

Ag-Info

June - July 2006

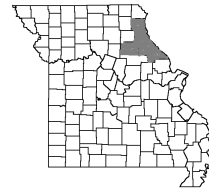
**Northeast Missouri Agriculture Newsletter serving
 Lewis, Marion, Monroe, Pike, Ralls, and Shelby Counties**

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Calendar of Events

June 16	First Annual Spring Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale , 7 p.m., F & T Livestock Market, Palmyra
July 5 - 9	Lewis County Fair
July 11	Quicken Class , Monroe County
July 10 - 15	Ralls County Fair
July 10 - 15	Shelby County Fair
July 14 - 23	Monroe County Fair
July 23 - 29	Pike County Fair
July 29 - August 5	Marion County Fair
August 3	Greenley Research Center Field Day , Novelty, 9 a.m.
August 10 - 20	Missouri State Fair , Sedalia
August 25 - 26	Management Intensive Grazing School , Canton
August 31	Grazing & Forage Field Day , Bowling Green
December 8	Show-Me-Select Bred Heifer Sale , Palmyra

University of Missouri,
 Lincoln University,
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 & Local Extension
 Councils Cooperating

AGRONOMY NOTES

Emergency Forages

According to the May 30, 2006 U.S. Drought Monitor, northern Missouri is experiencing a moderate drought. With hay supplies very limited to nearly nonexistent, annual forage species may be an alternative. The most appropriate species for grazing in northern Missouri are sudangrass, sorghum-sudangrass hybrids, and pearl millet.

Sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass hybrids have similar yield, good drought tolerance, and an upright growth habit. Optimal planting time is through June 30. Forage sorghums are unlike grain sorghums in that they are tall and stemmy, while grain sorghum has been bred for shorter stalks and a large amount of grain production. Sorghum-sudangrass hybrids were bred by crossing forage sorghum with sudangrass, resulting in a leafier forage.

Pearl millet is nearing the end of the optimal planting time (through June 15). While it can be seeded after mid-June, a lack of moisture when planted after this time is usually what limits yield. It is tolerant of drought conditions, and low-pH soils. There is no risk of prussic acid poisoning with pearl millet.

All of the above-mentioned species have a very hard stem, and are therefore difficult to make hay from. The best use of these annual forages is grazing. Prussic acid poisoning is a consideration with sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass hybrids, but not with pearl millet. Sudangrass causes less of a risk of prussic acid problems than sorghum-sudangrass hybrids, and has finer stems and higher digestibility. Prussic acid, or hydrocyanic acid, can build up to toxic levels in several plant species. Prussic acid is most likely to build up following a killing frost, or in tender young growth

Alix Carpenter

occurring immediately after a long drought. Prussic acid levels will decrease with time; the recommendation is to delay grazing a forage crop with known potential for prussic acid buildup for one week after the end of a severe drought.

If drought conditions continue this year, nitrate poisoning may again be a possibility, as in 2005. Sudangrass, sorghum-sudangrass hybrids, and pearl millet have the potential to accumulate nitrates under drought conditions. Nitrate accumulation occurs when plants are stressed (typically by drought), and unable to convert nitrate into amino acids. If drought conditions continue to develop this year, University Extension offices will again have materials to test potential forages for nitrate levels.

Bean Leaf Beetles in Soybeans

Over the past week, I have seen many soybean fields with bean leaf beetle feeding damage, as well as several fields with no feeding damage whatsoever. Both the larvae and adult beetles can damage soybeans. Adult damage to leaves appears as small, round holes between major veins on the leaflets (feeding by caterpillars and grasshoppers results in larger, irregular holes, or feeding damage along the edges of leaves). At this stage of soybean growth, bean leaf beetle damage is not as potentially serious as it is once the soybean enters reproductive growth, where pod damage may result in reduced seed quality and size.

The treatment threshold for bean leaf beetles is 5 beetles per row foot and 30% defoliation. For a list of insecticides, and their rates, labeled to control bean leaf beetle, please contact me.

AG & RURAL DEVELOPMENT NOTES

Amanda Cook

Missouri Parks and Soils Sales Tax on Ballot in August

The Missouri state park system has a proud tradition of preserving and interpreting the state's most outstanding natural landscapes and cultural features while providing recreational opportunities. Since its beginnings in the 1920s, the state park system has grown to more than 140,000 acres in 83 state parks and historic sites and 61,000 acres in the Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry. More than 17 million people annually visit the state park

system, which has an overall economic impact in Missouri of \$538 million annually.

Because of decreasing funds in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources state park system had begun to deteriorate. In 1984, Missourians passed a one-tenth-of-one-percent sales tax to support state parks and soil conservation efforts. Two-thirds of Missouri voters renewed the tax in 1988 and 1996. Unless reauthorized, the current tax will expire in 2008.

