



Your Experts for Life

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Crop Report

According to the experts most of our wheat crop is a total loss. Lauderdale ranked fourth in the state in wheat production last year. If you do plan to cut it for hay you may want to check the nitrate level before feeding it. The test for nitrates is only \$6 per sample. Most all the corn should recover. Again the experts say even if you only have 13,000 plants per acre it is best to stick with the crop. They also say you may need to side-dress it early because the plant is actually older than its physical appearance. Call me at 766-6223 if I can be of assistance.

Fertilizer Prices

Sticker shock has been the main reaction when shopping for fertilizer this spring. It is more important than ever to get those clovers in your pastures. A good clover stand can provide about \$75 worth of nitrogen fertilizer at today's prices. Clovers also add quality to those grass pastures because they are high in crude protein (>20%) and generally have high TDN levels. Maintaining a clover content of 20-30% in a grass-based pasture is recommended for improving animal performance. Learn more about making the best use of your fertilizer dollar at the Beef Field Day.

Grazing School

A special Grazing School specifically designed for Horse producers is planned for **May 15th at Belle Mina**. Call me for more information 766-6223.

Teleconferences

Our Beef Nutritionist, Darrell Rankin's at Auburn, is hosting a 1 hour teleconference starting at noon on May 2 and again on May 16th. This can be viewed at the County Extension office. If you are available, drop by and view or ask any questions.

Pinkeye

The summer forecast is to hotter and drier than normal. These are idea conditions for pinkeye. Pinkeye is spread by flies and good fly control will help keep pinkeye in check. If an animal develops pinkeye, treat it before it spreads to other animals.

Deworming Pays

An Oklahoma State trial compared performance of feeder cattle to those dewormed and those not dewormed. One group of calves was never dewormed, another dewormed at arrival at the feedlot and the third group at the farm and again at the feed yard.

Calves dewormed gained 48 pounds more on grass. When placed in the feed yard, 80% of the pulls came from those not dewormed. Those calves not dewormed had a 26% reduction in choice grade, gained 96 pounds less than those dewormed at both the farm and feedlot.

Internal parasites produce reduced feed intake, feed digestibility and performance.

Cow/Calf Profits

For ten consecutive years cow/calf producers have made a profit, for one of the greatest runs in profitability for this segment of the industry of any time in history. Average per head profits during the last decade were \$85.50 per head. Seventy percent of this total profit was realized during the last four years where average returns were \$151 per head.

Cattle-Fax is the source for this information.

Corn Gluten Feed

If they start making ethanol from corn then there will be a lot of corn by-products available for beef producers. See the enclosed information for more information.

Cheyenne Bermuda

The Cheyenne variety Bermudagrass seed has been disconnected because it is a very poor seed producer. They have replaced it with Cheyenne II but there will be limited supplies in 2007. In the meantime, Rancho Frio (a blend of the Cheyenne, Mohawk and Giant seeded bermudagrass varieties) is a good alternative. The Giant will die out but the Cheyenne will fill in as the Giant thins out.

Corn vs. Calf Prices

Historically, a 50 cent per bushel increase in corn prices will lower the 750 pound feeder calf price by \$7 cwt. Based on this, if we have \$4 corn this fall that would decrease calf prices by as much as \$28 cwt.

Heat Stress

Remember that cattle have an upper critical temperature of approximately 20 degrees cooler than humans. When you feel hot at 90 degrees, cattle may be in the danger zone for heat stress. If they are on infected fescue then it would make it even worse. Be careful working your cattle in the heat.

Randall Armstrong
County Extension Coordinator

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Corn Gluten Feed for Beef Cattle

*W. Warren Gill, Professor
UT Animal Science*

Corn gluten feed is a byproduct of the wet milling of corn to produce cornstarch, sweeteners, oil and other products. The growth of this industry in recent years has resulted in a relative abundance of a feed which deserves careful evaluation for use in beef rations.

Corn gluten feed (CGF) is typically a combination of corn bran, corn germ and steep liquor. It is available in either wet or dry forms. Dry CGF is available as meal or pellets. It is generally palatable and readily digested by cattle.

While corn gluten feed is derived from corn, the nutrient levels are generally higher than for corn since the ingredients remaining after processing have been concentrated. The crude protein content of CGF is somewhat variable, as would be expected, since the protein content of corn itself is variable. Crude protein values range from 16 to 23 percent, with the lower numbers most common in Tennessee.

The most-used term to describe the energy level in a diet is "TDN," which stands for total digestible nutrients. The TDN value of CGF is generally around 80 to 83 percent. This is lower than corn (88% TDN), but the form of energy is different. Corn is high in starch while CGF is low in starch. Since starch decreases the activity of the rumen microbes which digest fiber, feedstuffs like CGF, which are moderately high in energy from digestible fiber, are a good "match" for high forage diets.

