Grazing School

The Grazing School will be held Thursday, April 16 starting at 3:00 p.m. The first part of the session will be held at Clyde and Clovy Keaster’s Farm 8 miles east of Nashville on Highway 278. Topics to be covered there are Electric Fencing for Grazing Management, Weed ID and Control, and Sprayer Calibration using GPS.

The remainder of the program will be conducted at the Extension Homemaker Center (EH House) located at 425 N. 2nd St. in Nashville. Topics to be covered there will be Estimating Yields and Stocking Rates, Forage Testing, and Programs Available through the NRCS.

A meal will be provided. There is a $10/person or $15/couple registration fee. Please call in by April 14 to register.

Pesticide Applicator Trainings—Last Ones for the Spring

The Howard County Extension Service will be conducting its last pesticides trainings for the Spring on Monday, April 20. The first one will begin at 12:00 noon and the second one will begin at 6:00 p.m. Both training will be at the Extension Homemakers Center, 425 N. 2nd St. in Nashville. There is a $10 charge for the training.
LEARNING FARM LISTENING SESSION

If you are interested in diversifying your agriculture commodities, a Learning Farm Listening Session will be held **May 12 at 5:30 p.m.** in Nashville at the Extension Home-makers Center. A light meal will be served, please call in to register, if you are interested in attending.

SUPER COW SUMMER SERIES TO RETURN

The Super Cow Summer Series is back by popular demand. This year new topics and hands-on activities will be offered. Just some of the topics that will be covered include: Vaccination Program - When, Why, What, and How; Cattle Marketing Options-Off the Farm, Video, Internet, etc.; Cost Effectiveness and Efficiency of Various Fertilizers Options, and so much more. If there is a topic you are interested in, please let me know.

The Series is tentatively set for the last Monday of each month beginning in May. But watch the newspapers, radio or the Howard Co. UAEX Agriculture and Natural Resources Facebook page for updates.

GRAZE ACCORDING TO MOISTURE CONDITIONS

Grass grows rapidly when the temperature gets warm and moisture is plentiful. There are several options to reap the benefits of having all the extra grass, but you have to control where and when you let your animals graze to take advantage of all the extra grass. This can be done with fencing and management.

**Option 1**
The first option is to cut all the extra grass for hay to feed in the winter. If you are choosing this option, pick an area where you plan to hay and prevent cattle from grazing here before and after you have hayed the area.

**Option 2**
The second option would be to stockpile the extra growth in a pasture and use it for winter grazing. This can help decrease costs by feeding less hay in the winter. On summer pastures, you need to start fencing cattle out of areas as you plan to use for winter pastures to help accumulate growth in these pastures. If you are planning on using a winter pasture that is composed of a cool-season grass, like fescue, fence off this pasture and save the winter grazing portion by late July. You do not want to overgraze this area in the summer because late season growth will be slow.

**Option 3**
The third option is to start a planned rotational grazing program this summer. This will allow your pasture plants to recover well when they are being rested and build a deep and healthy root system that will help them maintain production when it turns dry. Don’t just be satisfied with all the extra grass; take advantage of it for its long term benefits.
**CONDITION SCORE COWS EARLY**

**Introduction**

Body condition scores (BCS) describe the relative fatness of a cow through the use of a nine-point scale and is an effective management tool to evaluate nutritional status of the herd. The body condition scoring system allows producers to visually assess their cow herd using a number system that objectively describes the amount of condition or fat reserve of an animal. Because cow/calf producers do not weigh cows on a regular basis, they need a management technique to evaluate their cow herd as it relates to productivity and profit potential. Cow body condition score is closely related to reproductive efficiency and is a more reliable indicator of nutritional status of a cow than is body weight. Body condition at calving impacts future reproductive performance for spring calving cows. Grazing lost body condition back onto cows is more economical than carrying harvested forage to them to achieve the desired body condition. Managing body condition is like making the porridge for Goldie Locks - not too hot, not too cold, but just right. It’s not economical to have cows too fat or too thin; they need to be just right at the right time of the production cycle.

**When to Condition Score**

As a rule of thumb, one BCS equates to about 75 to 80 pounds of live weight in cows. Thus, if a cow weighed 1100 pounds at BCS 4, this same cow would be expected to weigh 1175 pounds at BCS 5 and 1250 pounds at BCS 6. It is important to remember that these weight changes do not include weight of the fetus, fetal membranes, or fetal fluids, which in total amounts to about 125 to 155 pounds for cows in late gestation. With this concept in mind, remember a cow that is maintaining weight during late gestation is actually losing body weight and, possibly, body condition because the fetus is growing at least one pound per day.

The most common used condition scoring systems is the 1 to 9 body condition scoring system where a BCS 1 cow is extremely thin and emaciated and a BCS 9 cow is very fat and obese. Assign a cow a condition score in whole numbers such as 3, 4, 5, etc.

The greatest single factor influencing rebreeding performance of beef cows is body condition at calving, especially for spring calving herds. However, if producers wait until calving to manage body condition of their cow herd, they will find it very difficult and expensive to increase the body condition of a lactating cow.

Although evaluation of body condition can be looked at as an ongoing process, there are key times when body condition scoring should be considered in the late summer, early fall of the year especially for ranchers that are trying to graze cows for 12 months.

Consider condition scoring the cow herd in late summer. This may seem odd, but it does allow for strategic use of management practices that can economically put condition back on thin females. Condition scoring the cow herd at this time may be used in planning management strategies such as early weaning or supplementation programs for cows grazing warm-season pastures or range that are decreasing in quality. Scoring cows at this time is probably more important in range areas as compared to areas that would have both cool-and warm-season pastures and crop residues. Young cows need to be examined closely, as they are likely to be the females that are losing condition, and early weaning this group may be the management option. Also, if pasture quality and quantity is decreasing at a rapid rate due to environmental conditions, weaning the whole calf crop may be necessary. Data indicates that it is more economical to feed the calf directly than to supplement the cow to feed the calf.

Consider condition scoring the cow herd in the fall. Condition scoring cows in the range area in the fall is critical. Because of the feed resources, it is more difficult to get condition back on cows prior to calving in the range area where the feed resources are primarily warm-season grasses. Condition scoring cows at this time will help in planning an economical winter supplementation program to get females back to the target BCS. If young females are thin, consider early weaning their calves to allow them to regain condition. For producers that have cool-season pastures and crop residues, late summer/early fall condition score may not be as critical. However, it may be important in dry years. Then early weaning or supplementation may be management options.
The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution. If you require a reasonable accommodation to participate or need materials in another format, please contact your County Extension office as soon as possible. Dial 711 for Arkansas Relay.

Sherry Beaty-Sullivan
County Extension Agent-
Agriculture

The old rancher replied, "Well, I'll tell you, young feller, I was a little worried about winning that case myself, because that durned bull came home this morning."

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