



Eldon Cole, Livestock Specialist, P.O. Box 388, Mt. Vernon, MO 65712
(417) 466-3102 or colec@missouri.edu or <http://muextension.missouri.edu/lawrence>

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MEETING TIME

Just about a year ago we “shut down” having a lot of face-to-face events in the extension world. We didn’t stay shut very long but longer than we’d have liked. Yes, Zoom meetings came to our rescue and we all adapted to those computer activities, sort of. Some of those had decent attendance but usually it was less than we were used to.

We are moving into a less restrictive meeting protocol so I hope you still know how to attend meetings, visit with extension centers, but wear masks when requested and abide by social distancing and other sanitary practices.

Here are some in-person meetings for your calendar.

March 23 – 8:30 am – Novel Fescue Workshop at the University of Missouri Southwest Research Center, Mt. Vernon. The program will last until 4:30 pm but it covers what fescue toxicity looks like and how to convert the bad fescue to the good. Speakers will come from research extension, seed companies, farmers, Nobel Foundation, NRCS and best of all you’ll be able to visit with others who are there to learn coping strategies with your “hot” fescue. Call 417-466-2148 to register.

March 25 – Native Warm Season Grass Workshop 10 am until 3 pm also held at the University’s Southwest Research Center, Mt. Vernon. Space is limited. Pre-register by March 22 via phone at 417-357-6812 or online at <http://bit.ly/nngsworkshop>

March 29 – Performance Tested Bull Sale at the Springfield Livestock Marketing Center, 7 pm. The sale only offers 37 Angus. There are some outstanding bulls in the lineup that will help you select a genetic package that will improve your breeding program. Extension field specialists in livestock will give a 30 minute program at 5:30 pm in the sales arena for using numbers when selecting a bull. Following the bull sale, a foundational female sale will be held with 5 pairs, 2 bred cows, a bred heifer and 5 open heifers. Angus and Gelbvieh breeds are represented. Females will have met strict EPD standards. Online bidding will be available for both bulls and females. For details contact Phoebe Wiles, sales manager at 417-293-8002.

April 6 – Southwest Missouri Cattlemen’s Association Meeting at the Southwest Center, Mt. Vernon, begins at 7 pm. Guest speaker from the new, Missouri Prime Beef Packers, Pleasant Hope.

April 7-9 – Artificial Insemination School will be held at the Southwest Center Mt. Vernon. A second school will be **April 28-30**. For information call 417-256-2391.

April 27, 28, 29 – Grazing School at Crane, First Baptist Church, 8:30 am, register by calling 417-723-8389.

May 25, 26, 27 – Grazing School at the University’s Southwest Research Center, Mt. Vernon. Classes begin at 8:15 am. Registration deadline is May 19.

June 1 – Steer Feedout Weighin at Joplin Regional Stockyards. Entry deadline is May 10. Eligible steers must have been born after July 1, 2020 and have been weaned by mid-April. Must have at least 5 head or more. Complete feedlot and carcass data will be gathered for you. Call me at 417-466-3102 for details.

ZOOM TIME

Needless to say, if some of you fell in love with Zoom meetings via the computer there’s weekly, one-hour presentations via the Forage Livestock Town Hall. Speakers will be livestock and agronomy extension specialists from the state and regional level. You’ll also hear from Pat Guinan, the state weather authority. He’ll let you know where and when adverse weather is coming from. There are no charges for this and I encourage you to tune in during your lunch time. You might find it to be habit-forming. Register at:

www.ipm.missouri.edu/townhalls

FEEDOUT RESULTS

The 101 steers we sent to Iowa last June finally were all killed on February 9. Needless to say, the overall per head loss was \$167.54. The top one-third basically broke even while the low one-third lost \$380 per head. We had 4 die, there was above average treatment costs and the poorest rate of gain since 2015. Pinkeye, bovine respiratory disease and mycoplasma were the culprits that ran up the treatment costs. And to make matters worse feed costs sky rocketed.