The tax provides three-fourths of the funding for the state park system, which does not receive any general revenue. "The sales tax is absolutely essential to maintaining our state parks and to the delivery of quality services to all Missouri citizens and the visiting public," says Ron Coleman, president of the Missouri Parks Association. "Without the tax, drastic changes would be required in the way we manage our state park system."

Soil and Water Conservation Critical to Missouri

In the 1930s, Americans realized how devastating soil erosion could be. As the Dust Bowl swept across the nation, it relocated an estimated 300 million tons of soil. Legislation began to take shape to better manage and conserve our nation's soil. Despite these actions, in 1982, Missouri was still losing more soil than any other state except Tennessee.

Erosion is a natural process caused by wind and water, but it can increase substantially when the landscape is altered without appropriate conservation practices in place. As long as it rains, there will be erosion.

"We're the caretakers of the land and we need to protect it for future generations," said Elizabeth Brown, chair of the Missouri Soil and Water Districts Commission.

The Soil and Water Districts Commission, through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, administers the soil funds from the parks-and-soils sales tax, as well as the programs the tax supports, to Missouri's 114 county soil and water conservation districts. Each district works

with landowners at the local level to decrease soil erosion and improve water quality. In order to provide these services, each district receives a grant that can be used to hire personnel, fund technical assistance and provide information and education programs.

Since the passage of the tax, Missouri's soil erosion rates have dropped by more than half. According to the last available data, the 1997 Natural Resources Inventory, Missouri's erosion rates have dropped more than any other state.

The Cost-Share Program provides incentives for agricultural landowners to install practices that prevent or control excess erosion. Landowners can request a reimbursement for up to 75 percent of the cost of a practice. The practice first must go through a certification process and a maintenance agreement must be signed. Prior to installation, landowners must contact their local soil and water conservation district and work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to design the practice.

Erosion washes away productive topsoil, leading to decreased productivity of our land. The food that we eat and Missouri's \$4.97 billion agricultural industry depend on productive soil. Of Missouri's 44.6 million acres of land, 26.3 million acres are considered agricultural. Cultivated cropland comprise 10.5 million of those acres; 14.2 million acres are dedicated to pasture and hay land; and 1.6 million acres are Conservation Reserve Program land.

Reprinted and edited for length from Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Authors Lindsay Ayn Tempinson and Sue Holst.

AG BUSINESS NOTES

Insurance - Do You Know What You've Got?

Most of us take our insurance coverage for granted. We're sure that it will be there for us when we need it. However, as a landowner you need to keep updated every once-in-a-while on what you have (and more importantly, what you don't have).

If you own land I hope that you have some type of farm liability coverage. Different insurance companies may classify farms a little differently. Your farm liability should cover many things that could occur on and even off of the farm but there are some other things that may or may not be covered, depending on your company. Let's discuss a few of those.

Karisha Devlin

Fee Hunting If you're receiving money for someone hunting on your land, your regular farm liability coverage may not cover you. This is especially true if you're receiving over \$1,000 but that figure could be lower, depending on the company. There are special add-ons for fee hunting so if you're doing that on your property you need to check that out. You may also have to look to an additional company or organization (forest landowners) for that.

Boundary & Non-Boundary Fences While fences and animals are covered by your farm liability, more companies are making certain that you keep them up in the condition the law requires.

If you're responsible and your fences are not in good condition, you might be footing the bill at some point. If you're a landowner, remember what county your land is in as that determines who is legally responsible under the law (landowners are in all of these counties).

Farmers' Markets Several people sell at farmers' markets (or roadside stands) these days. Policies may cover you as long as you're not processing anything (jams, pies, tomato sauce, etc.) but most will require a commercial or business policy if you are processing products.

Environmental Concerns More insurance companies are becoming wary of environmental risks. These include abandoned wells on your property, waste dumps, animal waste or pollution issues and the unsafe handling of chemicals. Most of them ask you to do everything in your power to minimize your liability exposure. Some require an additional add-on also.

Additional Businesses Most of you don't think about businesses you have in addition to your normal farming business. These may include doing custom work, having a seed business in your

machine shed or repairing machinery, etc. for others. Your farm liability may not cover these as they are considered non-farm businesses so you might need to have a commercial policy also.

It is critical for you as a landowner to sit down with your insurance agent once every year or every other year at the most to go over and update your policy. Be sure you know what is covered and, probably more importantly, what's not. If you decide what's not covered is worth the potential risk, then that's your decision. Sometimes we take our insurance for granted when we shouldn't, so check on yours before you forget!

