

April 16, 2009

Beef Meeting

There are two important beef meeting coming up that you need to take advantage of and there is additional information on both in this mailing. The first is an area meeting featuring Dr. Don Ball at Russellville on the 23rd at 6:30 P.M. Please call to reserve your meal.

The next meeting is our annual Beef Field Day to be up near Greenhill at the Greg Hamner Farm just down from the Clemmons and Hamner Seed Plant. Make your plans to attend both of these important meetings.

Cow Temperament

Some research has revealed that measuring the white in a cow's eye can be a predictor of cow temperament. The measurements were taken with a video camera while cattle were in the chute. I wonder if this will work on humans?

Implants Reduce Fescue Toxicity

Implanting preweaned calves and stocker cattle on fescue pastures has shown to reduce the negative effects of endophyte infected fescue according to a Kansas study. Implanting improved daily gain by 12 to 16 percent on the low endophyte fescue however, the response was much greater on the high endophyte infected pasture in which gains improved 37 to 46 percent.

Beef Production

U.S. beef production per cow has increased 70% since 1965. In 1965 the pounds of beef per cow was 363 pounds and in 2006 it was 620 pounds. It was at 530 pounds in 1990.

Cow Psychology

Cattle hear differently than humans. They can hear both lower volume and higher frequency sounds better than humans but cannot pinpoint the source as well as humans. Loud sounds scare them very easily. Because of their poor depth perception, excessive screaming and hollering can agitate them and cause them to move away from the source and possibly crashing into fences or other objects, including people. Be extremely cautious of cattle with sight problems (such as cancer eye) as they rely on hearing to a greater extent and may overact to sounds. Cattle are attached to their own territory and are comfortable in that area. Changing environments or location alters their comfort level and can lead to changes in temperament.



They may become very tentative when exposed to strange surroundings. Also, in a new environment they sometimes try to re-establish a new pecking order. A single animal moved to a foreign environment may become overly agitated and aggressive. It is best to provide that single animal with a companion animal to overcome stress and excitement.

Does N (nitrogen) fertilizer increase the quality of grass pastures?

Generally speaking N fertilizer allows a producer to grow more grass, but it is not higher in quality. There is usually an increase in crude protein with applied N fertilizer, but there is also a decrease in the sugar content of the grass, which results in little, if any, change in overall nutrient quality.

The fertilizer that under most circumstances controls the rate of forage growth is N. It is best used to manage forage growth and to match forage growth to animal needs. During periods when forage is not adequate to meet livestock needs, N fertilizer can be helpful in increasing forage growth rates. Particularly in hay operations, N fertilizer allows for the production of large amounts of forages in a short period of time, which makes the usage of hay equipment more efficient.

Contrary to popular belief, N fertilizer has little influence on the overall quality of grasses.

Cattle Safety

Cattle are responsible for most of the injuries caused by animals. A bureau of Labor Statistics study from 1992 -1997 revealed that 75,000 workers incurred injuries and 375 workers were fatalities from animal related injuries.

According to an Oklahoma State study in 1997, of cattle injuries, more than half of the injuries resulted in human error and facilities accounted for almost 25 percent of the total.



Cow Twins

Twins of the same sex will grow into two normal individuals; but in twins of mixed sex, the female of this pair may be a freemartin. A freemartin is a sterile female, lacking a functional uterus and ovaries that may exhibit normal exterior female genitalia. The bulls from this twinning are normal.

If the cow has twin bulls or twin heifers, these should be normal but if the twins are a heifer and bull then there is a strong chance the heifer will not breed. Unless this heifer is of high value the best course of action would be to cull her at weaning. If she does breed then she will generally be acceptable as a cow.

