

November 12, 2012

COWCHIP

DATES TO REMEMBER:

November

15 Master Farmer Phase I Class – see article
19 Cattlemen’s Board Meeting
26 Bulk Distillers Dried Grains Available
30-Dec. 2 Tour of Ranches, East Texas

January

7 Cattlemen’s Banquet, 6:30 p.m., Kaplan American Legion
18-19 Parish Livestock Show, McCrory Building, Abbeville
18-20 LCA Convention, Monroe

FEED:

We will be getting a shipment of bulk Distillers Dried Grains on Monday, November 26. We have an extra 5 tons at this time. Cost is \$320/ton. With 25% crude protein and 83% total digestible nutrients in DDG’s, this will be the best nutrient buy you can find this winter. Call Tammy or I if you are interested.

MASTER FARMER PROGRAM:

For those of you who haven’t had the opportunity to begin the Master Farmer program we will have Phase I, Environmental Education, offered next Thursday, November 15th at the County Agent’s meeting room in Abbeville. It will begin at 3:00 p.m. and go through 9:00 p.m. A meal will be served.

Being a certified Master Farmer offers several advantages, by law you are presumed in compliance with environmental regulations. In addition, the LSU AgCenter can now design resource management practices for your farm so it should be easier to become certified. Also, if you plan to pursue Master Cattle Producer certification, one of the requirements is to have taken this class.

If you are interested please respond to Tammy or I by Wednesday, November 14th at 898-4335 so we can make proper arrangements.

JOHNE'S DISEASE:

Johne's disease is a chronic wasting disease that expresses itself by persistent diarrhea in infected cattle usually 4 years old or older. Cattle are usually infected as calves. Transmission is most likely from mother to daughter through nursing but can occur in the uterus during pregnancy. Infected cows shed the bacteria contaminating the environment and their udders. Calves ingest the bacteria while nursing.

A Demonstration Herd Project is being conducted by Ohio State University which sheds some light on this insidious disease. Due to the length of time from infection until a cow shows symptoms a cow can be shedding bacteria for months or years before she is recognized as being infected. Samples taken from the farm environment and udders and teats of the cows in the study have shown that severe contamination occurs in infected herds. In one herd with 88 cows seven cows tested positive for the disease. However, a more serious finding is that 33 of the 88 udders sampled were positive. Showing that these seven positive cows were not only contaminating their udders they were contaminating the udders of a significant number of other cows. It is important to note that this herd calved on dry lot and not in open pasture so contamination levels were more concentrated. Samples were also taken from soil and bedding in loafing areas and around bale feeders and were found to be contaminated in two of every five samples. Again, calves could be infected from such sources. While it is still most likely that a calf would become infected from its mother, it is possible that infected, shedding cows could infect several calves not just their own.

The message to ranchers is:

- Calving in confined areas should be avoided.
- Moving haying areas and mineral feeders should be done frequently.
- Testing of herd should be considered if a problem with the disease is suspected.

ELECTION RESULTS HAVE MINOR IMPACT ON HOUSE AND SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEES:

With votes cast and ballots counted, the 2012 election is over. Though the majority of the focus during the 2012 election season focused on the presidential race, the results of key congressional races in Tuesday's election will have a small effect on the House and Senate Agriculture Committees. Colin Woodall, Vice-President of government affairs for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), said now that the results are in, both committees can focus on issues important to rural America.

"The election season is over, and now it's time for Congress to begin working on the real issues affecting farmers and ranchers nationwide, such as passing a full farm bill and addressing permanent relief from the death tax," said Woodall. "We look forward to working with both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees so that NCBA continues to provide a voice for cattlemen and women that is heard loud and clear in Washington."

