

Ag-Info

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

equal opportunity/ADA institutions

August - September 2009
Northeast Missouri Agriculture Newsletter
serving Clark, Knox, Lewis, Marion, Monroe,
Pike, Ralls, and Shelby Counties

Upcoming Events

Greenley Center Research and Field Day, Novelty

August 13

Randy Smoot, (660) 739-4410, smootr@missouri.edu

Missouri State Fair, Sedalia

August 13 - 23

(800) 422-3247

State Beef Cattle Tour, Southwest Missouri

August 29

Justin Sexten, (573) 882-8154, sextenj@missouri.edu

Farm Lease Program, Kirksville and Kahoka

September 1

Karisha Devlin, (660) 397-2179, devlink@missouri.edu

15th Annual Statewide Women in Agriculture Conference, Kirksville

September 14 - 16

contact any University of Missouri Extension or Soil and Water
Conservation District office

University of Missouri Beef Research & Teaching Farm Field Day, Columbia

Phillip Brooks, (573) 882-2829

Annie's Project, location TBA

November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and December 7

Karisha Devlin, (660) 397-2179, devlink@missouri.edu

Northeast Show-Me-Select Bred Heifer Sale, Palmyra

December 12

Al Kennett, (573) 985-3911, kennetta@missouri.edu

LIVESTOCK NOTES

University of Missouri Beef Research and Teaching Farm Field Day September 17th

The 4th annual University of Missouri Beef Research and Teaching Farm Field Day is Thursday, September 17th starting at 8 am. This year's field day offers information on feed efficiency selection, antibiotic use, agricultural ethics, and cattle handling and stockmanship.

Bob Weaber, MU Extension geneticist, will start the morning program with "Selection for improved feed efficiency". Craig Payne, MU Extension veterinarian, will discuss "Judicious use of antimicrobials (antibiotics) in cattle". Terry Engle from Colorado State University will conclude the morning program by presenting "Emerging social ethics and agriculture".

The afternoon program begins with Curt Pate, Stockmanship instructor demonstrating "Smooth stockmanship". Curt's presentation will focus on methods to reduce stress in cattle handling, penning, and loading. Ron Gill, Texas A&M livestock specialist, will present "Beef industry stewardship" focusing on cattlemen's role in forming consumer perception. NCBA sponsors the Stockmanship and Stewardship Tour across the United States. The field day concludes at 3:00 pm with a pasture walk highlighting recent University of Missouri grazing experiments.

Numerous vendors will be available to visit with throughout the day and during lunch. The field day and luncheon is free. The Beef Research and Teaching Farm is located south of Columbia, MO off US-63 on Old Millers Rd. adjacent to the KOMU TV station and tower. Visit <http://animalsciences.missouri.edu/research/brtf/> for complete schedule. Contact Phillip Brooks, beef farm manager or Angie Gallatin, BRTF secretary at (573) 882-2829 for more information and to pre-register for lunch.

Sweet Clover Hay

No doubt, the presence of clover in pastures and hay fields has been plentiful this year. While clover is

Zac Erwin

excellent forage, it is accompanied by certain risks when baled for winter feeding.

The largest risk from sweet clover in hay, specifically in moldy hay, is the presence of a chemical compound called dicoumarin. Dicoumarin interferes with metabolism and the synthesis of vitamin K. Animals absent of vitamin K will not have proper clotting of the blood following an injury. Blood can even seep from otherwise healthy blood vessels when depleted of vitamin K. This effect is known as sweet clover poisoning or sweet clover bleeding disease.

The risk of baled hay containing dicoumarin is lessened when the sweet clover is extra dry before baling or storing to inhibit mold development. However, mold can develop on perfectly dry bales if they get wet, consequently outdoor storage can also pose a risk. Our higher than average rainfall has forced many producers to "rush" baling hay to beat a rain, and most likely will be a compounded problem if storing dry hay outdoors.

If you must feed moldy sweet clover, it is best to alternate feeding with other non-moldy forages. Alfalfa, or alfalfa mixed hay is best because of the high vitamin K content. Intermittent feeding of sweet clover is a safer option than mixing good and moldy hay together in an attempt to dilute dicoumarin concentrations.