2006 Cash Rental Rates Guidesheet

The newly updated cash rental rate guidesheet is now available at your local Extension office. The guidesheet was developed from a mailed survey of 223 Missourians. This guide should not be used as the sole basis for determining your cash rent, but it may provide a reference as you consider the factors unique to your situation. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (573) 633-2640.

LIVESTOCK NOTES

Hay Supplies

With the drought last summer and the extremely dry spring we have had our hay supplies for next winter may be very short. Several people have called to discuss ways they can supplement their hay supply for next year. Following are some suggestions I have for you to consider.

Anhydrous Treated Straw In 1988 when we had the drought several beef producers tried the practice of treating wheat straw with anhydrous ammonia and feeding it to cows in the place of grass hay. The anhydrous ammonia does three things to the straw which increases its feed value.

First the protein level of the straw will be increased. In fact it is sometimes doubled. It normally runs around 4% for straw and will be increased to 7-8 percent. Also the TDN levels will increase from around 42% to 48-50%. The biggest thing is that the anhydrous ammonia breaks down the fiber in the straw and makes it more digestible.

The system for treating straw is fairly simple. You stack about 70 big bales by going three wide with two on top and cover it with a sheet of 6 mil black plastic that is 40' x 100'. Seal around the edges with dirt, sand, or lime. Then run the anhydrous line from a tank under the plastic at a

Al Kennett

point midway along one side. You will add the anhydrous to the straw at the rate of 3% of the total estimated straw weight. For example if you had 70 one thousand pound bales, you would have 70,000 pounds of straw and would need to add 2100 pounds of anhydrous. Do this a little at a time for several days.

For a 1000 pound bale the anhydrous will cost you about \$7.50 per bale, the plastic \$2.40 per bale plus your cost of the baling.

I have a packet of information on this process that I would be glad to share with you.

Feeding By Products to extend your hay supply is another option. Right now soyhulls are a fairly good price as compared to other by-products. You might want to consider contracting some ahead for this winter. Because of the fiber content of soyhulls they can be fed at somewhat higher levels than other by-products and grain without lowering the utilization of forage by the cows.

Fall and winter grazing of turnips and oats is another very good option. I wrote about this last summer and several people tried it and were pleased with the results.

The Disselhorst Bros. at Palmyra have done this for the past 3 years. Each year has been a

little different but this past year the results were great. They had 50 acres of turnips and oats and grazed 80 head of cows on that from late October to early March and only fed hay for a couple days during that time. They use a hot wire and strip graze the turnips and oats which adds to the success of this practice.

You seed 2.5 to 3.0 pounds of common purple top turnips along with 1.5 to 2 bushel of bin run oats. This should be done in August or very early September. You can seed in ground that had wheat, or maybe a clover crop and sometimes after corn harvested for silage.

This is a great option and can save lots of hay. Those 80 cows I mentioned would have normally consumed around 200 big bales of hay!!

AI Breeding Box

Several producers in our area have used the AI breeding box this spring that is now available in our area and have been really pleased with it. The breeding box is available as a result of a grant we got to build a couple of the boxes. One is

available on the west side of our Extension region as well as in our area.

The box is like a chute but is completely enclosed and has no head catch. The cows stand much quieter while you are AI breeding them and don't go down on you like they sometimes do when fighting a head catch. Because of this there is less stress on the cows and your AI conception rates will probably be higher.

When you first see the chute, you will think there is no way it will work, but just talk to those who have used it this spring and you will find out different.

If you are interested in using it, give me a call.

Finally - when a man opens the door of his car for his wife, you can be sure of one thing. Either the car or the wife is new!!

Management Intensive Grazing School to be held in Canton, Missouri August 25 and 26, 2006

A grazing school, targeted at producers wanting to maximize the efficiency and profitability of their pastures, will be held on Friday afternoon/evening and all day Saturday, August 25-26. Topics covered will include an introduction to management intensive grazing, livestock nutrition, parasite control, economics, evaluation of farm resources, forage growth, grazing calculations, system layout and design, and elements of grazing systems, including watering systems and fencing. The seminar will end with a farm tour and field exercises.

For more information or to register, contact Alix Carpenter at the Marion County Extension Office, (573) 769-2177 or CarpenterAC@missouri.edu. Cost of the school is \$75 for the first person and \$45 for a second person from the same farm/firm. A \$30 advance deposit is required by August 15, 2006 to reserve a spot. The fee includes the cost of the meal Friday night, as well as lunch and refreshments on Saturday. The course also provides materials on grazing management specific to the Midwest. Registration is open to the first 50 individuals.

A registration brochure is also available online at http://extension.missouri.edu/marion/ag_docs/MIG2006brochure.pdf.