

HARDING COUNTY AG NEWS

Vol 5 Issue 2

Blair Clavel, Harding Co. Extension Agent

I would imagine that this newsletter will find most of you thankful for the little moisture we received and not gagging on dust for a short while. I hope that everyone has had good luck weaning calves, or selling them, and that the fall work is wrapping up. The days are so short now that it is hard to get much done. There are many things going on in the ag industry right now that will affect producers at a local and national level. If you all have questions with anything, please feel free to give me a call.

Cattle Growers Midwinter Meeting

The New Mexico Cattle Growers Association will have their midwinter meeting December 6-9. The following is an agenda for Cattleman's College.

PFIZER CATTLEMAN'S COLLEGE

December 6, 2007

AM Animal Health

9:15 Fifty Years of Technology-- Dr. Gary Sides, Pfizer Nutritionist

10:00 Break

10:15 Herd Health Planning—Dr. Glenn Rogers, DVM, Pfizer Veterinary Operations

10:50 Calf Immunity- The Maternal Influence- Dr. John Wenzel, DVM, NMSU

11:20 Interaction between Gestation and Calf Health- Dr. Mark Peterson, NMSU

12:00 Lunch

PM Poisonous Plants

1:00 Poisonous plants from a range manager's viewpoint

Dr. Chris Allison, NMSU

1:45 From a Veterinarian's viewpoint – Dr. John Wenzel, DVM, NMSU

2:20 Chemical control of Poisonous weeds- Dr. Keith Duncan, NMSU

3:10 Break

3:30 Marketing Cattle under today's conditions

Butch Mayfield, Superior Livestock

Dr. Jerry Hawkes, NMSU

4:15 Adjourn

Promotion and Marketing Committee Meeting

There will also be many committee meetings and many things to discuss. One of the things that will be discussed is the Beef Check-Off Task Force's recommendations concerning the beef check off. The Task Force has made four recommendations that need to be acted upon by Cattle Growers to ensure our input for the NCBA meeting in February of 2008. The four recommendations are:

1. An opportunity to petition for a referendum. The beef referendum process be revised to provide producers the opportunity to petition every five years for a referendum on continuing the Checkoff. Ten percent of beef producers signing the petition at county offices will trigger the USDA to conduct a vote within a year. This is similar to the Soybean referendum model.
2. An adjustment of the checkoff rate. To assure strong demand-building initiatives for the beef industry in the future and to offset twenty years of inflation, adjust the per head checkoff rate to \$2.00. The 50-50 split between State Beef Councils and Beef Board would remain the same. The industry will need to approve any checkoff rate change through a referendum.
3. Enhanced understanding of the Federation of State Beef Councils. The Federation of State Beef Councils gives priority to enhancing its identity in order to strengthen beef industry stakeholder understanding of the Federation. Options such as changing its name from The Federation Division to The Beef Checkoff Federation could be considered.
4. Making the checkoff more inclusive. Any reference to the charter date of established national non-profit industry governed organizations be eliminated from definition (1260.113c) in the Beef Promotion and Research Order. This will make the checkoff program more inclusive.



I chair the Promotion and Marketing Committee where these topics will be decided upon.

Whether you are a CG member or not, and you have been following this, I would like to have your feedback concerning these issues, particularly the possible increase in the rate. If you have an opinion, for it, against it, or otherwise, please give me a call or email.

Avian Influenza Training

I recently attended a training in Albuquerque on Avian Influenza for first responders to agriculture disease incidents. I don't know if they had me there because of all the commercial poultry flocks in Harding County, or they needed warm bodies, but I was told to go. On a serious note, although unlikely, we could very well see avian influenza at some point and we need to be ready to shut it down. Illegal cock fighting in the south is a concern, as fighting fowl can be smuggled across the border. We now have regional response teams composed of Dept of Health, Extension, Livestock Board, and other agencies to respond to an outbreak. Highly pathogenic (HP, the bad kind) avian influenza is a serious and often fatal infection in birds. It results from infection by type A influenza viruses. It appears to spread to poultry from migratory waterfowl. If you find multiple water fowl deceased, please let me know.



The following is an excerpt from the Beef Cow-Calf Weekly, an internet based weekly update from Beef Mag.

As Bio-Fuels Levels Head Up, What's The Fallout?

