Grimes Ag Newsletter

Courtesy of: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office Grimes County

February/March 2021 Issue #1

Our Staff:

Allen Homann
County Extension Agent, ANR & 4-H Youth Livestock

Kyla Moeller
County Extension Agent, FCH & 4-H Youth Development

Carla Hayes
County Extension Agent, CEP

Stacey Male
Office Manager

Questions?
Call us!
(936) 873-3907

Website:
grimes.agrilife.org

Address:
203 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Navasota, TX
77868

Evaluating Stocking Rates

How do you determine the stocking rate on your property? The first question you should ask is, "what is the forage production on my property?" Pasture forage is the most economical way to maintain and manage cattle and the forage production is the basis for any stock rate decision. The most common way to predict the stocking rate of your pasture is to determine how much potential forage production is likely and stock at a rate to utilize that amount of forage. Steps include… 1) determine daily animal requirements, 2) determine potential production, 3) compare production and requirement to determine stocking rate, and 4) check pasture periodically for any needed correction. Remember, these calculations are only estimates and vary due to weather variations, fertilizer requirements, and so forth. On average cattle will consume 26lbs of dry matter per cow per day. For 365 days the requirement is 9,490lbs of forage per cow per day. Now let's say you have 10 cows and a bull you now need 104,390lbs of forage for all 11 head for the year. That is a lot of forage!

If you have questions regarding stocking rates and forage production call your local Extension Office and visit with your Ag Agent for more information.

Pasture and Range Improvement

Annual and perennial weeds limit forage production, restrict grazing, cut carrying capacity, ruin wildlife habitat, and reduce forage yields and quality. Ultimately these weeds cause grass and beef production to suffer and decrease the value of the land. That is why managing these weeds is a essential to your properties overall value and production. Yes mechanical control options can be done and may temporarily appear to solve the problem, however they are labor-intensive and costly. For effective control of unwanted weeds on your property work with your County Extension Agent to first properly identify the weed and then develop the proper control plan that best fits your specific property.

Private Applicator Training

Friday, February 26, 2021
Grimes County Extension Office, 9a.m.

When: Friday, February 26, 2021
Where: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Grimes County Extension Office-Annex Building
203 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Navasota, TX 77868

Schedule:

8:30 a.m.	Registration
9:00 a.m.	Applicator Training Begins
Noon	Conclusion/Distribution of D-1411 Forms

Study materials can be purchased prior to the training or the day of the training from the Grimes County Extension Office for $60.00.

Please RSVP at (936)873-3907 to reserve your spot.
Coffee & Donuts will be provided.

For more information about this training contact the Grimes County Extension Office at (936)873-3907 or email: allen.homann@ag.tamu.edu

Anyone wanting to become a licensed private applicator with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) may attend this training. *A valid private applicators license is required by TDA for a person who uses or supervises the use of restricted use and/or state limited use pesticides to produce agricultural commodities.*

Agricultural commodity *is defined as any plant and any animal or animal product produced for sale, feed, food or other use by humans or animals.*

Contact Information

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Grimes County Office
203 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Navasota, TX 77868

Phone:(936)873-3907
Fax:(936)825-0539

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Private Applicator Training

Friday, March 26, 2021

Grimes County Extension Office, 9a.m.

When: Friday, March 26, 2021
Where: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Grimes County Extension Office-Annex Building
203 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Navasota, TX 77868

Schedule:

8:30 a.m.	Registration
9:00 a.m.	Applicator Training Begins
Noon	Conclusion/Distribution of D-1411 Forms

Study materials can be purchased prior to the training or the day of the training from the Grimes County Extension Office for $60.00.

Please RSVP at (936)873-3907 to reserve your spot.
Coffee & Donuts will be provided.

For more information about this training contact the Grimes County Extension Office at (936)873-3907 or
email: allen.homann@ag.tamu.edu

Anyone wanting to become a licensed private applicator with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) may attend this training. *A valid private applicators license is required by TDA for a person who uses or supervises the use of restricted use and/or state limited use pesticides to produce agricultural commodities.*

Agricultural commodity *is defined as any plant and any animal or animal product produced for sale, feed, food or other use by humans or animals.*

Contact Information

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Grimes County Office
203 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Navasota, TX 77868

Phone:(936)873-3907
Fax:(936)825-0539

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

TEXAS A&M BEEF EXTENSION FEBURARY BEEF CATTLE BROWSING

Dr. Joe C. Paschal, Extension Livestock Specialist, Corpus Christi, and Dr. Stephen P. Hammack, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist Emeritus, Stephenville, Editors.

WEANING WEIGHTS FROM FALL AND WINTER CALVING SEASONS: INFLUENCE OF STOCKING RATES ON PASTURE

Dr. Monte Rouquette, forage physiologist at the Texas A&M Research and Extension Center in Overton, Texas, recently summarized 44 years of research on the impact of season of calving and stocking rate on weaning weights. The calves were out of Braford and Brangus type cows bred to Charolais, Hereford, and Simmental bulls. The calves were born in the Fall (September, October, and November) or the Winter (December, January, and February). The cows and their calves were raised under one of three different stocking rates (SR), Low, Medium, or High on bermudagrass pastures overseeded with annual ryegrass and/or crimson or arrowleaf clover. Calves were together at about the same time each year.

