

Ozark Stockman

An informal Newsletter for Livestock Producers in the Missouri Ozarks and abroad...

Published by Ted Cunningham, Regional Livestock Specialist, MU Extension

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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

APRIL 1, 2007

Why should you attend a Grazing School???

As I write this newsletter, we are only a couple weeks from the start of "Management Intensive Grazing School Season" here in the Ozarks. While this may not sound as glamorous as the "opening" of trout or turkey season, if you're serious about making your livestock enterprise more profitable and you've not attended a grazing school, it might be time to re-prioritize.

When you really stop and think about it, what is the biggest component and asset to most livestock farms in Missouri? The answer is GRASS!!! Therefore, anything we can learn to better manage this resource with regard to forage quality, grazing efficiency, extending the grazing season, soil requirements, alleviating "summer slump", etc, should mean extra dollars in your pocket. And by the way, if you're a little unfamiliar with any of the above terms, you're likely the perfect candidate to attend a school this year.

While many of the concepts we teach at these schools may require that you spend some cash on additional fence and water distribution (if you'll visit with your local Soil



and Water Conservation District, you'll likely be able to qualify for cost-share practices), the bulk of what is taught are basic grazing concepts that can be put into practice without incurring additional expenses or using your existing structures. This is one reason why we emphasize that these schools promote "intensive management" rather than "intensive grazing".

Recently, Mick Gilliam, Ag Business Specialist, and Gary Applegate,

Livestock Specialist completed a survey which outlines the benefits and impact of the Grazing Schools held in the Ozarks. They surveyed all 1010 people who had attended a Grazing School in the five year period between 2000-2004, and got 111 responses. Here's what they found:

1. Of the 99 farms that had implemented a grazing system, they indicated that as a result of implementation, they had increased animal units equivalents from 5,669 to 6,804, which equates to a **20% increase in stocking capacity.**

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Update on the Show Me Select Heifer Development Program

Those involved with the Missouri Show-Me-Select Heifer Development Program are gearing up for a busy spring and summer.

The South Central Missouri Spring Sale for Show-Me-Select Heifers will be held May 12 in Mountain Grove. Randy Saner, Regional Livestock Specialist and Coordinator for the

Show-Me-Select Program in the South Central Region says he's expecting approximately 115 head of fall calving heifers. Randy also noted that about half of the

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Subscription Info:

If you'd like to receive this newsletter please do one of the following...

1. Email or call the Dent County Extension office and request to be put on the Ozark Stockman email distribution list.
2. Download the Ozark Stockman from our website at <http://extension.missouri.edu/dent/>. Each bi-monthly issue will be posted on this site as well as archived issues.
3. If you wish to receive this newsletter, but simply don't have internet/email access, give us a call and we'll work something out.

“The Basics & Beyond”, Sheep and Goat Workshop

Submitted by: Randy Saner, Regional Livestock Specialist

Sheep and goat producers interested in management of sheep and goats should plan to attend a Sheep and Goat Workshop on June 2 in Houston Missouri at the Texas County Fair Grounds.

The program will begin with a chance to visit with various vendors and pick-up information packets at 8:30 a.m. The topics and speakers will be: Introduction to Sheep and Goats by Susan Schoenian, State Extension Sheep and Goat Specialist, University of Maryland; “The Million Dollar Question: How to Select the Correct Animal” by Dr. Beth Walker, Assistant Professor, Missouri State University; Pasture Management for Sheep and Goats, by Mark Kennedy, State Grassland Specialist USDA – Natural Resource Conservation Service; Handling Facilities for Sheep and Goats by Susan Schoenian; Parasite Management by Randy Saner, Regional Livestock Specialist, University of Missouri Extension.

Show-Me-Select

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heifers will be black Angus influenced (black/black white face), and about half will be red Angus influenced (red/red white face), along with some other breeds in the mix.

To be eligible to be sold as a “Show-Me-Select” heifer, all heifers must meet a number of requirements which help ensure a quality replacement female. The basic requirements these heifers must meet include: a standard health protocol including bangs vaccination, a pre-breeding reproductive tract score evaluation and pelvic measurement greater than 150 cm conducted by a veterinarian, bred to a bull which meets stringent Show-Me-Select requirements for calving ease, a pregnancy check with-in 90 days of breeding to establish an approximate calving date, and then a second pregnancy check with-in 30 days of sale to guarantee pregnancy at sale time. Additionally, just prior to the sale, the heifers are individually evaluated by Department of Agriculture graders and must be free from blemishes, be at least a muscle score 2 and at a medium or large frame, and must have a body condition score in the range of 5-8.

Heifers in this sale are typically sold in lots of 2-5 head, and heifers within each lot must have projected calving dates within 30 days of each other.

For more information on the Show-Me-Select Program, or to receive a Sale Catalog give me a call or contact Randy Saner, 417-256-2391 or visit http://extension.missouri.edu/howell/showme/SC_Show-Me-Select.htm

Breakout sessions will include FAMACHA training and certification by Randy Saner, Direct Marketing of Sheep & Goats to the Ethnic Market by Susan Schoenian, Direct Marketing Sheep Products on the Internet, Susan Briggs, local Icelandic sheep producer, Marketing Goat Cheese through Morningland Cheese Coop by Leila Greystone local dairy goat farmer and Predator Control by Scott McWilliams, Wildlife Damage Control Biologist, Missouri Department of Conservation.

The cost for the program will be \$35 per person which includes lunch and \$10 extra per person for those wanting FAMACHA certification. The registration deadline is May 25, 2007. To register or for more information contact Top of the Ozarks RC&D at 417-967-2028 ext. 5 or by mail at 6726 Hwy 63, Houston, MO 65483.