Sincerely,

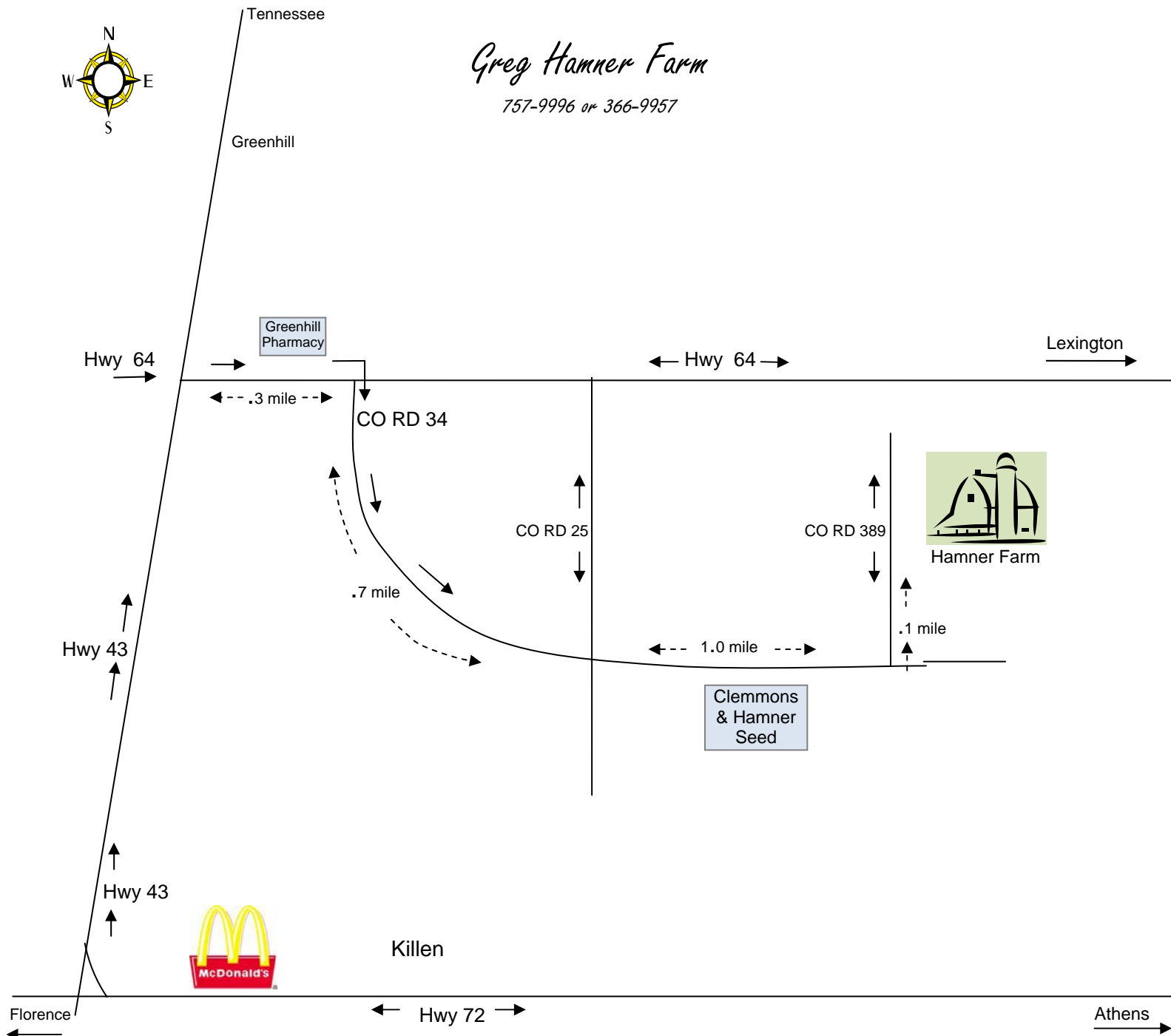
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Randall Armstrong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Randall Armstrong
County Extension Coordinator

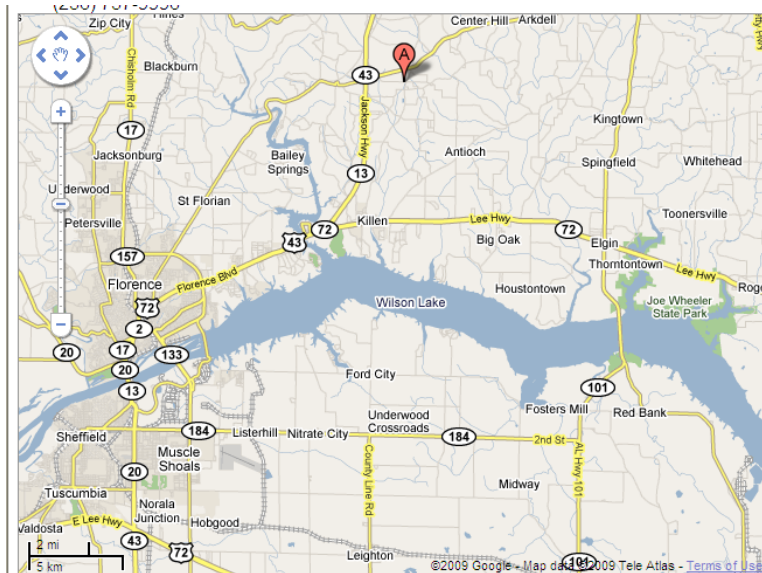


Greg Hamner Farm

757-9996 or 366-9957



For more information you may contact
Randall Armstrong at 366-9259





Beef Field Day

Saturday, April 25, 2009

LAUDERDALE COUNTY

9:00 a.m.