In 2007, the ethanol industry will produce more than 6 billion gals. of ethanol and use 2.25 billion bu. of corn in the process. But what does the future hold for ethanol production, grain prices and cattle prices?

Dillon Feuz, Utah State University economist, says no one really knows.

Other, that is, than prices for corn and all other grains, oilseeds and hay will be higher than current levels; and calf prices will be lower.

"Just don't ask me for a number and don't believe anyone who gives you a number," he says.

Writing for the Livestock Marketing Information Center, Feuz says there's probably no question the industry can hit the current government mandate of 7.5 billion gals. well ahead of schedule.

"However, the concern among cowboys is the present political climate where it seems that one congressman after another and even the President seem to be playing a game of 'I can beat that' when it comes to how high the next renewable fuels government mandate should be. It now seems almost inevitable that the new mandate will be at least 15 billion gals.

from grain. Then there is talk of another 21 billion gals. from cellulose," Feuz says.

Feuz says 15 billion gals. of ethanol will require about 5 billion bu.

of corn to produce, which will be more than 1/3 of current production and nearly equal the present use of corn in the feeding industry.

He adds that a look at past and present December corn, November soybean and July wheat futures tells an interesting story.

*Corn futures prices for December 2005 and 2006 averaged about \$1.95 and \$3.60, respectively. Current December futures are at \$3.80 for 2007 and \$4.28 for 2008.

*Meanwhile, November soybean prices have gone from \$5.80 to \$6.50 in 2005 and 2006 to \$10.50 for 2007, while November 2008 is priced at \$10.10/bu. And alfalfa hay prices are also at record-high levels. While Feuz recognizes there are other factors influencing these prices, devoting more crop acres to energy production is certain to raise grain and forage prices.

Feuz says he would prefer U.S. grain farmers make money rather than foreign oil producers, but says the government needs to be careful about the unintended consequences of mandates. He adds, however, that no one is capable of predicting all the ramifications for grain prices and for livestock profitability under a mandate for 15 billion gals. of ethanol from grain.

Termites

I have had several calls about termites. It is better to be safe than sorry with these creatures because often by the time you find them, it is too late. *The following is a response from our termite specialist Carol Sutherland, in response to validating a termite problem for me in the county.*

Si, Senior. These are likely one of our subterranean termites; I could only find worker caste termites, so I can't go any farther with the ID.

I could smell the musty book smell, however. Chances are---how close am I---someone wanted to pull out a long-stored photo album or wanted to see a book that had sat on a bookshelf or maybe inside a storage box for some period of time. Maybe they didn't see it when they picked up the album or book but as soon as they opened the cover, there was this dark, reddish-pinkish kind of granular "dirt" that came out of the spine area. The inside lining of the cover or maybe the red inside page had some strange little tracks chewed out of it so it looked like red puzzle pieces. Upon looking farther---little white, agile insects crawled into and out of the tracks. That was the clincher.

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Yes, termites eat woody materials---and paper meets that criteria. The book or album could be on a shelf or in a box---anything that hasn't been disturbed in awhile. The termite colony would approach the building where this paper was like a herd of tiny little cows. Instead of running over the range, however, they explore just under the soil's surface, probing and exploring blindly and alerting the whole moving herd to the prospects of food ahead. On the range they would delight in finding dried grasses and dried plant roots---even dry cow pies; all of the water they would need would be at the water table but it could be more convenient if it came from a leaky faucet, pipe or steamy bathroom tub or shower. Termites like these also feast on roots or other buried parts of woody plants, buried or partially buried wood, fence posts, firewood, building debris, etc. as well as discarded paper, cardboard and similar materials.

Subterranean termites enter homes or other buildings built on slabs through cracks, joints and crannies in the slab. For homes and buildings built over foundations varying anywhere from small crawl spaces through full size basements, they can enter the same way. For those who scout for termites for a living, these people usually crawl under the house or look at the foundation supports or inside walls with a flash-light and screwdriver, looking for "soft wood," termite droppings and especially soil tubes that outline the paths where termites are exploring, looking for wood or wood products to munch.



Books would be the equivalent of potato or tortilla chips for enterprising termites.

