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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agriculture Newsletter

Rain, Rain Everywhere! (Posted on May 29, 2015 by Vanessa Corriher-TX AgriLife Extension Forage Fax)

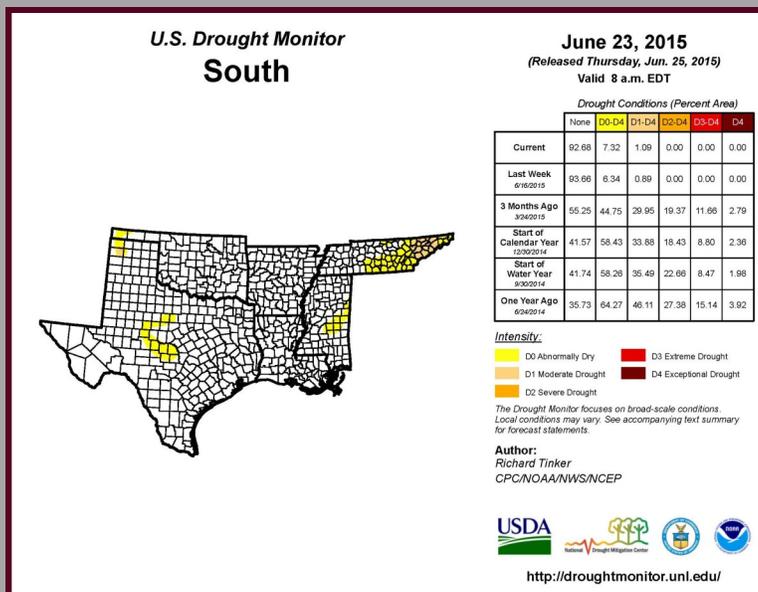
For the first time in a while, not a single county in Texas is in Extreme or Exceptional Drought conditions (according to the latest US Drought Monitor). All of this extra rainfall has been appreciated but has also been cursed by many crop and hay producers. So what does all this rainfall mean for our forages?

1. Weeds have matured and multiplied due to inability to spray at appropriate times. Once fields are accessible and there is a window of opportunity to be prepared to control weeds whether mechanically or chemically. If using herbicides, some weeds may require a higher labeled rate for control since they are larger and/or fully mature. If annual weeds have already fully matured, use of a herbicide will not be effective long term since seeds may have already been produced and dropped. Be prepared next year to control those populations early. As always the label is the law. Read herbicide labels before using products. Pay attention to rain fast times to make sure you have a window of opportunity that will not be wasteful of your resources. [2014 Suggestion for Weed Control in Pastures and Forages ESC-024](#)

2. The first hay cutting may still be standing in the field. Some locations may still have volunteer annual ryegrass that has not yet been harvested due to rainfall events. Even mature annual ryegrass will retain some nutritive value. Harvest as soon as weather conditions allow opening of the canopy for bermudagrass. Be mindful that once you have cut the hay if the soil is still wet it will take longer for hay to cure/dry. How quickly forage dries depends on humidity, temperature, wind speed, and solar radiation. As long as forage moisture content is above 40 percent, hay will continue to respire, leaving less energy for the livestock that ultimately consumes the hay. It is better to wait for good curing conditions than to take a chance that rain will fall on mowed hay. Once baled protect your investment by storing hay in a barn. If barn storage is not an option consider hay tarps and/or make sure bales are stored off the ground, on a well-drained slope, in rows with the flat ends of the bales together to minimize exposure to the elements. The rows should run north and south to maximize east-west sun exposure to help dry them after rains. [Hay Production in Texas](#)

3. Fertilize and apply limestone according to soil test recommendations once fields are dry enough to allow for heavy equipment to pass.

4. Scout for fall armyworms. Fall armyworms can cause heavy forage losses, especially in highly managed Bermuda grass hay fields. Have sprayers ready: cleaned, repaired and calibrated. Failure to detect and treat a developing fall armyworm infestation in a timely manner can result in a loss of a cutting of hay or loss of valuable grazing. Treatment is recommended when 3-4 or more larvae are found per square foot and leaf feeding is evident. Outbreaks often occur in late summer and fall and follow periods of rain, which create favorable conditions for eggs and small larvae to survive.



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BEEF CATTLE MARKETING & MANAGEMENT

Strategic Alliance

Ever-tightening profit margins and recurring cyclical downturns in cattle and calf markets have forced many cattle producers to search for ways to make their operations more profitable. Of course, cutting the costs of production is one way. However, a new concept called "strategic alliance," a way to increase revenues through vertical affiliations, is being widely discussed as a route to a more financially stable ranching operation.

Read the rest of this article at: <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-beef-cattle-marketing-alliances.pdf>

(Beef Cattle Marketing Alliances-James D. Sartwelle, III, Ernest E. Davis, James and, Rob Borchardt)

Cow-Calf Production Record Software

Producers who have computers frequently ask about the availability of software programs to handle cow-calf production records. Before purchasing a software program, it is important to analyze the value of such a system with regards to making better management decisions. Producers should evaluate their existing records to determine the types of information sought from a software program. Are inventory records important? Are summary reports of primary interest? By considering specific record needs, the producer is better equipped to choose an appropriate software package. The hardest steps to valuable recordkeeping are (1) making time for recordkeeping, (2) determining the herd information that is economically feasible to collect, and (3) summarizing the herd data for use in the decision-making process.