Corn gluten feed can be an economical source of nutrients. The protein and energy provided by a hundred pounds of dry CGF (90 percent DM) is roughly equivalent to 75 pounds of corn grain plus 25 pounds of Soybean meal (48 percent CP). The best method to get a fair comparison between CGF and other feeds is to incorporate these in rations formulated on a "least cost" basis. Computer programs are available for this.

Storage facilities also need to be considered. Dry CGF can be stored in grain bins; however, wet feeds require storage in a trench, bunker, bag or wet commodity storage pit. Wet CGF should be used as quickly as possible and stored in a manner that reduces spoilage, especially during the summer. Mold will grow quickly when ambient temperatures reach or exceed 63 degrees F. This will result in about 6 inches of spoiled feed within four to six days. The application of propionic acid at .5 to 1 percent wt./wt. will reduce spoilage for up to 14 days.

Check the mineral content to avoid mineral imbalances due to high levels of phosphorus, potassium and sulfur. Of these, possibly the most serious problem is with sulfur, which routinely reaches 0.5 to 0.6 percent and sometimes higher, particularly in the wet product. This may limit the amount which can be used to about 0.5 percent of body weight (dry matter basis). Sulfur content is a particularly worrisome problem in Tennessee because the Tennessee Forage Mineral Survey has shown that sulfur levels typically run at levels high enough to cause problems with cow-calf and forage-based stocker operations. These problems include rough hair coats, depressed growth rate, compromised immune systems (they get sick more easily) and decreased breeding efficiency.

The high phosphorus but relatively low calcium content could result in a calcium to phosphorus imbalance, particularly if CGF is fed above the recommended level of 0.5 percent of body weight. These limitations have often led producers to blend CGF with other feedstuffs, like corn and soybean hulls.

Several reports of problems with "scorched" CGF pellets have raised some questions. If using pelleted CGF, break open a few pellets and check for discoloration or a "burned" smell. If these are evident, the pelleting pressure may have been too high.

Grass Tetany in Beef Cattle

Darrell Rankins, Jr.

The dogwoods are blooming, the fish are biting, Spring is upon us, have you prepared for the potential problem of grass tetany in your cattle. Grass tetany is primarily a problem during this time of year when cattle are grazing highly fertilized grasses or cereal crops. It is a result of a serum magnesium deficiency in the animal. Grass tetany generally occurs in females during early lactation; however, other classes of cattle can also be afflicted. Signs of tetany may not be noticed until the animal is already down or dead. Early signs may include: nervousness, salivation, muscle tremors and labored breathing. Ultimately, the animal will go into convulsions and die if treatment is not administered promptly.

Grass tetany is always associated with low concentrations of serum magnesium. Blood serum is low in magnesium because the cow is unable to absorb sufficient amounts of magnesium. This is a result of the forages being low in magnesium during this time of year, being high in potassium and nitrogen and low in dry matter content.



A mineral supplement containing adequate magnesium is the most reliable means of preventing grass tetany; however, the cattle must eat the mineral. Cattle should consume 1 to 2 ounces of magnesium per day and their intake should be monitored frequently. Daily consumption is important because magnesium is not stored in the body for very long.

Several commercial mineral supplements are available which provide adequate amounts of all minerals and additional magnesium. At least 12 percent actual magnesium is recommended. The most economical means of supplementing magnesium is a 1:1 mix of trace-mineral salt and magnesium oxide. In general, magnesium oxide is not very palatable and the cattle may not consume enough of this mixture. Consumption can be improved by mixing equal quantities (by weight) of ground corn, trace-mineral salt and magnesium oxide. Other palatable grains also may be used; however, do not use protein supplements or meals to increase consumption. The high nitrogen concentration will serve to aggravate the problem. Remember - the goal is for the cows to consume 1 to 2 ounces of magnesium per day and the magnesium oxide is 60% magnesium.

Treatment of grass tetany can be successful if quick enough. When signs of grass tetany occur, contact your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Price Projections for Cattle and Beef, 2005-2012								
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
U.S. Dollars/Hundredweight								
Fed steers	87.28	83.93	81.68	79.35	76.46	74.19	72.35	70.94
Feeder steers	120.04	113.18	105.54	100.47	95.34	90.37	85.81	83.81
Utility cows	54.59	51.01	48.03	45.65	44.09	42.33	40.40	39.73
U.S. Dollars/Pound								
Retail beef	4.09	4.04	4.03	4.03	4.01	4.01	4.00	3.99
U.S. Dollars/Cow								
Cow-calf returns	138.20	70.93	31.79	6.75	-18.54	-40.90	-63.79	-78.02

Table Source: University of Arkansas

The Case for Growing Clovers

Prepared by Dr. Don Ball, Extension Forage Crop Agronomist, Auburn University

Clovers have long been viewed as being special and beneficial pasture plants, but recently incentives for livestock producers to grow them have further increased. Why are many people more interested than ever in growing clovers in pastures as companion species with grasses? Here are several reasons that collectively make a compelling case.