The first column in the following table shows the average weaning weights for both steers and heifers grouped by birth month. The heaviest weaning weights for the Fall calves were for those calved in September followed by those calved in October and then November. For calves calved in the Winter, the heaviest calves came in January, followed by February and March. The Fall calves average weaning weight was 659 lbs., and the Winter calves average weaning weight was 583 lbs.

Calving Month	**Weaning Weight (lbs.)**			
	Avg.	**Low SR**	**Med. SR**	**High SR**
Winter				
January	625 c	666 c	635 d	573 f
February	598 d	656 c	599 e	537 h
March	526 e	564 fg	535 h	479 i
Fall				
September	703 a	755 a	698 b	655 c
October	656 b	714 b	660 c	594 e
November	618 c	691 bc	612 d	543 gh

Average weaning weights and weaning weights by stocking rate with different letters are different (P<.05).

Source: Rouquette, M. and K. Norman. 2020. Research Center Tech. Rep. 2020-2. https://overton.tamu.edu/files/2020/08/RCTR-2020-2-Weaning-weights-from-Fall-and-Winter-Calving-Seasons.pdf

Editor's note: In visiting with the Dr. Roquette, stocking rate was determined by the amount of standing forage during the grazing period, essentially very little or no forage was considered a High SR, and more than ample forage was a LOW SR. Medium SR was in between. It was considered an easier method to evaluate stocking rate and was more easily adjusted due to season and rainfall.

VIRTUAL PERSPECTIVES OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PASTURES AND BEEF CATTLE: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The most important consideration of any pasture-based livestock operation is the hardiness and vegetational zone in which the operation is based.

Some of the components that need to be considered or evaluated are:

1. Soil testing to determine specific needs for fertilizer and perhaps limestone. A soil test is the best investment for efficient and economical forage production. Soil type, topography and even recommended stocking rates can be seen at https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov (or type "**web soil survey**")
2. Identification of forage species and overall pasture conditions considering forage cover and weed invasion. Forage species determine stocking rates.
3. Location and condition of cattle working facilities including alley ways for gathering livestock.
4. Availability and location of water sources relative to number of animals and size of pastures.
5. Fencing (amount and type) to set the number and size of pastures for grazing.
6. Grazing system for flexible stocking approach.
7. Stocking rate that offers sustainability of soil and pastures with variable livestock numbers to match forage production.

8. Decision on animal types to include calving season and grazing seasons and supplementation requirements.

Dr. Roquette indicated that the most useful factors to "look for" in forages include forage height, grazing pattern (especially evidence of "selective" grazing, and animal body condition. Selective grazing is an indicator of forage refusal based on palatability of forage species and stocking rate. With respect to animal performance, cow body condition score is the most useful visual assessment of what to "look for" as a before and after the fact management indicator of nutrition.

Source: Rouquette, M. 2020. Research Center Tech. Rept. 2020-4. https://overton.tamu.edu/files/2020/08/RCTR-2020-4-Virtual-Perspectives-of-management-strategies-for-pastures.pdf

RETAIL BEEF PRICES CONTINUE HIGHER THAN LAST YEAR

One common question from back in 2020 was how quickly retail beef prices would return to pre-pandemic levels. Retail beef prices have declined but remain above year ago levels.

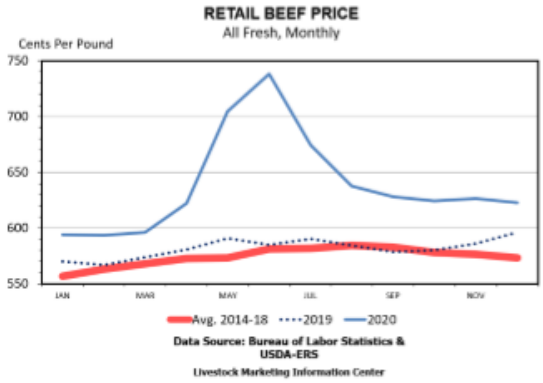
USDA's All Fresh beef price series peaked at $7.38 per pound in June 2020. The December monthly average price (released on January 14th) was $6.23 per pound. Retail beef prices declined fairly quickly after the June peak and were averaged $6.38 in August. This data, reported by USDA, is gathered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and reflects a monthly price from grocery stores across all beef quality grades and a range of beef cuts.

All fresh retail beef prices in 2020 were above those of 2019 the entire year. The price in March, pre-pandemic, averaged $5.96 per pound and finished the year at $6.23. Compared to December 2019, December 2020's all fresh beef price was $0.264 per pound, or 4.4 percent higher.

For the year, beef prices increased 9.7% over 2019. That was the largest annual increase in beef prices since 2014 when beef prices increased 13.4 percent. Price increases in 2014 were driven by drought induced tight beef supplies. Most of the increase in beef prices in 2020 occurred in the second quarter of the year, with price increasing 18 percent year-over-year. Beef prices also increased by 11 percent in the 3rd quarter over the prior year. In the aftermath of the drought,

beef prices registered 5 consecutive quarters of year over year increases as supplies continued to decline and demand grew. In case anyone wondered, 2016 and 2017 were the last years that average all fresh retail beef prices declined compared to the prior year.

