. Once the rain clears up, farmers will be able to spray, hopefully the last two weeks of August. Pesticide needs to be sprayed on dry foliage and, depending on the specific product, needs at least two hours of drying time to be rain-fast. Keep in mind, it is still important to monitor your fields and measure the army worm concentration in specific areas. The individual size of army worms is also important to monitor—once they have matured and are 1.5 inch in length, spraying pesticide is much less effective, as they are close to molting.

Foot rot: Muddy, manure filled areas are the perfect breeding grounds for bacteria, fungi and other organisms that may cause foot rot. Places to watch are those low lying areas, shaded areas where cattle may bed down, and areas around water sources; really, any place where cattle may stand for periods of time and/or defecate that have a tendency to stay moist. Be sure to keep a close eye on your cattle for signs of lameness, loss of appetite, fever, depression, and for animals having no desire to stand or move around. There is no vaccine, so prevention is key. However during this time, prevention, while more challenging, can be done with good drainage, good sanitation and use of lime (after the rain).

Hay: As producers are waiting out the rain to harvest, those forages are maturing. With increased maturity comes lower concentration of crude protein and energy (TDN) and increased fiber components such as neutral detergent fiber (NDF), acid detergent fiber (ADF) and lignin. Excess rainfall leaches soluble nutrients from hay, resulting in dry matter loss, increased fiber content and decreased energy (TDN). The severity of leaching nutrients depends on the forage species, intensity of rainfall, etc. as to how much quality is lost. Any rainfall during the wilting process (after hay has been cut, drying process) will prolong baling and will allow further loss of quality of nutrients. Yes, cut grass can be tedded and raked to help it dry out, but added tedding and raking also causes more leaf shatter, removing even more quality nutrients. Unfortunately, there are no real preventative measures, given the uncertainty of the weather. Patience is key in getting through this uncommon rainy August.

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Cow Corner

Spring calving: This time of year it is important to pregnancy check cows. It is time to wean calves. Pre-conditioning and fence line weaning is one option. Also, vaccinate heifers for brucellosis, evaluate heifers’ target weights, and cull animals that are not producing. Lastly it is a good time to think about fixing those fences and working on any other projects on the farm.

Fall calving: This time of year is calving season! It is also time to consider annual vaccinations, but remember to follow the manufacturer’s recommendations on the vaccine label, as pregnancy status usually affects when an animal can be vaccinated. It is time to vaccinate heifers for brucellosis, because their breeding season should begin in late November to December. It is time to think about sire selection and management, fertility test bulls, check body condition scores of all animals, deworm cattle, and lastly care for newborn calves - castrate, ear tag, dip navel, etc.

4-H

Most of this summer I spent getting to know our 4-Hers and, let me tell you, I am so proud I am in Howard County! We have some very talented kids and I love working with them.
About Me

These first few newsletters I’m going to tell you a little bit about myself and what I like to do this time of year. Fall for this Texas girl means FOOTBALL! I love it at all levels. Of course closest to my heart is college football, the Aggies. Next would be my former Aggies now in the NFL. I’ve recently become a Denver Broncos fan and although I hate to admit it, I can’t let my hometown team go, so yes, I’m still a Cowboys fan. I’m excited to see the local high school teams play, Nashville, Dierks, and Mineral Springs. I’ve heard great things about them! I really am proud to be here in Nashville, AR and hope I can represent this community well.

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County Extension Agent-Agriculture

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