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**July 20, 2020**

### **GRAZING SCHOOLS ARE BACK**

After the summer COVID-19 break we're gearing up for several late-summer or fall schools. I'm pretty sure the Neosho school is set for August 25, 26 and 27. Carthage is planned for September 21, 22 and 23. Springfield is October 20, 21 and 22 and Mt. Vernon is November 10, 11 and 12. These are all daytime schools.

We're still discussing the exact details as far as meals, tours, live or electronic presentations and of course, social distancing. In some locations, attendance could be limited. If you need to complete the school in 2020 in order to be eligible to move forward on a project these are options today. Stay in touch with the school coordinators near you.

### **FEEDOUT FINALE**

We finally got the Missouri Steer Feedout cattle slaughtered the week of July 7. That's about two months later than usual. I surely feel with that long a feeding period we gave the steers every chance in the world to "grade". If they don't grade Choice after 240 days, they probably never will.

Several of you did attend last November's Feedout Weigh-in at Joplin Regional. There you saw a variety of beef breeds and crosses as well as dairy crosses. Attend our Feedout Finale in early August and see how it turned out. Our panel of evaluators last November had no idea we would experience COVID-19 and have packing plants shut down with a two-month delay in harvest. With that in mind, we'll go easy on critiquing their predictions about the steers' performance.

At this time the Finale is set for August 4, 7 pm at the University's Southwest Research Center on state road H, Mt. Vernon. We'll have a powerpoint program that will show steers from each consignor along with their gain performance and carcass results. We'll also arrange to have it on-line after the event. Even though most of you have never retained ownership of your calves through to slaughter, I'll bet you can relate to some of those steers and their performance so I invite you to attend the Finale.

### **CORN SILAGE PRODUCTION MEETING**

Co-worker Patrick Davis and MU Extension state beef cattle nutrition specialist, Eric Bailey are teaming up to offer a corn silage production workshop on August 11 from 7 pm to 9 pm. Eric will share tips on how to harvest quality corn silage. Then Patrick will discuss how to utilize silage in beef rations.

The last 2 or 3 years there's been more corn cut for silage. Unfortunately, as with our big round bale hay/haylage, silage users are very wasteful and easily may waste 20 to 30 percent of the dry matter they put in a stack or trench. Hopefully, Eric and/or Patrick will address the wasteful side of corn silage and inspire you to be more mindful of the waste.

### **GARLIC & APPLE CIDER VINEGAR**

I'll bet many of you have heard someone this summer talking about the value of garlic and apple cider vinegar for fly control on their cattle. This isn't a new claim as three or four years ago I started getting questions about using them to reduce fescue toxicity problems. To date, I've not seen unbiased research about their value for fly control or overall performance.

### **NITRATE TESTING**

It's a little early to predict how much nitrate risk there is coming up but currently our droughty weather in June and early July indicates some risk. Here are a few nitrate thoughts to consider.

- Nitrates are more often a concern in sorghum-sudans, sudans and johnsongrass.
- Subjective testing done by Extension workers or veterinarians can be an effective screening tool but if the split-stem tests shows an immediate reaction take a larger sample to Custom Lab, Monett for a numerical test. A pale blue color doesn't bother me.

- Most of the nitrate risk is in the lower portion of the stem or stalk. The upper, leafy part is normally safe to graze.
- Nitrate does not leave hay during storage.
- Nitrate levels in droughty conditions, following a rain, can even increase several days and be at risk of problems. Give the plant 7 to 10 days following a rain to test it.
- Oklahoma State checked nitrate levels at different times of the day and concluded that time of day did not impact nitrate concentration or proportion of dangerous samples of forage sorghum hay.
- Heavy animal manure application or nitrogen can influence the risk of nitrate and may even show up in cool season grasses, bermuda and small grain forages.

### **SOUTHWEST CENTER REPORT**

David Cope, University of Missouri Southwest Research Center, superintendent will leave the Center at the end of the month. He's taken a position in Springfield as loan officer with Veterans United Home Loans. David had a very successful, six years leading the Center out of a troubling financial situation. A new meeting room facility was unveiled last year and numerous research projects have been launched since his arrival. Good luck, David.

Also from the SW Center the University of Missouri College of Agriculture has decided to not hold any field days this fall for the public and FFA students all across the state. In lieu of the actual visit to the research farms a "virtual" program will be held via computer. This will be an interesting arrangement but we'll give it a chance as part of coping with COVID-19. By the way, Extension agronomy and livestock field specialists have been holding one-hour updates since April each Thursday at noon. Some have found it a little tricky to find the Zoom but it's open to everyone at no cost. Specialists from the state and all across Missouri have contributed. Each week begins with a state weather review by Pat Guinan. Each session showcases the "weed of the week." Call-in questions are fielded by the Extension folks.

You can join in at: <https://umsystem.zoom.us/j/588323493>  
If this doesn't work contact your regional extension field specialist. Don't call me but if you do, I'm sure Janet can guide you to it.