Breeding Soundness for Bulls

Every year I hear a story or two about a bull that “went bad” during the breeding season, and failed to get cows settled in a timely fashion and in some cases simply didn’t get any cows bred. There is no telling what this costs beef producers each year who encounter bull problems. I have no doubt that some of these bulls incurred problems after they were turned in with cows, however, I’m certain many of these problems could have been detected prior to turn-out if a breeding soundness exam had been performed.

A proper breeding soundness exam (BSE) involves more than a semen test. Bulls should have examination of the scrotum, testicles, and penis for abnormalities, injuries, warts, hair rings, etc. Palpation of the prostate and seminal vesicles of the bull are also very important. Additionally, the bull should be inspected for overall soundness of feet and legs and other structural problems that might inhibit his ability to do his job.

It’s recommended that bulls be evaluated 30-60 days prior to the breeding season. This time frame also coincides with a good time to booster vaccinations and de-worm.

Even bulls that have had a BSE should be watched closely after they’re turned in to make sure they have ample libido and remain fit and healthy. Although a BSE doesn’t catch everything, it is certainly the best insurance policy you can buy to ensure you have a timely and uniform calf crop next year

Grazing School

(Continued from pg 1)

2. 80% of respondents with a grazing system indicated that fertilizer use had remained the same or decreased, and 69% indicated herbicide use had remained constant or decreased.
3. 33% of respondents said supplemental feed use had remained the same, and an astounding 54 % said supplemental feed use had decreased.
4. Length of grazing season increased from 245.5 days to 290.7 days, or an increase of 18% for farms that implemented a grazing system
5. 94% of the farms that indicated they had implemented a grazing system, believed that participation in a Grazing School had enhanced the overall profitability of their farming operation.

If you stop and think about these results, here's what it boils down to:

The majority of the farms that participated in and implemented some form of a grazing system, increased the number of animals on their farm, but incurred no additional feed related expenses! What more can you ask for?

Here's a list of Management Intensive Grazing Schools and their contact information that will be held this year in the Ozarks.

2007 Ozark Regional Grazing Schools

<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Contact Info</u>
Rolla	April 19-20	Phelps Co. SWCD 573-364-6202 ext 3
Koshkonong	April 26-28	Stacy Hamblton 417-778-7490
Linn	May 3-4	Osage Co. SWCD 573-897-3797 ext 3
Hartville	May 17-19	Ted Probert 417-741-6134
MU Wurdack Farm - Cook Station	June 21-22	Ted Cunningham 573-729-3196
Houston	July 18-20	Sandy Wooten 417-967-2028 ext 4
Lebanon	September 12-13	Mary Jo Tannehill 417-532-6305 ext 101
Willow Springs	September 13-15	Randy Saner 417-256-2391
Maries River Watershed	September 20-21	Osage Co. SWCD 573-897-3797 ext 3

What's it Worth? Pasture Rental and Custom Rates

What's it worth? This is a common question throughout the year here in the office. I regularly receive questions from prospective tenants and landowners concerning the going rate for pasture rent, as well as a good deal of questions regarding the going rate for different ag services.

I'll tackle the pasture rental situation first. In Missouri the two most common methods of leasing pasture is on a cost/acre/year basis, or on a cost/head/month basis.

For questions related to pasture rental, the first reference I use is the MU Guide, G427 "2006 Cash Rental Rates in Missouri". This document is a compilation of returned surveys from farmers and ranchers engaged in cash rental agreements, and is usually updated every 2-3 years. This guide currently reports average prices, as well as highs and lows for the following: 1. Good Pasture (less than 4 ac/1000 lb cow/year, 2. Fair/Poor Pasture (more than 4 ac/1000 lb cow/year, and 3. Timber Pasture. Additionally, charges for pasturing cattle by stocking rate (cost/head/month) are included and broke down into the following categories: 1. Per cow/calf/month, 2. Per yearling per month, and 3. Per heifer per month.

Obviously, there are a lot of factors that go into how pasture is valued. Tract size, quality of fence, species of forage, cross-fencing, water availability, location, and who takes care of fertilizing and fence building are the big ones. MU Guide G427 should really be used as a guide to establish base prices and then adjustments should be made for other attributes.

MU Guide, G302 "2006 Custom Rates for Farm Services in Missouri", is the reference I use for folks wanting to know what bushhogging, baling, tillage, etc, is worth. It contains a cost for about every operation common to a farm enterprise. In general, these rates have significantly fewer variables and I can quote a rate fairly easily for most any service needed for a farm. However, factors such as fuel price, equipment capability and availability may greatly affect these prices.

To access these guides online, go to <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mgt/custrate/custrate.pdf> for the G302 Custom Rates Guide or go to <http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/agguides/agecon/g00427.pdf> for the G427 Rental Rates Guide.

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Calendar of events

April

- 4— "Tips for the 2007 Breeding Season" program featuring Dr. David Patterson in West Plains at the Howell County Extension Office. RSVP by April 2, contact Randy Saner 417-256-2391 for more info.
- 5—"Beef Economic Outlook" program featuring Dr. Ron Plain in Bourbon, MO. RSVP by March 31, contact Ted Cunningham 573-729-3196 for more info or Tina Paris 573-743-5515.
- 19-20—Rolla Grazing School. Contact Phelps County SWCD at 573-364-6202 ext 3 to register and for more info.

May

- 3-6—South Ozarks Premier Beef Marketers Annual Tour
- 5—Southeast Region Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale, Fruitland, 1 pm, contact Roger Eakins for more info at 573-243-3581
- 12—South Central Region Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale, Mtn. Grove, 1 pm
- 18—Southwest Region Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale, Carthage, 7 pm, contact Eldon Cole for more info at 417-466-3102
- 21—South Ozarks Premier Beef Marketers, Spring Co-mingling