Read the rest of this article at: <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1926/CR-3276web.pdf>

(Cow-Calf Production Record Software-David Lalman, Carly Griffith Hotvedt, and Damona Doye)

Using a Slide in Beef Cattle Marketing

Selling cattle well in advance of their delivery date, or forward contracting, is a marketing option available to beef producers. Such a transaction requires the seller to estimate the weight of the cattle prior to delivery. Weights estimated at the time of sale and those recorded upon delivery often differ. Therefore, to ensure fair market value up

on delivery, an adjustment of the sale price is often necessary.

The "slide" is a predetermined adjustment in the sale price of cattle and is included in the contract (forward contracting) or in the description of the cattle (video or Internet marketing) being offered for sale. It is based on the difference between the weight estimated prior to consignment or contracting and the actual pay weight. Pay weight is the actual live weight of the cattle upon delivery minus a "pencil" shrink. This pencil shrink is negotiable and normally ranges from 2 to 4 percent.

Read the rest of this article at: <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-using-a-slide.pdf>

(Using a Slide in Beef Cattle Marketing-Rick Machen and Ronald Gill)

Preconditioned Feeder Calf Sale

The purpose of preconditioning and process verification for stocker/feeder calves is to minimize the morbidity and mortality experienced by calves as they move from their home ranch into the beef production system.

The program is based on:

- a minimum 45 day weaning period
- a series of two modified live respiratory complex (IBR, PI3, BVD, BRSV) vaccinations 14-21 days apart. (Preferably, the second vaccination will occur at least 14 days prior to sale.)
- a series of two 7-Way Clostridial vaccines given on the same schedule as the viral vaccines mentioned above
- a Pasturella vaccine given during the first round of vaccinations
- treatment for internal parasites (and external parasites if present)

It is recommended that the calves be held in the pen for a minimum of 3-5 days after weaning. A high quality preconditioning ration should be offered twice daily and cool, fresh, clean water should be available. The remaining 40+ days of the weaning program will likely be most economical and efficient if done in small pastures, grass traps or improved pasture.

Supplementation with cubes, cake or a grain-meal mix may be necessary to achieve the desired gain of 1-1.5 lb/day.

Read the rest of this article at: <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-thinking-about-preconditioned.pdf>

(Thinking about a Pre-conditioned Feeder Calf Sale? - Rick Machen, Ph.D, Associate Professor & Extension Livestock Specialist)

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WEED OF THE WEEK: GRASSBUR (FIELD SANDBUR, SANDBUR, ETC.)

Grassbur is a grass weed that is very troublesome in pastures and hay meadows throughout Texas. Most grassburs are easily recognized in the mature stage of growth when the “bur” seed heads become apparent. The bur itself is actually a “capsule” that usually contains from 1 to 3 seeds. We tend to think of the grassbur species as a warm season annual plant. However, many grassburs are classified as perennials because they can survive from one year to the next. The presence of grassburs can be an indication of a weak stand of forage. Grassburs are more tolerant of acidic, low fertility soils than many of our warm season forages. One of the best cultural control measures is to maintain a healthy stand of forage with proper management.



Identifying grassbur is key to chemical control. Unfortunately most can not identify a grassbur until it has produced the bur seed head. Dr. Paul Baumann, Professor & Extension Weed Specialist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, has an excellent publication on grassbur identification. Click here for a copy of the publication: [Grassbur: Early recognition is a key for management.](#)

(May 21, 2015 by Vanessa Corriher <http://foragefax.tamu.edu/2015/05/21/weed-of-the-week-grassbur-field-sandbur-sandbur-etc/>)

TDA PESTICIDE NON-COMMERCIAL APPLICATOR'S LICENSE

Here are some quick links that have information regarding getting your TDA Pesticide Non Commercial Applicators License

Directions on how to obtain a private pesticide applicator: <http://agriflife.org/aes/how-to-obtain-a-private-applicator-license/>

Training online: <https://agrifliferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm/productDetails/ProductID/1730/>

Pesticide Safety Education Resources: <http://agriflife.org/aes/pesticide-safety-education-resources/>

WALMART AND ARAMARK ON ANIMAL WELFARE AND ANTIBIOTICS

In response to increasing concerns and demands from many consumers, more and more companies producing food products are establishing policies on animal welfare and antibiotic use in livestock production. On May 22, Walmart announced new corporate positions on animal welfare and use of antibiotics in farm animals. The company says it will not tolerate animal abuse and is committed to working with suppliers to implement the Five Freedoms (originally conceived in Great Britain in 1965), which are:

- freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition;
- freedom from discomfort;
- freedom from pain, injury, and disease;
- freedom to express normal behavior;
- freedom from fear and distress.