### **WEANED, WHAT'S IT MEAN?**

I had a fellow ask me what the definition of weaned was the other day. He'd apparently taken 5 or so calves to a sale barn and the man at the receiving area asked him if his calves were weaned. I'm not sure how he answered but he was a bit confused. We've all heard the story about the

reply he might have given, "yes, I weaned them just before I loaded them on the trailer to bring them to the sale."

The term, weaned certainly means different things to different people, whether they're buyers or sellers. When I began my Extension career in the 60's there was a big push on preconditioning feeder calves. I recall the target for weaning was 14 days before they qualified for those specials.

Since then we've seen different pre-con programs advance the weaned time to 28 days, then for quite a while 45 days was the standard. Sixty days is not unusual to hear kicked around some circles today for a desired weaning period. We know it doesn't take 45 or 60 days for a calf to forget who took care of it for the first six or eight months of its life. At the same time, extending the weaned period certainly reduces the stress on the calf as it moves through the production chain from the farm to origin, the backgrounders/stocker phase and ultimately the feedlot.

I do know the person who asked what weaned meant quickly asked, will a weaned calf bring more money? I assured him they would and our market reporting system often differentiates between weaned and bawling (non-weaned) calves. Six to eight dollars premium is not unheard of.

If you've never truly weaned calves on the farm, I encourage you to do so, but do it right. The tried and proven system is referred to as fenceline weaning. In this system calves and their mothers are located in a familiar, fresh pasture with a sturdy fence, maybe reinforced with a hot wire. On weaning day, leave the calves where they were and put the cows just across the fence. Be sure and locate the calves' feed source along the fence next to the cows. Ideally, the water source will also be along the fence. The calves should also have shade easily available. Bawling and fence walking will be less than if you put the calves in a dry, dusty pen with strange furniture in it such as feeders, water sources and mineral feeders. Try it, the calves will like it.

### **AMMONIATE WHEAT STRAW**

A caller asked about treating wheat straw with anhydrous ammonia or applying a liquid molasses to the bales. I told him he'd probably get more bang for his buck with the anhydrous treatment but to do some price comparison. We know anhydrous will essentially double the protein and increase the intake and palatability significantly of wheat straw. It also causes you to cover the bale stack. Some of you may want to consider anhydrous treating fescue stubble hay. It sure works wonders on sorry fescue.

# **\*\*GRAZING SCHOOL CHANGES\*\***

Just as my July Beef Newsletter was being printed, we received word that the Neosho, Stockton and Springfield grazing schools are cancelled. The Carthage school will be moved to Lamar. The Mt. Vernon school will be moved to **October 21, 21 and 22** at the Southwest Center. Stayed tuned and be prepared for appropriate social distancing and possibly masking.

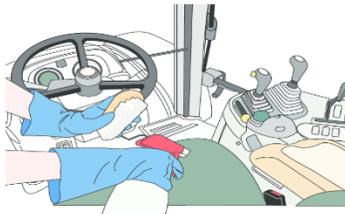
## **COVID-19 On-Farm Operations**

### **Sharing Equipment Safely**

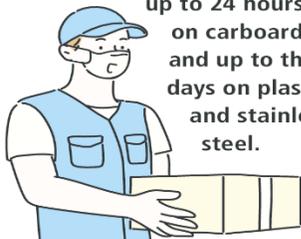
Farms are essential businesses

Workers and delivery people sometimes operate the same equipment on a farm. Due to the contagious nature of COVID-19, **take measures to reduce exposure.**

**Do all you can to limit the use of each piece of equipment to one person.**



The COVID-19 virus can survive **up to 24 hours on cardboard** and **up to three days on plastic and stainless steel.**



◀ When equipment must be shared, sanitize points of contact — steering wheels, grab handles, seats, radio knobs, gas tank covers — between uses.

▶ Use prevention measures such as physical distancing for all involved in the farming operation.

◀ Sanitizer does not work on greasy, dirty hands. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds instead.

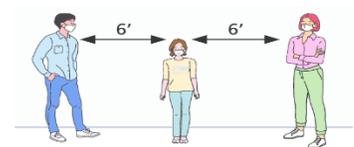
▶ Make hand-washing stations easily accessible so people can wash their hands before and after using any equipment.

▲ Put tissues, antibacterial wipes, nitrile gloves and paper towels in common areas — including the machine shed, tractors, bathrooms and farm trucks.

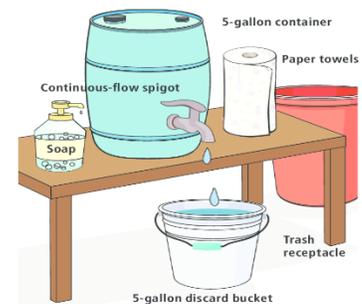
◀ Have a plan for handling on-farm deliveries.

▲ Prevent cross-contamination of buildings and equipment by instructing delivery people not to use your equipment to unload deliveries.

Some of these measures will take time and planning, but they can help prevent the spread of the virus, keeping you, your workers and visitors safe.



**Social Distancing**  
Stay six feet apart



**Prioritize farm safety by making hand-washing, sanitizer and other preventive supplies easy to find.**

- Follow CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>.
- Contact your county health department for specific guidance and regulations.
- COVID-19 resources: <https://extension2.missouri.edu/covid-19-resources-public>