Lower Nitrogen Fertilizer Costs. Increased cost of nitrogen fertilizer is probably the number one factor that has stimulated more interest in clovers. Like most legumes, clovers have the ability to obtain nitrogen from the atmosphere and "fix" it in nodules on the roots. The amount of nitrogen fixed varies depending on species, stand density, fertility, weather and the extent to which the clover has been defoliated. However, numerous studies have shown that nitrogen fixation/acre/year by a stand of annual clover(s), white clover, and red clover often is within the range of 60 to 150, 100 to 150, and 150 to 200, respectively. At current nitrogen costs of around \$0.40/lb, this represents a value of \$24 to over \$80 per acre per year.

Better Forage Quality. The forage quality of legumes, including clovers, is generally higher than that of most forage grasses. Legumes are usually higher in crude protein, digestibility, and many minerals and vitamins. They also are digested more rapidly than grasses and tend to stimulate increased intake. The result is better performance of grazing animals in terms of higher gains and higher reproductive rates.

Better Distribution of Growth. The introduction of clovers into grass pastures often extends the grazing season as compared to grass alone. Red clover is especially likely to provide additional summer production when grown with cool season perennial grasses. Overseeding a cool season annual legume on a warm season perennial grass pasture permits production of quality feed during winter and early spring when such pastures would otherwise be unproductive. Also, several species of clovers can extend the grazing season when planted on a prepared seedbed with annual grasses.

Increased Forage Yield. The total yield of forage per acre from a grass/legume mixture is usually increased over grass alone. For example, in studies conducted over many years in Kentucky, red clover grown with tall fescue produced more total yield than tall fescue fertilized with 180 pounds of nitrogen per acre. A clover/grass mixture is especially likely to increase dry matter yield as compared to grass alone that receives little or no nitrogen fertilizer.

Reduced Risk. Legumes complement grasses in many ways, and having a mixed sward of grass and clovers constitutes a lower risk situation than having a pure grass sward. For example, many pests attack only certain plant species, and therefore a disease or insect pest is less likely to devastate a mixed forage stand than a pure stand of one forage species.

Benefits in Crop Rotation Systems. In addition to furnishing nitrogen for succeeding crops, clovers tend to improve soil characteristics by improving soil tilth. They also may create root channels that benefit subsequent crops grown in rotation with clovers or clover/grass mixtures.

Reduced Animal Toxicities. Clovers can play an important role in offsetting various livestock disorders caused by forage grasses. In a recent survey in two southern states, "growing legumes with tall fescue" was found to be the number one strategy used by beef cow-calf producers to increase performance of animals suffering from fescue toxicity as a result of grazing toxic-endophyte tall fescue. Furthermore, the likelihood of grass tetany is reduced by the presence of clovers in animals' diets because the underlying cause of this disorder is magnesium deficiency in animals, and clovers contain higher levels of magnesium than grasses.

Environmental Acceptability. Because of their symbiotic relationship with nitrogen-fixing bacteria, clovers and other legumes provide homegrown slow release nitrogen, which is more environmentally friendly than commercial nitrogen. They furnish pollen and nectar for honeybees, and tend to increase populations of beneficial predatory insects. Clovers also provide food for wildlife including deer, rabbits, and game birds.

More Interesting and Attractive Pastures. Clovers are more colorful and attractive than grasses, especially when blooming. They make pastures more attractive to humans and, given their palatability, to grazing animals as well.

Increased Profit. The use of clovers can have an enormous positive impact on the economics of raising grazing animals. Nutrition is generally recognized as the primary limiting factor on most livestock farms, and legumes usually provide higher nutrition levels than grasses. Better nutrition means more milk production, higher weaning weights, and increased likelihood of high reproductive efficiency. These factors obviously impact gross income.

Clovers also help reduce or eliminate the requirement to apply nitrogen fertilizer, which typically accounts for 20 to 40% of the cost of producing forage from grasses. Clover seed usually costs \$10 to \$25 per acre. Other costs associated with establishing clovers depend on the site, situation and method of seeding, but are typically less than the seed costs. Often the value of nitrogen fixed by clovers will alone more than offset the cost of clover establishment.

Conclusion The use of clovers in forage programs has numerous potential benefits. When clovers are present, animal performance goes up while expenses go down. Clovers are truly sustainable plants. Research results, farmer experience and many demonstrations have clearly shown clovers to be agronomically sound, environmentally friendly, and economically advantageous.





Beef Field Day

**Saturday, April 28, 2007
9:00 a.m.**

LAUDERDALE COUNTY



2006 Beef Field Day

Beef- It's What's for Dinner



Learn About

Latest Information on D.O.T.
Numbers & Premise I.D.
Herd Health & DeWorming
Dealing with High Fertilizer Cost
Pasture Weed Control
Much More, Come Join the Fun

**For Directions to the
Hamner Farm
Greenhill & Killen area**

*FREE
to all Cattlemen
presentations begin
at 10:00 a.m.*

**Sponsors:
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County ALFA Farm Federation
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Lunch will be



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