

Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year



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### TREAT NOW FOR LICE

When do you normally treat your cattle for lice? As with a lot of animal treatments you do it when you see evidence of the problem. It's no different for lice on cattle as we treat when you see them slipping hair, rubbing on fences, feed bunks trees, etc. That's usually in later winter.

Well, chances are your cattle may already have a louse infestation. There are generally two types of lice, the blood sucking type and the chewing type that feed on the surface of the animals' skin. Both are irritants to the cattle and cause a reduction in gain which takes money out of your pocket.

The old, "ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is sure applicable with lice control. Early in the season, like now, you won't actually see evidence of lice unless you have them restrained in the chute. Perhaps you've used a parasite control already this fall and that could help in lice control. Unfortunately, a single treatment with a spray or pour-on product won't control lice eggs or nits so you need a follow-up treatment to control the next generation of lice.

If you're a stocker operator or buying breeding stock you should consider your new animals have some degree of lousiness and treat or isolate them from your "clean" cattle. Be sure to read the label instructions or check with your veterinarian about topical pour-ons that will give greatest protection from lice. Old fly tags are worthless at this point so hopefully you've removed them.

Backrubbers and dust bags may give some relief if kept charged. Injectable products likely won't help on the chewing lice, the best method will be sprays or pour-ons.

### SHOW-ME-SELECT SALE REVIEW

The SMS sale season is over and it ended in "barn burner" fashion with the three December sales all topping at \$3050 up to \$3500. Here's the comparisons. The last column I've calculated to compare the number of 550 pound

Medium-Large 1 and 2 Muscle steers it took to buy one average SMS heifer based on the average steer value at the feeder sale nearest to their sale.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>No. Head</u>	<u>Avg. Price</u>	<u>Ratio Steers to Heifers</u>
11-19	Kirksville	223	\$1882	1.91:1
11-19	Carthage	173	\$1790	1.98:1
11-20	Kingsville	252	\$1909	1.97:1
12-4	Fruitland	58	\$2112	2.35:1
12-10	Farmington	82	\$1964	2.26:1
12-11	Palmyra	<u>247</u>	<u>\$2259</u>	<u>2.30:1</u>
		1035	\$1983	2.08:1

The low per head price was \$1400 to \$1600 at the six sales. Last spring's sale averaged \$101 below the recent sales, I think we can say even though we were selling bred heifers, mostly commercial, this was a bullish sale season.

### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

If you have a black cow herd, I'm sure you've noticed some of the cows have a reddish or brown patch of hair from the shoulders back along the topline. It seems to be more prevalent this year and I even had a person at the Carthage SMS sale remark that he wondered what caused it and he felt it was more noticeable on the SMS heifers than in the past.

I've wondered for several years the same thing and have asked researchers, producers and veterinarians and there isn't a consensus why it occurs in their answers. When the Southwest Center was running their adult cows through the chute on December 10, I evaluated each of the 85 black, black baldy and red cows for whether they had the odd colored hair on their shoulder and front ribs. I also collected their birth year based on the year/letter code. The Center's herd is all fall calvers.

I'm sure if you're still reading this, you're curious what I found or didn't find. First of all, the 8 red cows did not show any unusual hair coloration along their shoulders.

Next, 58% of the black or black baldies had very noticeable sun-burnt spots in the proximity of their shoulders. Forty-two percent did not show any hair color difference.

Heifers born in the fall of 2018, of which there were 20 head, 80% or 16 had the sun-burnt hair. The year 2017, had 19 cows and 63% had the same look. I've not traced down if there could be a sire difference.

Of people I've quizzed most say, it's related to "hot fescue". Others say it's related to copper deficiency. Any ideas??? Does it affect gain??? Reproduction??? Sale price when they go through the sale ring??? Is it repeatable??? Could horn flies be involved as that's a favorite "roosting spot" for them??? What about applying pour-ons in that location??? I have more questions at this time than answers.

### **2022 IS K**

According to my Redbook the International year/letter code for 2022 is K. We still have several Redbooks left if you want one. The book is \$6, but the postage is pricey. We charge \$2 for postage if we mail it to you.

### **COMBAT FESCUE TOXICITY - LEGUMES**

A good way to battle fescue problems is to interseed legumes. The common ones to use in pastures are ladino clover and lespedeza. If it's a hay field, red clover works well and it also is suitable for grazing. Legumes also lessen your nitrogen fertilizer expense. January and February are good months to no-til or broadcast legumes in a thinning, hot fescue field. Be sure and take or review your soil test as the legumes perform best if your pH is in the 6 plus range. The exception is lespedeza which will do fine in the 5 to 6 pH range.

### **A NEW PUBLICATION**

The faculty in the Animal Science Division, led by Dr. Jordan Thomas, have put together an excellent reference titled "Whole System Management of Beef Cattle Reproduction." It not only deals with repro technology, it deals with genetics, health and management. It's the text booklet for a workshop we used for such an event at Mt. Vernon. Order it at: <https://extension.missouri.edu/cb28> The cost is \$45 plus shipping.

### **MISSOURI CROP AND LIVESTOCK BUDGETS**

Each year Extension and the College of Agriculture Food & Natural Resources publishes Enterprise Budgets for a variety of beef, swine, dairy, sheep, goats, grain crops and forages. You can access the 2022 budgets at:

<https://extension.missouri.edu/program/agricultural-business-and-policy-extension>

### **BEEF BUDGETS**

The beef budgets above include steer backgrounding (winter and pasture), beef heifer, north & south Missouri cow-calf, and yearling steer feeding budget.

I've helped pull some of the numbers together and most cattle raisers look at the numbers and shake their head and say, "that can't be right." For example the 2022, South Missouri cow-calf fall calving budget shows an income over total costs of a negative \$172.16. The spring calvers are worse with a negative \$180.45.

The income over operating costs show a negative \$38.51 in the fall calvers and negative \$44.86 for the spring calvers. If you're in north Missouri the red ink is even worse with fall calvers shown losing \$255.92 and spring calvers at a negative \$240.76 when all costs and income are calculated.

Here are some example incomes and operating costs for south MO total income from a cow (steer, heifer and cull cows) \$927.21. Total operating costs \$965.72. This cost may seem terribly high to you but it includes cow replacements, labor at over \$200 per cow, feed, stored forage, mineral, pasture based on a rental rate, bull cost, machinery and utility cost. Under ownership costs we find depreciation, interest, insurance and taxes. Remember, this is an average and we know some of you are better but some are worse.

It paints a rather sobering picture if you have beef cows or you plan to get into the business. So stop and ask yourself why do I have cows or what can I do to make them profitable?

First of all, I doubt if you plan to haul your cows to your auction's next special cow sale. You like cows and they've been a part of the family's farm forever. You probably figure the budgets I've shown are for the poor managers who now have high priced land to contend with while your grandpa put the operation together for a drop in the bucket compared to today's \$3,000 plus per acre investment in making a home for beef cows. As bad as the budgets appear, there are parts of the U.S. where they're worse so analyze everything you do. There are tweaks here and there that will help your bottom line. One possibility might be to reduce the numbers in your cow herd to better match your forage supply.