Beef Demand Remains Stagnant

The US beef cow herd is currently at low levels not seen since the 1960s. Current estimates maintain that the nation's beef herd is continuing to contract with no market incentives that would indicate rebuilding will begin any time soon. One lesson that has clearly been learned in this industry: demand is king. While supplies appear friendly to producers, weak demand for beef products has so far overcome tight supplies. Demand has averaged 7 percent below prior year levels through June according to CattleFax data. Beef demand is going to be the defining factor for livestock markets in the foreseeable future. Personally, I'm remaining

optimistic that if producers can hang on through this recession, or possibly even build their numbers, there will be dividends paid on the other side. Historically, demand for certain food items (i.e.

higher priced retail cuts of meat) rebound much faster than other luxury goods following recessionary periods.

AG BUSINESS NOTES

Changing or Terminating Farm Leases

Before harvest starts, farm landlords and tenants wanting to make changes in their lease agreements need to be reviewing the terms of their current rental agreements. Hopefully you have written leases to review. This is a particularly important time of the year because there is typically a lease termination time notification period listed in the terms of a lease. An additional point is many landlords and tenants are unaware that when terminating or changing verbal leases, they must give the other party at least 60 days written notice prior to the end of the lease agreement anniversary.

An advantage of a written lease is it will state the date the lease agreement was made. If you have a verbal lease that has been in existence for several years, it may be difficult to determine the anniversary date. Was your lease agreement entered into on January 1, March 1, or some other date? Remember if either party wants to terminate a verbal farm lease – written notice must be delivered to the other party at least 60 days before the anniversary date of the lease agreement.

If you want to terminate a verbal lease, put your intentions in writing and deliver the notice to the other party. For example, if you have a lease with an anniversary date of January 1, the party wishing to terminate the lease should deliver written notice to the other party before the end of October. Again,

Karisha Devlin

this is where a written lease would be valuable because it would eliminate the potential debate over the anniversary date of the lease agreement. So if you currently have an oral lease, even if you do not plan to change the terms of the lease, there is no better time than now to put it in writing.

Upcoming Programs

A Farm Lease Program will be held September 1 in Kirksville and Kahoka, MO. Topics that will be covered include: current cash rental rates and trends, how to legally terminate a farm lease, things to include in a lease agreement, and concerns related to them. For more information contact me, Karisha Devlin, at (660) 397-2179.

The 15th Annual Statewide Women in Agriculture Conference will be held September 14 - 16 in Kirksville. The goal of this conference is to provide an opportunity for women with agricultural backgrounds to network and learn about agriculture and related topics. We would like to expose women from throughout the state to the regional agricultural differences that Kirksville and our area have to offer. For this year's conference, we are planning an opening banquet with entertainment, a variety of workshops, a tour of the Heartland Dairy & Creamery, luncheon with keynote speakers, silent auction, and hospitality room. For brochures with the application forms, visit your local MU Extension office or your local Soil and Water Conservation District.

LIVESTOCK NOTES

State Beef Tour

The state beef tour is in Phelps, Crawford, and Dent Counties this year and will be held Saturday, August 29. The tour starts at 12:30 p.m. at Oak Knoll Ranch which is located off Hwy 72 south of Rolla.

The tour includes 5 stops with a variation of beef cow operations and stocker cattle. The last tour stop will be at the MU Experiment station at Wordack Farm where a complimentary beef dinner will be served.

Zac Erwin and I both have flyers on the tour that describe each tour stop and includes a map and directions to each stop. Call and we can mail you one.

AI Breeding Boxes

The Northeast MO Beef Cattle Improvement Association now has two of the AI breeding boxes available for rent in our area. One is a single box that will only hold one individual at a time. The other is a double box that holds two head at once.

The boxes were used a lot this spring. In fact they were used 28 days by 20 different producers with over 1000 head of heifers or cows going through them. All but one of the producers using the boxes were pleased with them and impressed with how they work. The one producer had problems getting the cows in the box which no one else had trouble with. Maybe his cows were just too gentle!!

AI Kennett

We have adjusted the rent for the AI boxes down a little. In the future we will charge \$25 per day for the single box and \$50 per day for the double.

Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale

Our fall Show-Me-Select bred heifer sale will be Saturday, December 12, 12:30 p.m. at F & T Livestock Market. I expect us to have 150-175 heifers in the sale this fall. They will include Angus, Simmental, Charolais, along with crossbred black heifers. We are also going to have a small group of red crossbred heifers this year. Most all of the heifers will be bred to calving ease Angus bulls.

