

# 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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## Feeding Hay Efficiently

During the winter of 2006-2007 hay prices escalated from our typical \$35-45 per ton to as high as \$70-80 per ton for fescue/grass/legume mix hay. In many cases, hay simply couldn't be found at any price. Currently, with drought and a below average hay crop in many areas of the state, along with last year's winter resulting in the emptying of many hay barns in the region, it appears there will be little relief in hay prices for the coming feeding period.

The production and feeding of hay has never been cheap, especially now with high fuel, machinery, and land values. Wintering livestock, regardless of method, continues to be a costly venture. Aside from stockpiling tall fescue, feeding hay remains to be one of the most economical and convenient feedstuffs for wintering livestock, however, given the potential scarcity and price, livestock producers should take a close look at means to conserve hay and improve feeding efficiency. Perhaps one of the quickest ways to conserve your hay is to evaluate your feeding



methods and decrease hay waste. A common feeding practice in the Ozarks is unrolling large round bales of hay, typically in a rocky or otherwise poorer quality pasture. There've been a good number of reasons for this practice, and many that made good sense, especially when hay was dirt cheap and wasting a little hay meant pennies instead of dollars.

One method to reduce hay waste is to unroll or feed a restricted amount or an amount that the livestock can clean up in a timely manner. This basically involves having a good idea of what the feed requirement of your livestock is, and then properly gauging the amount of hay that you unroll. Research that evaluated feeding a 1, 2 or 4 day supply of hay, showed conclusive results that hay waste more than doubled when comparing the 1 day (11% waste) to 2 day (25% waste) amounts, and nearly tripled (31% waste) for the 4 day feed supply.

## Performance Tested Bull Sale - Oct. 26

The 61st All Breed Performance Tested Bull Sale will be held October 26 at 7 pm at the Farmington Livestock Auction. This fall's sale, which is sponsored by University of Missouri Extension, features 46 bulls consisting of 25 Angus, 5 Charolais, 14 Simmental/SimAngus, and 2 Polled Hereford. The majority of these bulls will be 18 months or older, and be semen checked and ready to go to work. The standards these bulls must reach to be eligible to be sold are that they must have a yearling height of at least 49

inches, have a yearling weight of at least 1050 pounds, and have a yearling grade of a "B-" or better. Additionally, bulls will be visually graded for quality and soundness the day of the sale and indexed for sale order. There should be an excellent selection of bulls to improve your herd, with numerous bulls which qualify as Show-Me-Select Heifer Bulls. For more information and a catalog, give me a call or contact Crawford Price, Sale Manager, at 573-996-2389.

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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.

## Test Your Hay

All hay is not created equal, but all hay has some value. The real problem is that hay quality can be very deceptive even to a trained eye. If you've not already done so, now is the time to get your hay tested and find out what supplemental feed needs you may have for this winter.

Hay testing should preferably be done with the use of a "core" sampler, which is simply a device which when used with a cordless drill or brace, screws into a bale and takes a uniform cross section of the hay. Typically, I recommend taking as many core samples as possible from a given lot of hay (hay from the same field, cut at the same time, etc) and then compiling those core sub-samples for a uniform sample which should provide you with an average of hay quality.

Most MU Extension offices, as well as some Soil and Water Conservation District offices and feed stores have core samplers available for use.

In general, the cost for a hay test runs from about \$13 to

\$26 depending on the amount of information you'd like. In general, the main components you need to get out of your hay test include: moisture, crude protein, and the Total Digestible Nutrient/Net Energy values. Additional information such as Acid Detergent Fiber, Neutral Detergent Fiber, Calcium, and Phosphorus may be beneficial especially if the hay is being used for growing livestock and in some cases it may also be necessary to see what other minerals are available from the hay.

A hay test should pay for itself. The opportunity to determine whether or not you need to supplement additional protein or energy, feed the proper hay to the right class of livestock and plan for purchasing additional supplement should result in livestock coming through the winter months in better condition and for less money.

For more information on hay tests contact me or your local Extension Office.

## Welcome to Will McClain, New Agronomy Specialist

I wanted to take an opportunity to welcome a new addition to the South Central Missouri Regional Extension Ag Team. Will McClain began work as Regional Agronomy Specialist headquartered in Crawford County on September 1st and has hit the ground running.

Will is originally from Mt. Vernon, MO where he grew up on a cow-calf operation. He received his bachelors from Missouri State, and masters and PhD from University of Missouri in agronomy/plant nutrition. Although I can't relay all the specifics, Will's graduate work focused on forages, with a good deal of work with tall fescue, stockpiling, grazing, etc. I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a "forage" trained agronomist, and I'm certain he'll be a great benefit to the livestock producers and grass farmers in south central Missouri.

Will is scheduled to be the featured speaker at the Dent County Cattlemen's Meeting October 18th in Salem and he'll be talking about pasture improvement and soil fertility, and I'm sure he'll be around at most ag-related function in the coming months, and hopefully I'll get him to right a article or two for this newsletter in the coming issues.

If Will can be of assistance to you, or you'd like to set up a time to meet with him, feel free to give him a call or send him an email. Although he works out of the Crawford County office, he also services Dent, Phelps, Gasconade, and Texas counties. Will can be reached at 573-775-2135 or McClainWE@missouri.edu.

