

Ag-Info

October - November 2006

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

Alix Carpenter

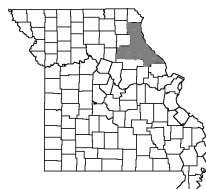
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Calendar of Events

November 8	Ralls County Cattlemen's , time and place TBA
December 5 - 6	Crop Management Conference , Columbia
December 7 - 9	Missouri Cattlemen's Association Convention , Springfield, Missouri
December 8	Show-Me-Select Bred Heifer Sale , Palmyra

Farm Safety Affects Everyone

Recently, a Monroe County farmer was critically injured in an accident involving his tractor and a semi truck. Thankfully, he is on his way to recovery. This accident was a stark reminder that we all need to be more safety conscious. Harvest is in full swing and more pieces of farm equipment are on the roads as they travel from field to field. It is important for farmers and other motorists to be aware of the dangers of transporting farm equipment on the highways and country roads. As the days get shorter, driving can be difficult as visibility problems arise. On country roads, dusty conditions make driving particularly hazardous when harvest equipment is moving from field to field.

Motorists need to remember that tractors and other farm machinery often cannot travel faster than 25 mph and these vehicles have limited maneuverability. Farmers and ranchers need to remember that many non-farm drivers might not take that into consideration. To increase visibility, farmers should use Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblems. The emblems are fluorescent orange triangles with red retro-reflective borders that are mounted on the back of all farm equipment. These emblems fade over time and should be replaced at least every two years. It is also important that farm tractors and combines have functioning hazard-warning lights. Operating headlights and hazard-warning lights provide advance warning for other drivers on highways and country roads.

Here are several other safety tips from University of Missouri Safety Specialist, Karen Funkenbusch.

- ✧ Never allow your vehicle or load to extend into oncoming traffic lanes. If the road is too narrow to avoid this, have an escort vehicle warn or stop oncoming traffic.
- ✧ Stay on the pavement. Traveling with one set of wheels on and one set off pavement can lead to a loss of control.
- ✧ Pull over occasionally when safe to do so to let traffic pass. This reduces the likelihood of a following motorist attempting an unsafe pass.

- ✧ Never exceed the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) or the towing capacity of your vehicle.
- ✧ When towing with a tractor, the towed weight should not exceed the weight of the tractor. Since tractors have brakes only on the rear wheels, towing loads heavier than the tractor can lead to loss of control. Never tow more than one trailer on the road.
- ✧ Slow down on curves and during turns.

If you have any questions about farm safety on public roads, contact your local University of Missouri Extension office.

Starting a Value-Added Enterprise

Many of you may have an idea for a value-added enterprise, but are unsure where to start. The University of Missouri has resources to guide you through the process. The Missouri Value Added Center, located on the University of Missouri-Columbia campus, develops resources for Missourians ranging from organizing a value-added group and starting a business, to developing niche markets and enhancing business profitability. The Missouri Value Added Center website contains information related to the development and sustainability of value added ventures in Missouri. The link to the website is: <http://valueadded.missouri.edu>. In addition, there are five Regional Agriculture Business Counselors (RABCs) that are available to work directly with you and assist in determining the feasibility of projects. Assistance is available in several areas:

- * *Facilitate* - Value added business endeavors
- * *Feasibility Studies* - Formal documents that detail necessary information used to educate investors or lenders of possibilities for success or failure of the new business.
- * *Business Plans* - Formal documents created by the business owners. RABCs can assist the owners to ensure the business plan represents their wants and needs and clearly presents the business to other investors and lenders.
- * *Grants* - Help business owners find grant opportunities.

I am the Regional Agriculture Business Counselor for northern Missouri. If you would like

to start a value-added enterprise, or have questions about investing in a value-added enterprise, contact me at (573) 633-2640. You can also email me at devlink@missouri.edu.

Upcoming Program

Annie's Project is a comprehensive educational program and support network for farm women. It is based on the experiences of an Illinois farm wife who spent a lifetime learning to become a better and more involved business partner with her farm husband. During the class, farm women will receive training on financial records,

production records, marketing plans, risk management, legal regulations, records, and human resources. The dates for the program are Nov. 7, Nov. 14, Nov. 21, Nov. 28, Dec. 5, and Dec. 12 (a total of 6 sessions). The location will be Palmyra State Bank in Palmyra, Missouri.