Also, Walmart asks suppliers to:

- report and take disciplinary and corrective action in cases of animal abuse;
- find and implement solutions to address animal welfare concerns;
- promote transparency through progress reports.

These three approaches are more outcome-based ways of managing welfare rather than dictating exact production practices to be followed. The alternative approach is to specify strict requirements for the production sector, such as taken by Aramark (below).

And, regarding the use of antibiotics, Walmart asks suppliers to:

- adopt and implement the Judicious Use Principles of Antimicrobial Use from the American Veterinary Medical Association;
- eliminate uses for growth promotion in animals of medically important antibiotics;
- report antibiotic management to Walmart and publicly report antibiotic use annually.

On April 30, Aramark, one of the largest food-service companies in the U. S., also announced new policy as follows:

- purchase only cage-free eggs by 2020;
- address welfare concerns of fast-growth production of chickens and turkeys and eliminate dumping and shackling in slaughter;
- eliminate pork from gestation-crate production systems by 2017, address pain relief from castration, eventually eliminate tail docking and use of ractopamine in hogs;
- address pain relief from dehorning and castration of cattle, eventually eliminate dehorning, eventually eliminate use of such products as bovine growth hormone, zilpaterol, and ractopamine in cattle;
- eliminate all veal from animals confined in crates by 2017;
- cease purchase of foie grass from ducks and geese.

(Walmart news.com, downloaded 5/22; <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/2015/05/22/the-five-freedoms-of-cattle/>; Aramark.com, downloaded 5/11)

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RANCH MANAGEMENT AND REPLACEMENT HEIFER CONSIDERATIONS

BUYING VS. RAISING REPLACEMENT HEIFERS

Should beef cattle producers raise re-placement heifers, or buy them? Many pieces of paper have been scribbled on by producers trying to find the right answer. The problem is that no one answer is right for all producers. Each producer operates under conditions unique to that situation. When deciding on the best strategy for replacing heifers, producers need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of raising or buying replacement females as well as consider other economic and general management issues specific to their operations.

Read more of this article at: <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-buying-vs-raising-replacement-heifers.pdf>

(Buying vs. Raising Replacement Heifers-Jason Cleere, Assistant Professor and Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, The Texas A&M University System)

Seven Management Techniques That Move Cow-Calf Producers Toward Profitability

- 1) Conduct breeding soundness examinations on all bulls every year.
- 2) Palpate cows and heifers and remove all non-producers
- 3) Maintain cows in moderate body condition at calving
- 4) Appreciate the hidden value of vaccinations
- 5) Deworm suckling calves
- 6) Use growth implants
- 7) Reduce cost by determining your production unit-cost

Read the rest of this article at: <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-seven-management-techniques.pdf>

(Seven Management Techniques That Move Cow-Calf Producers Toward Profitability-R. Daniel Posey, DVM, DABVP, Clinical Assistant Professor-Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Texas A&M University)



Managing External Parasites of Texas Livestock and Poultry

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a system approach that combines a variety of livestock production practices using both biological and chemical control methods. External and internal arthropod parasites of livestock and poultry are a constant menace. These pests lower the quality of animal products (hides, hair, & wool) by physical feeding damage;



reduce meat, milk, and egg production by sucking blood from animals; transmit diseases; and cause energy loss. Read the rest of this article at: <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-managing-external-parasites.pdf>

(Managing External Parasites of Texas Livestock and Poultry-Clifford E. Hoelscher, Carl D. Patrick, & James V. Robinson, Extension Entomologists-The Texas A&M University System)

Reproductive Performance in Replacement Heifers Has Long-Term Consequences on the Cow Herd

Everyone wants good cows! These are females that wean a calf annually throughout their lifetime. A cow's ability to do this depends heavily on her performance as a heifer. Thus, good heifers, make for good cows. There is no question that selecting the right heifers, rearing them properly, and getting them bred early in their first breeding season has long-term positive impacts on herd production and profitability. Read the rest of this article at: <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-reproductive-performance.pdf>



(Reproductive Performance in Replacement Heifers Has Long-Term Consequences on the Cow Herd-L.R. Spott, Professor, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist and Research Scientist, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A&M University)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Ag Law & Climatology meeting at the Exhibition Center, Tuesday, August 4th, 9:30AM (lunch provided).
- Grass Grazing & Animal Management School begins Thursday, August 20th 3-7PM at the Exhibition Center

If you are interested in either one of these, call the office and sign-up. 806*323*9114

FACTS ABOUT CANADIAN, TEXAS (HEMPHILL COUNTY)

- As of 2014, Canadian's population is 2,783 people. Since 2000, it has had a population growth of 21.16 percent.
- Compared to the rest of the country, Canadian's cost of living is 17.00% Lower than the U.S. average.
- Canadian public schools spend \$26,616 per student. The average school expenditure in the U.S. is \$12,435. There are about 10.2 students per teacher in Canadian.

(Information found at <http://www.bestplaces.net/city/texas/canadian>)



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