Learn About

*Presentations begin
at 10:00 a.m*

- GPS for the Beef Production
- Do you have the right kind of Cattle
- USDA Update from NRCS & FSA
- Stock Trailer Safety & Regulations
- Forage Species

Greg Hamner Farm
Greenhill area
see map on reverse side

*Fun, Food, Fellowship &
Educational AG Exhibits & Equipment*



*FREE to all
Cattlemen*



From left to Right – Ted Mattle, Past County President; Orland Britnell, State President; & Kyle Bevis, County Jr. Cattleman Vice President



**Paul Austin
2008 Field Day Host**

*Lunch will
be Served*



*Beef– It's What's
for Dinner*



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Field Day Sponsors:
Lauderdale County
Cattlemen's Association
County ALFA Farm Federation
Lauderdale County Extension System



Beef Business Basics

“Tools for Management Success”

April 23, 2009 - 6:30 p.m.

Northwest Alabama Stockyard

Russellville, Alabama

This program is designed to help producers get back to the basics and to make profitable decisions with their cattle in these volatile economic times.

Basic topics such as soil testing, soil fertility, plant needs, hay testing, animal nutrient requirements, hay storage, rotational grazing, and forage variety selection will be discussed.

Applying the basic fundamentals of forage production will likely be the key to your economic survival!

Meeting Topics:

“Soils and Fertility” - Gerry Thompson, Regional Extension Agent for Animal Sciences & Forages, TN Valley Region

“Forage Quality” - Jonathan Gladney, Regional Extension Agent for Animal Sciences & Forages, Blackbelt Region

“Making Profitable Culling Decisions” - Dr. Lisa Kriese-Anderson, Extension Animal Scientist, Auburn University

Featured Speaker:

Dr. Don Ball, Extension Forage Specialist, Auburn University
“Surviving in Challenging Times”

There is no cost to attend this program
A delicious meal will be provided by the Franklin County
Cattlemen’s Association

To help us plan for the meal please RSVP by April 20th
to the Franklin County Extension Office at (256) 332-8880
or contact:

Gerry Thompson, REA at (256) 353-8702, Ext. 25
for more information



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‘AU SAND MOUNTAIN’ BAHIAGRASS’

Bahiagrass occupies more acres of land in Alabama than any other forage species. However, someone who lives in North Alabama might find that statement hard to believe because most of the bahiagrass in Alabama is in the southern one-half or so of the state. This hardy grass, which is native to South America, can be grown on soils and sites that range from drought-prone sands to fairly heavy clays and from upland sites to wet-natured bottom fields.

Bahiagrass can be used for either pasture or hay, but is most commonly used for pasture. Although a number of hybrid bermudagrasses have a higher yield potential, bahiagrass has a longer growing season than bermudagrass and consequently provides more calendar days of grazing. Unlike hybrid bermudagrasses, bahiagrass can be propagated by seed, and is quite tolerant of a wide range of fertility regimes. Once established in an area in which it is adapted, it will persist almost regardless of how it is managed.

Pasture acreage in North Alabama is dominated by cool season forages, especially tall fescue. While cool season forage species can provide a good supply of nutritious pasture forage in spring and autumn, production in summer is poor. Warm season pasture forage options in North Alabama and areas with similar climate are limited, but another option is now available in the form of the variety ‘AU Sand Mountain’ bahiagrass developed and released by Auburn University.

This variety originated from a patch of Pensacola bahiagrass that had been planted in the early 1960’s on what is now the Sand Mountain Research and Extension Center near Crossville, Alabama. Over time, nature selected the most hardy plants, and in 1984 Dr. Edzard van Santen, a plant breeder in the Department of Agronomy and Soils at Auburn University, collected seed from this ecotype and began working with it. Since that time it has been included in numerous yield trials in Alabama and in several other states.

