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livestock specialists.....

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DATES TO

REMEMBER:

- **May is beef month—make plans now with your local cattlemen's group to promote beef and educate consumers on the terrific product that you work so hard to produce!**
- **May 10—Missouri Steer Feedout entries due**

Magnesium and Grass Tetany

Spring is finally here and when cows begin grazing the lush first growth in pastures, grass tetany (also called grass staggers, wheat pasture poisoning and hypomagnesia) can start showing up. Grass tetany is a nutritional disorder resulting from inadequate blood levels of magnesium. Conditions which increase the risk of grass tetany are lush green forage, prolonged cloudy weather, older cows in early lactation that are heavy milkers, and soils that are low in magnesium and calcium and high in nitrogen and available potassium. The older cows in early lactation are more prone to grass tetany since cattle become less efficient at mobilizing body stores of magnesium as they mature. Further complicating the situation, cattle have a limited ability to store magnesium in the body since magnesium is rapidly excreted through milk, urine and feces. Clinical signs usually begin with incoordination, excessive salivation, nervousness, staggering, convulsions and death. Prevention is the best treatment; providing supplemental magnesium after the development of a problem will usually not correct the problem. To prevent grass tetany, dry cows should consume 10 grams of magnesium per day, while cows nursing calves should consume 20-25 grams of magnesium daily. To provide this level in the body, a commercial mineral mix containing at least 10 percent magnesium is recommended. High magnesium mineral programs should be included in your cowherd management program beginning in late March or early April as the lush spring forage growth starts so acceptable levels will be achieved in the body to prevent problems later in spring. For producers who want to mix their own high magnesium mineral, a mixture of 30% magnesium oxide, 30% trace mineralized salt, 30% dicalcium phosphate and 10% dried molasses fed free choice should achieve the recommended levels of magnesium. Incorporating legumes into pastures or feeding hay that contains red clover or alfalfa will also help minimize grass tetany problems since legumes contain about twice as much magnesium as grasses.

Considering Timed AI this Spring?

Don't Forget the Breeding Barn We have to Rent

More and more producers are utilizing estrus synchronization and timed AI. Most who have tried it realize the benefits and continue to use this tool that allows the use of proven sires to get a high percentage of cows pregnant on one day. And no, just because these cows breed and settle on one day doesn't mean they will all calve on one day! For those of you who do not have good facilities to AI cows or heifers, we have a portable AI breeding barn that is available to rent for \$50 per day of use and we ask that you wash it out before it is returned. These barns work really well and make breeding cows much easier. To schedule the barn for use, contact the Gentry County MU Extension Office at (660)-726-5610. It is a good idea to schedule early because it does get used a fair amount in the spring!



KSU Focus on Feedlots Report

Kansas State University Extension recently released their February 2013 closeout information in their latest Focus on Feedlots report which includes data from ten different Kansas feedlots. The 19,907 steers averaged 1350 pounds, 161 days on feed, 3.43 average daily gain, 6.28 feed/gain dry basis, 2.02% death loss and \$131.12 average cost of gain. The 24,279 heifers averaged 1236 pounds, 151 days on feed, 3.20 average daily gain, 6.27 feed/gain dry basis, 1.64% death loss, and \$132.31 average cost of gain.

USDA Animal Disease Traceability Rule

On March 11, 2013, the USDA Animal Disease Traceability rule went into affect nationwide. This rule requires that certain species and classes of livestock be officially identified before they are moved across state lines. This regulation does not apply to cattle being moved within Missouri nor does it impact cattle moving into Missouri from other states because Missouri’s requirements already meet or exceed the new federal requirements. If moving cattle from Missouri to another state, the following classes of cattle will need to be officially identified and have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection before movement occurs: sexually intact beef cattle 18 months of age or older or cattle of any age that are going to a rodeo, recreational event, show or exhibition; all female dairy cattle regardless of age, and all male dairy cattle (including steers) born after March 11, 2013. There are exceptions to the rule including but not limited to beef cattle less than 18 months of age, cattle moving directly to a harvesting facility, cattle moved as a commuter herd, cattle being moved directly to an approved tagging site, and back tags if cattle are moved directly to a harvesting site and processed within three days. For more information on the Animal Disease Traceability Rule, please visit the Missouri Department of Agriculture website at <http://mda.mo.gov/animals/health/disease/traceability.php>.

There are several forms of official identification. One is the National Uniform Eartagging system which includes metal eartags such as the “silver” or “brite” USDA tag and the orange Brucellosis vaccination eartag. These tags are recognized by their numbering system and are imprinted with the official US shield. Another one is the animal identification number (AIN) tag. These include electronic identification tags or visual tags that contain a fifteen number code (starting with 840) and are imprinted with the US shield. Group/lot identification numbers are also accepted when cattle will be managed together as one group throughout the entire pre-harvest production chain. Other forms of identification such as brands, tattoos and breed registry certificates may qualify but only when accepted as an official form of identification by the shipping and receiving state.

??Question of the Week??

Everyone keeps talking about the importance of knowing how my cattle perform in the feedlot and on the packing house rail. How can I, as a small producer, find that out?

The Missouri Steer Feedout is a great way to “experiment” with cattle feeding and retained ownership with minimal risk. It only takes five head of steers to participate and complete feedlot and carcass information is returned. Another option is the Missouri “Quality Beef by the Numbers” program. The Quality Beef (QB) program is designed to track cattle through the feedlots and packing plants regardless of herd size. For more information on either of these, contact your local MU Extension livestock specialist.

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