Two of the House committee's most senior members will not be returning. Tim Holden (D-Pa.) was defeated in a primary and Timothy Johnson (R-Ill.) is retiring. Leonard Boswell of Iowa, the fourth-ranking Democrat on the House Agriculture Committee, lost his seat to Republican Tom Latham. Bobby Schilling (R-Ill.) was defeated Tuesday night by opponent Cheri Bustos. The committee's No. 4 Republican, Steve King of Iowa, won in a tight race against Christie Vilsack, wife of the Agriculture secretary and former Iowa governor Tom Vilsack. Other Republican members who kept their seats are Chris Gibson of New York and Scott Tipton of Colorado. The House's leading advocate for restricting the agricultural use of antibiotics, Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.), faced a tough GOP challenge this year but kept her seat.

On the Senate side, three members of the Agriculture Committee are departing. Democrats Kent Conrad of North Dakota and Ben Nelson of Nebraska are retiring, while Republican Richard Lugar of Indiana was defeated in his primary. Two other Democrats on the panel – Sherrod Brown in Ohio and Bob Casey in Pennsylvania – faced relatively tight re-election races, with both senators keeping their seats. Republican candidate Deb Fischer, a rancher and strong supporter of the cattle industry, won in Nebraska with overwhelming support.

“The most important action that farmers and ranchers can take in an election year is vote, and our members came out to the polls in record numbers,” said Woodall. “Our members realize that their vote on Tuesday doesn’t affect just the next two or four years; it has an impact that will last a long time.”

WHEAT PASTURE PROSPECTS FADING FAST:

Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist, writes in the current Cow-Calf Newsletter about the latest casualties of the drought.

No significant rain has fallen in Oklahoma in over two weeks. Last week’s Crop Progress showed that 25 percent of Oklahoma wheat was in good condition and 61 percent was fair with only 12 percent poor or very poor. Though the wheat crop in 2011 was planted later, the crop condition at the end of October was substantially better than this year. Moreover, wheat conditions will likely show significant deterioration very soon without rain. Since the majority of wheat has emerged and soil moisture is depleted in many areas, additional moisture is critical and must arrive very soon. In the driest areas of the north central and northwest parts of the state, wheat has either not emerged or has not been planted at this time. The short term weather forecast indicates little precipitation probability for the next 8-14 days. The El Niño that has been anticipated much of the summer and fall appears to have faded into weak or neutral conditions, providing fewer chances for winter moisture in the Southern Plains.

Stocker demand has faltered as the potential wheat pasture is far from a reality at this time. Stocker producers are in a wait-and-see mode before committing to stocker purchases. There appears to be considerable interest in wheat pasture leasing by producers as well as feedlots hoping to secure some spring feeder cattle supplies and use wheat pasture to put on cheaper weight gain before feedlot placement. However, the clock is ticking on wheat pasture prospects in Oklahoma.

Many cow-calf producers were likewise hoping that wheat pasture would supplement hay supplies that are, in many cases, barely sufficient for winter feeding. The recent lack of rain is beginning to re-advance drought conditions that had improved somewhat in the past few weeks. The final set of pasture and range conditions in October showed 69 percent of the state in poor to very poor condition compared to 86 percent poor to very poor at the end of October, 2011. Lack of water is increasingly the principal challenge of many producers. Many ponds are critically low and only in a very few isolated areas did the earlier rains produce any runoff to replenish water supplies. If freezing weather should occur, many ponds will freeze solid even if they are not completely dry; a threat that will grow as winter approaches.

Oklahoma has not experienced nearly the level of cattle liquidation or early marketings in 2012, compared to the massive liquidation in 2011. Better forage and hay production in the first half of 2012, combined with already destocked herds, made it possible for most producers to get to this point in 2012 with little additional liquidation. However, current water and hay conditions mean that many producers may not be able to make it through the winter or will arrive at spring with water and forage resources completely depleted. Continued dry conditions that eliminate wheat pasture and fails to replenish water supplies sets up the next

round of cattle liquidation in Oklahoma. A normal winter will be tough and anything more severe than normal will accelerate additional liquidation.

Sincerely,

Andrew Granger
County Agent
Vermilion Parish

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