Even though each of the 10 groups showed a loss during the finishing period, Ronnie Veith, Purdy only lost \$43.72 per head. His 10 head gained an average of 3.24 lbs., converted the best at 7.37 pounds per pound of gain and 100% of the steers graded low Choice or better.

The top profit steer was a Red Angus from Kunkel Farms, Neosho with a net profit of \$85.21. The feedout calculates Retail Value Days of Age and Retail Value Days on Feed. Jason Bean, Sheldon had an Angus steer capture both of those recognitions. As a group, his was also tops.

If you've never entered the feedout, I encourage you to do so to find out if you're raising cattle the order buyers are looking for. As I always tell people entering the feedout that I can't guarantee you'll make money, but you will learn a lot about the true genetic worth of your cattle.

PINKEYE

Have you experienced a problem with pinkeye, year after year in your cattle? I hear stories and read about situations like that and wonder what causes it to be so difficult to manage. Sure, we know the various causes like *Moraxella bovis*, *Moraxella bovoculi*, mycoplasma and IBR.

Eye irritants such as face flies, bright sunlight, dust, fescue seed and pollen can be factors. Unfortunately, some of these irritants are difficult to control.

Iowa State in cooperation with the Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity shows the animals with pinkeye scars are 34 pounds lighter than their herdmates at weaning. The damage doesn't stop there as they have found animals with scars continue to do poorly during finishing and run another 34 pounds behind their mates.

When you put it all together you see why the sharp-eyed order buyer wants to pull off any blue-eyed, pop-eyed calves he's bidding on. I hear cattle owners say they just let it run its course, but if you haven't tried some of the vaccines such as Solid Bac, an implant or an autogenous bacterian I encourage you to give something a try ahead of pinkeye season. Check with your veterinarian about what seems to work in your neighborhood.

The important thing is to give any vaccine early in the season and control flies, especially face flies. If you spot weak, teary-eyed animals, pull and treat that day and isolate or at least put a patch over the affected eye. Some will put them in a barn or shed so they're out of the bright sun. I'm not a real strong advocate of clipping pastures affecting pinkeye, but it might help in some instances. We did a clip vs. no clip of fescue pastures at the Southwest Center back in the last century. We were hoping we

would see a difference, but we didn't have any eye issues in any of the replicated pastures. I also believe Kansas State did a clip/no clip study at Mound Valley and they did not see a difference. I do like clipping for higher quality grazing later in the season.

SHADE

Have you noticed all the stories in the ag press about the benefits of shade all of a sudden? Even as you drive around southwest Missouri, you'll see more shades showing up in treeless pastures. Some of the shades are expensive running \$15,000 to \$20,000. Of course, they're sizeable and some are powered and easy to move.

The feedyards are also seeing benefits of shade especially in the sick pens. I well recall in the early 90's when grazing schools became popular, the big question about small pastures people asked, do they need to have shade?

The first thought by some speakers was, no, shade is not necessary as cattle in the Flint Hills don't require it. Well, once again the University researchers looked at it, both from a cow-calf and a stocker standpoint and found pregnancy retention and rate of gain benefits in treeless pastures with artificial shade compared to no shade at all. Of course, all the pastures were primarily hot Kentucky-31 fescue.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTION

What's the average rental rate for pasture in southwest Missouri? Now this is a loaded question. The last MU survey showed \$40.74 per acre for good pasture land in 2018. "Good" was described as less than 4 acres per cow-calf pair per year. Your definition of good may vary. In the survey taken in 2010 the average was \$29.88.

From prices I've been hearing the last year or so I believe it's probably going to average closer to the mid- \$40's. I'm sure you've heard of some over \$50 if it is mostly, open acres with just enough shade, has a mix of good grass and legume, is well-fenced, located near the person who has the cattle and a reliable water source. You can probably think of some bells and whistles that you might add to your list.

There are other considerations that may cause the price to be higher or lower. Land owners may lower the price if the cattle owner is vigilant about controlling weeds, like musk thistle or hemlock. Also, if they take care of fertility needs annually and make their rent payment promptly.

As you can see, it's hard to compare rental rates due to the many variables.