Beef prices were above the year before in December for a variety of beef cuts. Increases ranged from about 2 percent for ground beef to about 6 percent for chuck roasts and a number of steak cuts. USDA reports data on grocery store retail featuring activity and this data indicates some growth in retail beef featuring across a variety of cuts, particularly chucks and briskets.



Several factors may be contributing to higher reported retail prices when wholesale and live cattle prices have been at, or below, last year's levels. The data reflects only grocery store prices. Grocery stores have sold more beef, in volume and value, compared to the year before due to restaurant shutdowns. It's also likely that costs have increased between wholesale and retail levels due to compliance with corona virus restrictions and constraints in processing. It may be difficult to get average retail prices below pandemic levels in coming months as beef production is expected to decline, cyclically, this year and, hopefully, the economy is able to fully open expanding restaurant demand.

Source: Dr. David P. Anderson, Professor and Extension Economist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. In the Cattle Markets 1/18/21 https://lmic.info/publications/in-the-cattle-markets

DOES KNOWLEDGE OF QUALITY GRADE AND BRANDING AFFECT CONSUMERS?

Strip loins were selected of USDA Quality Grades Select, Choice, Prime, Certified Angus Beef® (CAB), and Select from carcasses from cattle classified live based on appearance as Angus (Angus Select). A consumer taste panel evaluated steaks cut 1-inch thick for tenderness, juiciness, flavor, and overall liking. Two comparisons were conducted. In the first, taste panelists were not informed before tasting of source of a sample. In the second, panelists were told in advance of tasting of Quality Grade or CAB branding of samples being evaluated.

If panelists did not know source of their sample before tasting, CAB did not rate statistically significantly higher than Choice for any palatability traits. Similarly, there was no significant difference in palatability traits between Select and Angus Select when source was unknown.

But if panelists knew source before tasting, Angus Select rated significant higher than Select and CAB rated significant higher than Choice for all traits except tenderness, Prime rated significantly higher for flavor and overall liking. If panelists knew samples were known to be Angus Select, ratings were significantly higher than Select for flavor and overall. But there were no significant differences between Select and Choice when source was known.

Based on this study, when source of product was known, consumer impressions were higher for CAB and Prime, as well as for Select when known to be produced from cattle identified live as Angus. But this was not the case when panelists compared Select and Choice from known sources. So, are consumers affected by knowing the source of a steak? The answer to that question is, “It Depends”.

Source: (J. Anim. Sci. 94: 11, p.4930; Kansas St. Univ.)

COMPARING SYSTEMS FOR PRODUCING GRASSFED AND MODIFIED GRASSFED BEEF

Interest has increased among some consumers for grass-fed beef. To qualify for the USDA grass-fed label, “cattle must be fed only mother’s milk and forage (grass and other greens) during their lifetime. The forage can be grazed or consumed as hay or other stored forage. Also, the cattle must have access to pasture “during the growing season.” Various grass-fed organizations may have somewhat expanded or different requirements, some with independent inspection and

verification. And there may be modifications in some systems from USDA and other requirements.

Four systems were compared using steers:

- Grown on pasture and then finished on high-concentrate rations for 140 days (CON)
- Grass-fed only for 20 months (20GF)
- Grass-fed for 20 months and then finished for 45 days (GF45)
- Grass-fed only for 25 months (GF25).

Final weights differed statistically significantly across groups, ranging from 1052 lb. for GF20 to 1377 lb. for CON. Between GF25 (1254 lb.) and GF45 (1212 lb.), there was no significant difference. Dressing percent also differed significantly across groups, 50% for GF20, 53% for GF25, 58% for GR45, and 62% for CON.

For CON, marbling scores and USDA Quality Grade (85% Choice, 15% Upper Choice) differed significantly and were higher from all other groups. In Quality Grade, GR20 (59% Select, 41% Standard) was significantly lower than other groups. Between GF25 (13% Standard, 82% Select, 6% Choice) and GR45 (85% Select, 15% Choice) there was no significant difference.

In general, as grazing time was longer and finishing time increased, total weight produced increased and Quality Grades were higher.

NOTE: Any financial differences across these four production systems were not evaluated. But if there are different costs of production for any systems, these should be assessed in regard to different prices realized, if any, for product marketed.

Source: (J. Anim. Sci. 98: Supple. 4. #68: Univ. of Calif.-Davis)

BQA Tip for February

Dr. Jason Banta, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, Overton

Estrus synchronization is used by some cattle producers to facilitate artificial insemination, embryo transfer, and natural breeding. Various products including GnRH, prostaglandin, or analogues of these hormones are used in synchronization protocols. It is critical to read the label for each product to make sure it is stored

and administered according to label directions. Products that are used for the same purpose vary in storage guidelines. Some should be stored at room temperature and others in a refrigerator. Use a refrigerator thermometer to monitor the refrigerator temperature. Unless the label states otherwise, these products should be administered in the neck according to BQA best management practices.

###