## Disposition's role in Cattle Performance and Profit

Recently at the MU Wurdack Farm Field Day, Dr. Bob Weaber, MU Commercial Ag Beef Genetics Specialist was on hand to demonstrate some of his research techniques involving disposition and temperament in beef cattle. The method Bob used for assessing temperament was a measurement called "exit velocity". Exit velocity is simply a measurement of an animal's speed recorded after it leaves a chute. In short, the faster a calf leaves the chute and runs away is correlated to the disposition or temperament of the animal. Similar assessments such as "chute scoring" or "pen scoring" were also talked about as methods of evaluating disposition in subject animals.

In a nutshell, Bob's message was that disposition has proven to be a significant factor in animal performance traits such as daily gain and feed efficiency, tenderness, and health, and that disposition is a highly heritable trait (.4 heritability). The fact that disposition has been established as a highly heritable trait means that by selecting against animals, especially replacements that have poor dispositions, we can fairly rapidly make genetic improvement for that trait.

Disposition is considered a "convenience trait" as it is a trait which directly contributes to savings in time, facilities, drugs, and labor in a livestock enterprise, not to mention safety of the owner. For some folks, evaluation of temperament may be old hat, but for others, incorporating some form of disposition scoring and selection against poor temperament should prove very beneficial in overall improvement of their herd.

## Feeding Hay Efficiently...(continued from page 1)

Another method to reduce hay waste is to feed hay in a ring, rack, or other device that prevents excessive trampling and urinating/defecating on the feedstuff. While there has been ample research to show that basically the use of any type of feeder will decrease hay waste, in recent years the development of "cone" type feeders has shown even more improvement over the conventional hay ring.

In a multi-year study from North Dakota State University, a comparison of feeding hay via rolling hay out on the ground, using a hay shredder and feeding on the ground, or using a cone feeder was made. The results of this study showed that using a cone type feeder improved cow weight gain, and when using a tightly made bale fed with the strings on, had an estimated 4.3-5.0 times less waste as compared to feeding rolled out hay or chopped hay on the ground respectively.

One final method that could be used to conserve hay would be restricting the access time cows have to the feedstuff. This method involves allowing cows a given amount of time to consume their daily requirement and then removing them from the feedstuff. The time cows

are allowed to consume the hay is highly dependent both on quality of the hay and the stage of production the cow is in, however, under most feeding applications with average quality grass hay, an access period of 12 hours should result in acceptable cow performance and a significant reduction in hay waste.

The economics of improving feeding efficiency of hay are fairly straightforward. Obviously the use of a feeder, regardless of type comes at an additional cost. Most of the improved "cone" type feeders appear to sell for somewhere in the area of \$700—\$1000.

In closing, regardless of feeding method, if hay waste can be reduced by say 10%, and your hay is valued at \$35 per bale and the bales weigh 1000 lbs, you've just saved yourself approximately \$3.50 every time you feed a bale.

Picture of a cone type bale feeder used in North Dakota State University Trial



## Show-Me-Select Heifer Sales for Fall 2007

If you're in the market for some quality replacement beef heifers, an excellent source is the Show-Me-Select Heifer Program, which will be holding several regional sales around the state in the coming months.

Heifers enrolled and sold in Show-Me-Select Sales have met rigid guidelines for development and reproductive performance. Aside from not allowing heifers with blemishes, inadequate condition, and small frames from being sold, these heifers also must meet health/vaccination requirements and reproductive targets to be eligible. Heifers must have a veterinary reproductive tract score, meet minimum pelvic area measurements, and of course must be determined to be pregnant and veterinary checked to estimate approximate calving date.

Typically, heifers are sold in lots of 2 to 4 head, with some single lots and a few lots of larger quantity. These lots are comprised of heifers that must have expected calving dates within 30 days of each other, which provides an excellent management tool for the buyers of these heifers.

The Show-Me-Select Program is a nationally recognized Heifer Development Program, that has an excellent reputation for providing quality replacement heifers. There has been participation from nearly every county in the state in the program and buyers from numerous

other states have purchased Show-Me-Select Heifers.

I often receive questions regarding the cost of producing replacement females. I urge producers to take a sincere look at what it costs to produce a quality replacement. If you really do the math, I'll bet in many cases you're better off selling your heifer calves and buying replacements.

Below is information about the upcoming fall Show-Me-Select Sales. If you need additional information, or are interested in becoming a producer of Show-Me-Select Heifers, feel free to let me or Randy Saner, South Central Region Coordinator know. Randy can be reached at 417-256-2391.

**November 16 - Southwest Region, Carthage, 7:00 p.m.**  
Eldon Cole, 417-466-3102

**November 24 - West Central Region, Kingsville, 11:00 a.m.**  
David Hoffman, 816-380-8460

**December 1 - Southeast Region, Fruitland, 1:00 p.m.**  
Roger Eakins, 573-243-3581

**December 1 - North Central Region, Green City, 1:00 p.m.**  
Jim Humphrey, 816-324-3147  
Chris Zumbunnen, 660-265-4541

**December 8 - South Central Region, Mountain Grove, 1:00 p.m.**  
Randy Saner, 417-256-2391

**December 14 - Northeast Region, Palmyra, 6:00 p.m.**  
Al Kennett, 573-985-3911

# *Ozark Stockman Newsletter*

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## *Calendar of events*

### October

18—Dent County Cattlemen's Meeting, Salem

20—A.I. Field Day, West Plains, contact Randy Saner at 417-256-2391

### November

13—South Ozarks Premier Beef Marketers-Fall Commingling

### December

8—South Central Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale, Mtn. Grove, 1 pm.