



Chewing the Cud

May 10, 2011

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Dry

It seems ironic that we are in such a drought and yet the Mississippi River is at record levels and outside its banks. I spoke with Patrick Babineaux, FSA County Director, and he tells me that the drought monitor has put us in a category that should prompt Livestock Forage Disaster Program payments to producers who purchased crop insurance for their pastures. Those policies had to be in place by February 28, 2011 to be eligible for the program. There are provisions for producers who do not have the insurance but have been farming less than 10 years, or are socially disadvantaged or have limited income.

The day I spoke with Patrick he did not have all the details but if you were one of those who purchased the crop insurance or feel that you meet the other criteria I would call Patrick at the FSA office.

Fertilizing Spring Pastures

It is probably too dry to fertilize pastures at the writing of this newsletter. I would be inclined to have some green grass present and moisture either present or imminent before I would fertilize. I would be particularly careful where ryegrass was planted. I have not seen many summer grasses coming in behind ryegrass yet.

Fertilizer prices have gone up since this time last year so the last thing you want to do is waste money.

Here are price comparisons for 2 local farm supplier's average bulk prices over the past 4 years:

	<u>May 2008</u>	<u>May 2009</u>	<u>May 2010</u>	<u>May 2011</u>
DAP -	\$930.00/Ton	\$500	\$570	\$690
Urea-			\$440	\$495
Ammonium Nitrate -	\$470.00/Ton	\$420	\$410	\$465
Muriate of Potash -	\$570.00/Ton	\$800 (falling)	\$520	\$595
17-17-17		\$545	\$490	\$575

All Extension Programs are open to persons regardless of race, color, creed, sex, religion, national origin or handicap.

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For the average spring pasture a producer with medium fertility might put out fertilizer at a rate of 50-60-60/acre. Using the above prices the cost would be :

<u>May 2008</u>	<u>May 2009</u>	<u>May 2010</u>	<u>May 2011</u>
\$107.75/acre	\$88.05/ acre	\$79.54/acre	\$92.75/acre

The average cost of the same fertility program that we used last year has increased by \$13.21/acre. All the costs have been figured using diammonium phosphate (DAP), muriate of potash and ammonium nitrate. You could save \$4.28/acre by using urea but you would need to add a urea stabilization product such as Agrotain to control nitrogen losses to the atmosphere and then add that cost to your price. The urea stabilization product would only give you about 2 weeks of stabilization.

If you apply 17-17-17 alone, you cannot achieve the 50-60-60 blend. You can get a 51-51-51 blend using 300 pounds of 17-17-17 which will cost \$86.25/ acre or you can get a 60-60-60 blend by using 350 pounds of 17-17-17 at a cost of \$100.63/acre.

Any one of the nutrients that is low in your pasture can limit growth. We typically think that if a nutrient is evaluated as very low on your soil sample report that you have less than a 50% yield potential. If any nutrient is low you only have a 50-75% yield potential if you do not fertilize.

Potassium levels are of particular concern in your hay fields. When you remove the forage, potassium is also removed from the pasture. Unless you feed the animals in the hay meadow, there is no recycling of nutrients. It takes approximately twice as much potassium for good yields in a hay field as it does in a pasture where cattle are grazing.

This chart will show how much nutrient is removed from a hay field for each ton of forage produced.

Pounds Removed/ Ton of Hay		
<u>Nutrient</u>	<u>Hybrid Bermuda</u>	<u>Bahia</u>
Nitrogen	46	43
Phosphate	12	12
Potash	50	35
Sulfur	6	6

Feed Prices

In light of the dry conditions many people are already looking at how to supplement either cows or calves. If you have to use grain, it is an expensive proposition.

Cattle that we sell in the fall will either go to winter wheat pastures or to the feed yards. As you can see the cost of feeding calves is very expensive. The saving grace is that fat cattle are selling well above last year.

Here is how feed grain prices have stacked up on the past 4 years.

Comparisons:

	<u>May 08</u>	<u>May 09</u>	<u>May 10</u>	<u>May 11</u>
Corn (bu)	\$6.70	4.12	3.63	7.12
Soybeans (bu)	\$12.71	11.02	9.87	13.43
Wheat (bu)	7.90	5.76	4.86	7.65
Live cattle	91.45	82.03	99.03	109.15

As you can see, commodity prices are much higher over last year even though cattle prices have moved up. At the same time, transportation cost to move grains and cattle have drastically increased since last year putting more pressure on cattle producer's bottom line.