Farming is a complex business today, and it is critical that everyone in the operation is well versed to try to handle any problems that come up. Class size is limited, so if you are interested, contact me at (573) 633-2640 as soon as possible.

LIVESTOCK NOTES

Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale

Our 10th Northeast Missouri Show-Me-Select spring calving heifer sale will be held Friday night, Dec. 8, 2006 at F & T Livestock Market, Palmyra, Missouri. Sale time will be 6:00 p.m. We will have between 225 and 250 head of bred heifers in the sale. They will be mostly Angus and Angus cross, including several BWF. Also we will have a few Simmental and Charolais.

Yes, believe it or not this will be our 10th sale. The program was started in Northeast Missouri in 1996 with our first sale held in December of 1997. During that time we have sold 2865 head of heifers for a total dollar value of \$2,987,000. That is an average of \$1043, for the first nine sales. The low yearly average was \$789 in 1997 and the high was \$1429 in 2005. The program has been a value added program that has benefitted the agriculture economy of Northeast Missouri.

Over the years of the sale one thing we always do is survey the buyers of the heifers to see how they got along with the SMS heifers. We have had 308 surveys returned to us on over 2800 head of heifers. The percent of the heifers assisted at calving has been 11% as compared to the national average of 22% assisted for first calf heifers. The percent death loss at birth has been 5.0% as compared to a national average of 9-10 percent.

Knowing a projected calving date of the heifers and having them calve in a narrow window has

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always been one of the top reasons that buyers say they purchase SMS heifers. Of the 2800 head represented in our surveys, 89% of them have calved within 2 weeks of their projected calving date.

Catalogs for the sale will be ready in about three weeks. Let me know if you would like one.

Soyhulls - Too High??

Yes in my opinion soyhulls are presently too high as compared to some other by-product feeds in our area. They are presently costing \$95 to \$100 per ton.

Let's do some comparison. Five pounds of soyhulls per head per day to cow or feeder calf would be costing you 25 cents per day. It only takes 4.5 pounds of corn gluten feed to give you as much energy as 5 pounds of soyhulls and at the same time you get 1.7 times more protein. At corn gluten's present price of \$70 a ton the 4.5 pounds would cost you only 16 cents per day.

DDG's out of Macon are costing \$87 per ton. It only takes 4 pounds of DDG's to give you the same energy as 5 lbs. soyhulls and you get 2.2 times more protein. The 4 lbs. of DDG's would cost about 17 cents per head per day.

I have not figured cost of transportation but that is a little hard for me to do and be accurate for each of you since you all live different distances from the processing plants involved. However,

even with transportation differences you are going to save 7 to 8 cents per head per day by replacing 5 pounds of soyhulls with either DDG's or CG.

You might save enough to buy your wife a diamond for Christmas and make both of you happy.

Very Productive Cow

Did you read the article in one of the farm magazines recently about the Arkansas cow?? She is 10 years old and has had a total of 22 calves in 9 years. That included 4 sets of triplets and 5 sets of twins. Of the 22 calves she has saved 18. And no she hasn't been on fertility drugs!!

Finally: Every man wants a wife who is beautiful, understanding, economical, and a good cook! However, the law only allows one wife!!

AGRONOMY NOTES

Alix Carpenter

Fall Pasture Weeds

Pastures around the region appear weedy every fall, and this year is no exception. There are several species widely distributed through pastures and hay fields this year, such as foxtails, broomsedge, goldenrod, ironweed, mullien, and several milkweed species. A survey of the weed species in a hayfield or pasture can often tell us a lot about the overall condition of the field. Many of these weedy species indicate that soil pH is low (the soil is acidic), fertility is low, the field remains wet, or the field is compacted.

Depending on the species, weeds can be quite detrimental to pasture/hay yield. However, chemical control is not always the most cost effective, or practical control measure. Several cultural control methods can be extremely effective at weed control in these settings, including:

Adjusting soil nutrient levels and pH - weeds have evolved over time to be more efficient competitors with desirable plants under stress conditions. Removing some of these stressors, including optimizing soil pH and nutrient status, can assist the desirable species in competing with weed species. Now is an ideal time to take soil samples, to confirm the pH and nutrient status of the field.

