March 21, 2014

Prairie County Cattle Producers:

The County Brucellosis (Bangs) vaccination program will be held Thursday, April 17, and Friday, April 18, 2014. Arkansas law requires that all heifer calves intended to be used as replacements between 4 and 12 months of age be vaccinated against Brucellosis.

Representatives from the Livestock and Poultry Commission and the Prairie County Extension Service will offer the on-farm vaccination program at no cost to all Prairie County beef and dairy producers. If you are interested, please return the enclosed reply card or contact Prairie County Extension office by Wednesday, April 9, 2014. You may call 870-256-4204 in Des Arc or 870-998-2614 at De Valls Bluff. A schedule will be put together and producers will be notified when we will be at their farm.

The Livestock and Poultry Commission has stated that each farm where cattle are to be vaccinated must have a chute or squeeze chute with a head gate where cattle can be subdued. Even with good facilities, the chances of someone getting hurt are possible. If the proper facilities are not available or safe, the vaccinator has the right to refuse to vaccinate your calves. Calves will not be vaccinated unless the owner or someone representing him is present.

As the spring grasses arrive so do the weeds. I know producers are thankful that we had a great hay crop last year as this has been a very long cold winter. Listed below are a few weed control options:

Herbicides are a great resource when you have a weed problem but not a miracle cure to weed control. Environmental and cultural problems such as soil compaction, poor drainage, and low fertility all contribute to weedy pastures. Every farm operation is unique in itself but the same process applies.

1. Inventory Forages (take note of chemical sensitive forage such as clovers)
2. Identify the weeds to be controlled
3. Select effective herbicide(s)
4. Follow Product Label
5. Apply at the recommended rate and date

White clover greater than two inches has some tolerance to 2-4-D amine at rates up to 1lb ai/A. Red, crimson, and arrowleaf clovers do not have any tolerance for chemical. Scout your fields and make a plan, know what it is you want to kill and what you don’t. The most important thing is read the label. If you do not have clovers in your forage program there are more options for broadleaf control. For more severe broadleaf weeds and woody plants consider Grazon P + D or GrazonNext HL. For Broadleaf weed and bahiagrass control consider using Cimarron Plus or Cimarron Max. For brush control (blackberry, sweetgum, sumac, etc.) in pastures consider mixing Remedy Ultra and Grazon P+D.
Contact the Prairie County Cooperative Extension Service or consult the U of A Extension Publication MP44 for all your questions regarding recommended chemicals for weed and brush control. Also, you can download the publication, Pasture Weed and Brush Control from our website: [www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu).

Grass Tetany

Cool season forages such as fescue or winter annual cereal grains such as wheat and oats can cause grass tetany. In Arkansas this disease usually occurs in February, March, and April. Grass tetany is caused by low magnesium levels in a cow’s body. Usually, older lactating cows are affected. Increased potassium intake can also be a factor because it can slow magnesium absorption. Rapid growing forage can be a source of potassium, especially if a fall or early spring pot ash application was made to pastures. Watch for decreased appetite, excitability, muscle spasms, and frequent urination. Cattle may get down and be unable to get up. Provide a free choice mineral supplement containing at least 10% magnesium. Cows will intake 2-4 ounces of supplement per head daily. Provide an adequate number of mineral feeders based on your herd size.

Armyworms

The true armyworm is more of a spring pest of cool-season grasses and tall fescue but will damage other forages and grains. Armyworm larvae are small and do not eat much during the first four stages. During the fifth and sixth stage damage seems to appear overnight due to large amounts of forage consumed. Large armyworms will move to uninfested fields in search of foliage. Although true armyworms can have two to three generations per year, typically only the first generation causes significant damage to forage. True armyworms tend to avoid forage containing legumes, such as alfalfa and clover. Scout for these pests before economic damage occurs. Remember, true army worms tend to feed at night and will crawl down into the thatch during the day. Look for feeding scars or feces (small dark spots). Producers should also watch for birds feeding in fields because birds will exploit armyworms as a ready food source. Early signs of armyworm damage include leaves that are chewed on the underside only and fields with a slight “frosted” appearance.

Upcoming Events

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find flyers for the upcoming Delta Beef Producers Conference at the ASU Farm in Jonesboro and the Livestock Field Day at the Livestock and Forestry Research Station in Batesville.

Brent Griffin  
CEA-AG Agent/Staff Chair

Michael Paskewitz  
CEA-Ag Agent

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