If the book is an heirloom or of great value otherwise, consider removing it and any other wooden or wood product valuables from wherever they are now. Shake, brush or bang the book against a hard surface a few times to shake loose all the crumbly dirt (termite poop and such) out and perhaps some of the termites. Put the books into a plastic garbage bag (a little one will do nicely), twist down the top, perhaps stick a piece of paper on the outside with today's date on it and stick it in the freezer for several weeks---maybe until Xmas---to kill any resident termites. Worker termites do not reproduce but there's a chance that one of the "satellite queens" might lay a few in the more remote parts of the termite colony. Leaving the book as undisturbed as possible in the freezer could allow the cold to do its job. Frost-free freezers will dehydrate the little rascals, finishing them off more efficiently than just cold.

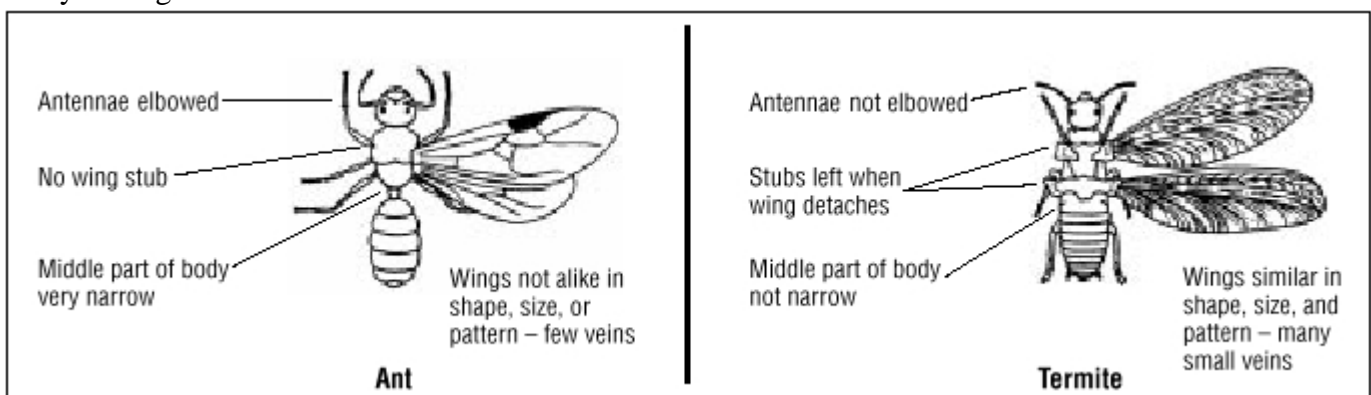
While exposed termites are incredibly easy to kill with just about any insecticide, that isn't the case with termites infesting buildings. With few exceptions, the average homeowner cannot purchase insecticides labeled for termite control---nor would he/she want to from the standpoint of volume sold and price (\$\$\$). Homeowners lack the equipment and expertise to know how to apply any of these pesticides correctly or safely, too. Farmers, ranchers and those who tinker around machine shops wouldn't have any better equipment, knowledge or expertise either.

Termite treatment of homes is a job for a licensed professional. I would bet the nearest one of these---licensed with NMDA in category 7D---would be Albuquerque. Get out the Yellow Pages---on the web probably---and check. I would suggest getting at least 3 on-site visits by entomologically-inclined representatives of these companies (not the people selling the service packages) plus written estimates and written explanations of their plans of attack, insecticide(s) used and re-call policies. This will be a big chunk of change but it can stop the damage.

From there, expect more expense in repairing the damage. This would be the time to renovate, in other words.

Hope this helps. Later.....Carol

Many folks get termites confused with ants... here is the difference.



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Forage Sample Analysis for Harding County-Supplementing Fundamentals 2007

If you recall, in 2004 monitoring sites were set up throughout the county as a better means for determining loss for FSA programs. As a bonus, the clippings were sent to be analyzed for nutrient content. 2007 marks the 4th year of reporting the nutrient analysis of the forage samples. We will do this each year hoping that it will aid you in your supplementing decisions. If you have questions about a site nearest you, please call the office. These values are on a dry matter basis representing ranches from one end of the county to another. Samples were taken on November 20 and 21.