Grazing management - if plants are overgrazed, the amount of reserved carbohydrate (stored in the roots to support plant growth in the spring) is

diminished. This can reduce stands through winter-kill, and result in the desirable species being less competitive in the spring. Proper grazing management will ensure that sufficient plant material is left to allow for vigorous spring regrowth.

Mechanical control - preventing existing weed species from setting seed, and therefore spreading through the field, will limit the number of undesirable species in the field.

Prevention - involves not allowing weeds to become established in a field. Cleaning equipment before moving field to field, as well as quarantining new livestock from an unknown source, or from a weeds infested area, for 48 hours in an isolated area, will reduce the introduction of weed seed.

If herbicides are necessary for control, proper timing is crucial. Ideal herbicide application time varies with weed species. In general, annual weeds are controlled most effectively with herbicides when they are small and actively growing. This is in the late fall to early spring (winter annuals) or late spring to early summer (summer annuals). Biennial weeds (which complete their life cycle in two years) are best controlled when the weeds are in the rosette stage, which usually occurs in fall or early spring. Established perennials are most susceptible to herbicidal control when they are in the bud to bloom stage, which is often in the fall.

If new perennial, poisonous, or noxious weeds appear, direct and speedy control measures should be taken. Control measures should also be taken when weeds are thirty percent or more of the plant stand. University of Missouri Extension has a publication, *MP581: Weed and Brush Control Guide for Forages, Pastures, and Non-Cropland*, which lists control measures for a variety of weedy species. This publication is available from your local Extension office. When using chemical weed control measures, be sure to read and follow label instructions.

Winter Wheat Weed Control

Winter annual weeds can be devastating to wheat yield. In Missouri, 50 field pennycress plants per 100 square feet can result in a yield loss of 37%. Fifty wild buckwheat plants, or 80 prickly lettuce, in the same area can cause a 15% yield loss.

When considering a herbicide application in wheat, consideration should be made to identify weeds and their growth stages, the growth stage of the wheat, and herbicide persistence and rotational restrictions.

In wheat, perhaps more so than any other crop, accurate determination of crop growth stage prior to herbicide application is critical to avoid crop damage. When applied to early or too late, this misapplication can result in stunting and yield reduction. In general, wheat is tolerant of broadleaf herbicides when they are applied after the wheat has tillered, but before jointing occurs. Applying 2,4-D too early (prior to tillering) can cause stunting and incomplete head formation and grain fill.

Post-emergence herbicides are most effective on winter annual weeds when applied at the weeds' rosette stage, in early spring. If the stem has elongated and flowering initiated, the weed becomes much more resistant to control efforts. Of the herbicides labeled for broadleaf weed control in winter wheat in Missouri, the phenoxys (2,4-D and MCPA) are the least expensive. As these herbicides are growth regulators, proper timing of their application is critical.

Tillers can be distinguished from leaves by the sheath which encloses the base of the tiller,

separate from the main stem. Determining when grain head development begins is difficult, although it does precede stem elongation. Stem elongation can be determined by the appearance of the first node, or joint, above the soil surface. This "jointing" stage can be determined by running your fingers up the stem, searching for a joint, which should be about one inch above the soil surface. Alternately, slicing a stem lengthwise will reveal a hollow stem and solid node.

Once jointing occurs, applications of 2,4-D, MCPA, and Banvel should be avoided because of the likelihood of crops injury and yield loss. Research from the University of Missouri indicates that applications of 2,4-D and Banvel after jointing leads to a yield loss of 3 to 6 bushels per acre (a yield reduction of approximately 10 to 15 percent in this study). MCPA should not be applied after jointing at labeled rates. Bronate, the combination of MCPA and bromoxynil, though contains a low enough concentration of MCPA to permit application after jointing has occurred.

A full list of herbicide recommendations can be found in the *Weed Control Guide for Missouri Field Crops*, available at your local Extension office. Keep in mind that the winter annuals which will (or already have) germinate this fall will have a much more detrimental effect on wheat yield than those germinating later. Whenever a pesticide is used, remember to always read and follow label directions.