

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Headline: Fall Chores

WARSAW, Mo. – Fall is a time for beef producers to assess the past growing season and prepare for the upcoming winter months. Evaluating the forage base and livestock performance can help identify changes that need to be made in upcoming growing seasons.

Pasture and hay fields should be monitored for weed pressure and the presence of toxic plants. Identify and mark problem areas so they can be treated in a timely manner next year. Assess grass stands and identify areas for possible renovation to thicken the stand. Soil test and identify nutrient deficiencies so fertilizer and lime dollars can be spent more efficiently to correct existing problems.

Inventory and quality test hay supplies. Identify sources of needed nutrients and develop cost-effective feeding programs. Grain and grain by-product prices are lower than in past years, but it is still economically beneficial to control supplementation as much as possible. If you have used distiller's grains in the past, rations will need to be adjusted to account for the lower energy values due to more oil being taken out of the product.

Body condition scoring of the cow herd is essential, especially this year. Be sure to wean calves before cow body condition is depleted. The cheapest way to add weight and condition to cows before winter is to not let them lose it in the first place. Remember, adding weight is a function of increasing the energy intake of the animals. Low levels of protein supplementation will not provide enough energy to improve body condition. High energy supplements such as grains or grain by-products will need to be fed, especially if the cows are thin and need to add condition.

Evaluate the performance of the calf crop. How did it compare to past years? Do changes in the breeding program, such as new bloodlines or crossbreeding, need to happen? Are cow and heifer pregnancy rates where they should be? If not, why not? Do you know which cows are performing better than others? Maybe it's time to look at

production record software to help manage the cow herd and provide information to make better culling decisions.

When you get your hands on a 2015 calendar, make notes on the appropriate months to identify management priorities for problem areas. These reminders can be especially helpful with items such as weed control programs. Listing these management practices will help ensure they are done on a timely basis. We will have a limited number of the “red books” available for sale at the Extension office if you need a 2015 pocket record book.

If you have questions on any of these topics, contact me by e-mail at schmitze@missouri.edu or at the Extension Center in Warsaw at (660) 438-5012.

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