2007 Forage Sampling Data- Harding County

Number	Moisture%	CP%	ADF%	TDN%	Calcium	Phosphorus	Aluminum	Cobalt	Copper	Iron	Manganese	Molybdenum	Zinc
1													
2	81.41	4.71	42.1	55.64	0.33	0.12	732	0.32	8	512	53.6	1.31	19.8
3	82.72	5.47	45.51	52.95	0.31	0.09	920	0.37	10.2	667	14.8	1.21	31.7
4	81.8	5.67	40.43	56.96	0.34	0.13	1310	0.83	8.2	1020	81	2.15	24.6
5	88.54	4.77	39.92	57.36	0.44	0.13	1080	0.52	8.98	793	83.6	1.4	26
6	87.91	5.15	39.96	57.33	0.6	0.11	1890	0.96	8.41	1570	111	2.07	20.9
7	90.82	3.72	42.83	55.06	0.27	0.05	1510	0.53	7.48	1130	67.6	0.57	17.8
8	89.42	4.41	43.26	54.72	0.25	0.1	443	0.2	6.09	268	80.6	0.5	20.3
9	80.98	6.73	38.71	58.32	0.39	0.19	612	1	8.18	438	71.6	2.53	29.1
10	88.84	5.02	41.1	56.43	0.29	0.06	1170	0.33	11.1	688	49.6	0.67	24.4
11	84.49	4.97	45.6	52.88	0.27	0.05	717	0.2	7.91	490	41	1.13	20
12	87.96	6.94	29.85	65.32	0.43	0.14	686	0.2	7.85	505	59.4	0.89	22.9
AVG	85.90	5.23	40.84	56.63	0.36	0.11	1006.36	0.50	8.40	734.64	64.89	1.31	23.41

This chart indicates that we should be supplementing protein in amounts that help increase forage digestibility. However, the average crude protein levels for the area this year are a full one percent higher than the last 3 years combined. Also, there was not a lot of forage grown in places. This, coupled with the fact of the higher protein levels, may suggest supplementing with a lower protein, higher energy feed. When crude protein levels are below 7%, we should start to think about supplementing. That is pretty much every winter in Harding County. In order to determine how much to feed and how often, ask yourself a simple question:

Do my cows have grass to eat in the pasture? If yes, is it brown or green? If green, don't feed. If brown, protein is likely deficient and inhibiting digestion. Feed a high protein supplement greater than or equal to 32% CP at .1-.3% of body weight per day. If forage is inadequate, de-stock. Then determine if green or brown. If green, supplement a 20% or less CP source at .4-.8% of body weight per day, as energy is deficient. If brown, supplement a 20-28% CP source at .3-.5% of body weight per day. If forage shortage is severe and brown, supplement with a 20% or less CP source at .4-.8% of body weight per day and then hope it rains.

This is simply a guide to help, and is not perfect. It simply says to use high protein in small amounts/d if you have grass and higher energy in larger amounts/d if you don't.

Higher protein feeds will cost more per ton than higher energy feeds because corn and other cereal starches are usually cheaper. However, it is useful to figure cost on a \$/lb CP basis because you will feed less of it and hopefully get more bang for your buck on a daily forage utilization basis.

Remember that these comments are for cows. Growing and developing animals may require more energy for their growth and maintenance requirements.

Mineral supplementation is a tricky issue. I would pay attention to the Phosphorus, Copper, and Zinc. The requirements for cattle are: **.18-.22% for P, 10-12ppm for Cu and 30-40ppm for Zn**. This data shows that all 3 of these are deficient (copper marginal). We all know that this country is low P, and most folks that feed a mineral have the required P in it. Furthermore, Cu and Zn deficiencies have been the blame for low immune response in calves from NE New Mexico. That, and the fact the high Fe and Mo levels can inhibit them from working. Ironically, some folks don't have any trouble with health in their calves and don't even feed a mineral. It is a very regional issue (even pasture to pasture).



This newsletter will be available on the web site at <http://www.hardingcounty.org>. If you have any questions or need any more information, please feel free to call the office at 505-673-2341.

Best Regards,

Blair Clavel
County Extension Agent

The following is data from Superior Livestock showing the premium difference in calves off cows and value added programs. There were noticeable price differences in weaned calves in 2006-2007 across the board. Thanks to Ed Herron for the data.

2007 Value Added premium increase over 2006 per/cwt

	2007	2006	Increase
Vac 24	2.86\$	1.94\$.92\$
Vac 34	4.86\$	3.41\$	1.45\$
Vac 45	7.83\$	7.61\$.22\$
Vac PreCon	7.22\$	5.88\$	1.34\$