The key to profitability is to keep a sharp pencil and be as efficient as possible.

Horn Flies

Horn flies will normally increase numbers to the point that they affect cattle productivity in May. The economic threshold when we should treat for horn flies is at 100 flies per side (200 flies/cow).

Recommended horn fly controls include:

Sprays - Co-Ral, Permethrin, Rabon, Ravap

Pour-ons – Dectomax, Ivomec, Ivermectrins, Cylence, Saber, Permethrin Pour On

Backrubber – Co-Ral, Ravap, Permethrin, Lintox-HD

Dust Bags – Co-Ral Dust, Permethrin Dust, Python Dust, Rabon Dust

Ear Tags -

Organophosphate

X-Terminator	(20% diazinon)
Optimizer	(20% diazinon)
*Patriot	(40% diazinon)
Co-Ral Plus	(20% coumaphos + 20% diazinon)
*Warrior	(30% diazinon + 10% chlorpyriphos)
Dominator	(20% pirimphos-methyl)

Pyrethroid

Python	(zetacypermethrin 10% + PBO 20%)
Python Magnum	(zetacypermethrin 10% + PBO 20%)
Cylence Ultra	(beta-Cyfluthrin 8% + 20% PBO)
Saber Extra	(lamdacyhalothrin 10% + PBO 13%)

Chlorinated hydrocarbon (Cyclodiene) Tags

Avenger	(endosulfan 30%)
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All ear tags will provide approximately 10 weeks of control for susceptible flies. For resistant horn flies, tags with an asterisk (*) are more likely to give satisfactory control.

Remove old tags at the end of the fly season or when fly populations exceed the economic threshold.

Weed Control Updates

Weeds should be controlled when they are actively growing. I would not spray when extremely dry conditions exist. The plants have shut down growth and will not uptake the chemicals when it is very dry. Wait for some moisture and we get some green up.

Most of the succulent broadleaf weeds that grow in the pastures are fairly easily controlled if you catch them early (less than 12 inches). You can control them with 1 quart of 2,4-D per acre. If you wait and they get more mature you may have to go up to 2 quarts per acre to get control. This method should give you good control of common weeds such as dog fennel (yankee weed), blue vervain, golden rod, purslane, morning glory, cocklebur, indigo, ragweed and goat weed.

What you really need to concentrate on early is the hard to kill pasture weeds. Those would include horse nettle, Cherokee rose, multiflora rose, Chinese tallow tree (popcorn or chicken tree), locust saplings, sweet gum saplings, and persimmon saplings. You will need something stronger than 2,4-D, look at Weedmaster, Grazon P&D, Crossbow or Remedy.

Horse nettle should be sprayed before it flowers and use Grazon P&D or a generic with 2,4-D plus picloram.

Common Herbicide choices and their formulations:

2,4-D	2,4-D
Weedmaster	2,4-D + dicamba
Crossbow	2,4-D + triclopyr
Remedy	triclopyr
Grazon P&D	2,4-D + picloram
Grazon Next	2,4-D + aminopyralid
Pastureguard	triclopyr + fluroxyyr
Surmount	fluroxypyr + picloram

Dupont sent out a news release in April stating that their herbicide, Velpar, has received a label update allowing 0 days grazing restriction and 38 days for harvested forages. The previous restriction was 60 days for grazing or feeding harvested forage. Velpar is primarily used for smut grass control in established stands of Bermuda and Bahia grasses.

Beef Referendum

A state wide referendum will be held on May 31,2011 between the hours of 8:30 a. m. and 5:00 p. m. at the office of each parish county agent to allow Louisiana cattle producers to decide whether to approve a fifty (\$ 0.50) cents per head assessment on all Louisiana cattle marketed within or outside Louisiana for the purpose of funding the Louisiana Beef Promotion and Research Program.

Each eligible voter is entitled to only one vote.

Each eligible voter shall vote in the parish of the voter's domicile, or in the case of an organization, in the parish where its principal office is located.

Each eligible voter must bring proof of ownership of cattle in 2010, proof of residency, and in the case of a person casting a vote for an organization a resolution or other form of authorization showing that such person is authorized to cast a vote on behalf of the organization.

Sincerely

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