Cattle Theft Penalty Increases

House bill 62 has been signed by Governor Nixon. Included in the law is a provision that raises the penalty for cattle theft from a class C to a class B felony. This requires a sentence of 5 to 15 years in prison and the convicted felon must serve a minimum of 80% of the sentence. Now, all they need to do is catch some of the thieves and get a conviction.

Finally: The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight, because by then your body and your fat have become really good friends!!

AGRONOMY NOTES

Soybean Aphid

Soybean aphids have been found throughout the area, although in numbers not as high as some previous years. The aphid is a pale green color, and has two cornicles (often referred to as "tailpipes") on their hind end. The aphids are first found on the underside of lower leaves, and stems. Due to their small size, scouting for aphids typically requires a hand lens with 10x or greater magnification. Easier to see are beneficial insects (such as ladybird beetles,

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insidious flower bugs, and damsel bugs), which feed on the aphid, and are present in most affected fields.

Like all aphids, the soybean aphid reproduces rapidly, and produces a new generation every five to ten days, depending on temperature. Adult aphids give birth to live young; it is not uncommon to see a range of sizes of aphids feeding on one plant. With such a rapid rate of reproduction, aphid numbers can build up very rapidly. As they feed, aphids suck juices from plant cells.

Aphids are usually wingless, but will develop wings and fly to where wind will carry them to new fields. Aphids produce honeydew, on which black mold grows. Walking through a field infested with soybean aphids can result in black smudges on pant legs.

Areas with good moisture, and recent rains, should be scouted first, as aphids prefer lush growth. Hot, dry weather will slow the aphids' progress. In past years, beneficial insects have kept aphid levels to an acceptable level. Ladybugs and insidious flower bugs (also known as minute pirate bugs) eat aphids as they arrive on the soybean plants, and are often an effective biological control agent. Treatment is justified when there is an average of 250 or more aphids per plant during R1 (flowering) to R5 (pod fill). The most benefit from control is found when the pest is present, and controlled, at early stages of reproductive growth (R1 through R3, beginning pod). Contact me for a current list of insecticides labeled for soybean aphid control.

Soybean Rust

Soybean rust has been monitored nationwide, and throughout the state, again this year. As of July 27, rust had been detected on soybean in two sentinel plots in Louisiana, one in Alabama and Georgia, and on kudzu in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas. However, rust had not spread throughout these states. If the current slow spread of rust continues, no problems should be expected from it in Missouri during 2009. Keep in mind though, most of the Missouri soybean crop will be vulnerable to soybean rust until mid-September, and a lot of changes in the spread of the disease may occur between now and then.

Local Food Conference

The Tri-State Local Food Conference, which will be held at the Fairfield (Iowa) Arts and Convention Center on September 4 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., is an opportunity for local food producers looking at the new interest in local food as an opportunity to expand their operations and cash flow.

The Producer Innovation track at the conference opens the ground for expanding farm operations and farm profitability. In the first session, two farms and one farm cooperative share lessons learned about

the successes and considerations of direct-marketing their produce through farm shares, or community supported agriculture. Rebecca Graff from Fair Share Farm will be on the panel, as well as Joanne Roepke-Bode (Fresh Connections) and Amy Brucker (Good Earth Food Alliance).

Next, producers can learn about agri-tourism as a way of diversifying farm income and hear from producers that have made agri-tourism a vibrant aspect of their farm. Kathy Hohl from Kathy's Pumpkin Patch and Art and Vera Gelder of Walk-About Acres will talk about how their farms evolved into designated destinations while Iowa State Extension's Marsha Laux outlines resources available for producers interested in expanding their farm operations to include agriculture-enthusiastic tourism.

The third panel session invites producers to look into online marketing with Ina Cernusca (Missouri Exchange), Ray Hansen (Iowa Market Maker), and Sandy Shetler (Illinois Market Maker). These Extension specialists will discuss the opportunities and successes made available to producers as online markets create a year-round marketplace for direct sales.

Another conference track will discuss having fresh, delicious and healthy meals served at schools, hospitals, assisted living and nursing homes, and available at grocery stores. A third track will be of special interest to local food systems advocates and food policy developers.

Contact Elisabet Humble at (641) 472-6177, or visit www.travelfairfieldiowa.com/food-conference/, for more information, or to register.