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The variety has been proven to be more winter hardy than other bahiagrass varieties, and will expand the area of adaptation of bahiagrass farther north. The exact northern limit is not known, but is likely at least as far north as Central Tennessee. In the upper portion of the area where bahiagrass has been commonly grown, AU Sand Mountain has consistently yielded better than other varieties. However, the farther south the new bahiagrass is grown, the less likely it is to outperform currently available varieties.

AU Sand Mountain bahiagrass will provide another warm season perennial grass option for livestock producers north of the area where bahiagrass has typically been grown. It may be particularly useful in areas where a warm season perennial grass is needed but sites and soils are too moist for good bermudagrass production. (Note: in some areas bahiagrass may outcompete other perennial forages, so plantings should be limited to areas where there is no concern about this occurring).

In addition, this variety will provide a higher-yielding bahiagrass option for persons in the northern portion of the area in which this grass is presently commonly grown. Persons interested in obtaining seed of this new variety should contact Dr. Jim Bostick, Executive Vice President of the Alabama Crop Improvement Association, whose phone number is (334) 693-3988.

*Prepared by Dr. Don Ball, Extension Agronomist/Professor, Department of Agronomy and Soils, Auburn University, AL 36849, and Dr. Jim Bostick, Executive Vice President, Alabama Crop Improvement Association, P.O. Box 357, Headland, AL 36345.

EMPHASIZE QUALITY AND SUPPLEMENT LESS

Dennis Hancock, Forage Extension Specialist
The University of Georgia

I generally encourage the use of supplemental feeding programs. There was a time (a few weeks ago), when a few extra pounds of supplement could make up for low quality hay without breaking the bank. With the meteoric rise in feed prices, however, that time has passed. As we begin to make hay for the winter of 2009-10, I highly recommend that you place an emphasis on making good quality hay.

The current prices and price forecasts for commodity and by-product feeds are rather expensive, given the price of cattle. Certainly, hay isn't cheap, either. But, high quality hay is still cheaper than most supplements you can feed. Money can be made by supplementing less, but this will only work if an emphasis is placed on making high quality hay. (Of course, grazing more in the winter months will be even more profitable, but I digress.)

Priorities for Good Quality Forage

Certainly, there are many factors that affect the quality of hay. The most common factors are enumerated in Table 1. Note, however, that maturity is listed first. **Maturity is BY FAR the most important factor that affects forage quality.** As plants mature, the fibers that give the plant structural support become more rigid (more lignified). This causes the forage to be less digestible and less capable of providing the energy needs of the animal. As a result, more and more supplement is needed to meet the requirements of the animal (Table 2).

Table 1. The primary factors affecting the nutritive quality of a hay lot.

Factor	Recommendation
Plant Maturity	Cut bermudagrass every 4-5 wks; cut tall fescue in the boot or early head stage.
Forage Species	Use the highest-quality grass species that will persist in your environment.
Bale Storage	Protect bales from rainfall and weathering during storage (i.e., barn, tarp, etc.).
Rain During Hay Curing	Avoid cutting if significant rainfall (> 0.50 inches) is predicted during curing.
Moisture at Baling	Allow forage to dry to the appropriate moisture (Round: 15%; Square: 18%)
Fertilization	Provide fertilizer based on soil test recommendations.
Variety	Use varieties that have proven to be higher in quality.

Table 2. The effect of bermudagrass and tall fescue maturity on hay quality, supplementation rate, and cost of supplementing a lactating beef cow.*

Crop	Maturity	Crude Protein (CP)	Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN)	Supplement Req. For a Lact. Cow*	Cost to Supplement
		---- % ----	---- % ----	lbs/hd/day	\$/hd/day
Bermudagrass	4 weeks	10-12	58-62	0	\$0
	6 weeks	8-10	51-55	2.3 – 4.8	\$0.22 – 0.45
	8 weeks	6- 8	45-50	5.3 – 7.5	\$0.50 – 0.72
Tall Fescue	Late boot	14-16	66-70	0	\$0
	Early head	11-13	60-63	0	\$0
	Dough (seed)	8-10	50-54	3.0 – 5.3	\$0.28 – 0.50

* Assumptions: 1200 lb cow, average to above average milking ability, first 3 months postpartum, 6.0 lbs of TDN required daily, and supplement provides 85% TDN and costs \$190/ton (\$0.095/lb).

For information on insect and weed control for pastures and forage crops see the publication at this link:

<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0500-A/VOL1-2008/forage.pdf>