

Drought Management Program – September 22

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TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

Parker County Forage News

With our current weather conditions and forecasts of possibly more of the same, a meeting has been scheduled to discuss options and strategies for livestock producers. As most of you know:

- Grazing is running short or non-existent,
- Hay is in short supply and expensive,
- Hay of all kinds is being shipped into our area so what should you look for,
- Supplements are available but what should you feed and how much,
- If you cull part of your

herd or sell out completely what are your income tax options and also,

- What does the future cattle market look like?

These are just some of the issues which will be discussed at a Parker County Drought Management Program, Thursday, September 22 starting at **6:30 p.m. at the National Guard Armory building in Weatherford.** A fee of \$10.00 per person can be paid at the door.

Dr. Ron Gill, Extension Livestock Specialist from College Station will discuss the above mentioned nutri-

tion issues and how to possibly better manage the cattle we have remaining this fall and winter. Dr. Stan Bevers, Extension Ag. Economist will discuss expenses, the market outlook, and producer tax strategies.

The program should prove to be quite beneficial for those of you with cattle and questions on what to do next.

The National Guard Armory is located at 716 Charles St. in Weatherford just south of Coutts St. and north of Shirley Hall Middle School. Charles St. can be accessed from South Bowie Dr. by way of Coutts St. or Longhorn Drive.

Drought and Vitamin A

By: Dr. Steve Hammack, Professor & Extension Beef Cattle Specialist Emeritus

One thing that comes into play during our persistent drought that is usually not a problem is Vitamin A deficiency. Cattle can store from two to four months supply of vitamin A in the liver on diets exceeding Vitamin A requirements, basically a little something green. That supply can be exhausted in a drought. How do you supply supplemental vitamin A? My colleague Dr. Ted McCollum, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist at the Texas AgriLife Center in Amarillo, recently

summarized supplementation of vitamin A:

- Most fortified range/breeder cubes fed a 1-1 1/2 lb/day for dry cows or 1 1/2—2 lb/day for lactating cows should provide adequate levels of vitamin A;
- Mineral supplements, if fortified with 200,000 units vitamin A/lb, would provide adequate levels when consumed at rates of 2-4 oz/day;
- Stability of vitamin A in supplements can be affected by composition of

the supplement, source of vitamin A, and length and conditions of storage;

- Injectable vitamin A can be used to provide from about 1-3 months reserve, depending on the cow's stage of production and the concentration and dose of the product.

Supplementation of vitamin A is relatively inexpensive and should be an integral part of drought management.

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Changes Announced for Adult Cattle Being Sold at Texas Markets

Austin—Effective August 1, 2011 the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) no longer requires brucellosis testing of adult cattle for change of ownership. TAHC has also ceased to pay the \$2 per head supplement to markets for the testing. Approximately half of the markets have indicated however, that they intend to continue testing all or some of the adult cattle sold through their markets. For markets wishing to test, they will still be able to receive all the supplies currently being provided at no charge, including the brucellosis card test kits. TAHC inspectors will also be able to run the supplemental testing as usual if a card positive animal is disclosed. TAHC officials strongly encourage voluntary testing of Texas cattle to remain vigilant in keeping Texas Brucellosis free.

It is imperative to remember that Brucellosis was found in two cattle herds in Texas earlier this year. Approximately 25 card positive (usually false positive) animals per month are detected throughout Texas markets. The secondary test run by TAHC in-

spectors at markets will usually clear those consignments for sale unrestricted, and only require the card positive to be held up.

“Even though TAHC is undergoing drastic budget reductions, the agency will continue to provide a market inspector wherever cattle are sold to support all of the cattle programs underway,” Dr. Dee Ellis, State Veterinarian, said.

A separate issue regarding the identification of cattle is also under discussion. Historically all Texas cattle leaving a market have had a USDA eartag in place because they were brucellosis tested there. The official identification of cattle (usually with a metal eartag) is not completely linked to brucellosis testing however. TAHC and USDA rules require official identification on all cattle tested, but they also require the market to record existing official ID’s on any adult cattle presented for sale, all dairy cattle prior to movement, any bulls involved with the Trichomoniasis program (including virgins) and Mexican origin event cattle.

It is anticipated that the TAHC will consider a rule proposal in September that may require permanent official identification of adult cattle sold at Texas markets. It is further anticipated that USDA will release in the near future a rule for comment that will eventually require cattle moving interstate to have permanent official identification.

“I am asking all markets for voluntary compliance to continue ear tagging adult cattle (or reading existing tags) sold through their markets for the next few months, while the rule making process is in progress,” Dr. Ellis stated. Local TAHC regional offices and inspectors will work with individual markets on possible exceptions for extremely weak or old cattle presented for sale in the meantime.

Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.

Noble Foundation Offers New Resource for Drought Stricken Farmers

The Noble Foundation recently launched a new online resource to assist farmers and ranchers, who are enduring one of the worst droughts since the Dust Bowl.

Noble Foundation agricultural consultants have developed www.noble.org/drought, a Web page that will serve as a central repository for information to assist agricultural producers in managing their properties and resources throughout this difficult situation.

“This is a once-in-a-generation drought,” said Billy Cook, senior vice president and director of the Agricultural Division. “We haven’t seen this type of heat and lack of precipitation since the record-setting drought of the mid-1950s or even the Dust Bowl.

Lloyd Noble established the Noble Foundation to assist producers after he witnessed the devastating effects of the Dust Bowl. Decades later, we’re equipped with the knowledge and experience to help farmers and ranchers to successfully endure this drought.”

Information for the special Web page was developed by the Noble Foundation’s agricultural consultants, who have been inundated with hundreds of calls concerning drought management since the beginning of July. Additional information was gathered from university researchers and agricultural experts from around the country. The Web page will be updated as long as the drought persists.

The Web page will provide countless aspects of drought management from safeguarding pastures and

destocking to tax implications and wildlife concerns. “This is a comprehensive resource that should answer many of the questions that come with struggling through this drought,” said Hugh Aljoe, consultation program manager for the Noble Foundation. “This is reliable information that will help farmers and ranchers meet their specific challenges. Of course, the Noble Foundation consultants are always here to help in person, too.”

Websites for Hay:

www.agr.state.tx.us

(click Hay Hotline in blue box)

www.hayexchange.com/tx.php

Texas Drought Officially the Worst Ever

Taken From: Texas A&M News & Information Services

College Station— Preliminary reports from the National Climatic Data Center indicate that July 2011 was the warmest month ever recorded statewide for Texas, with data going back to 1895, according to John Nielsen-Gammon, the Texas State Climatologist and professor of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M University. The average temperature of 87.2 degrees broke the previous record of 86.5 degrees set in 1998. The June average temperature of 85.2 was a record for that month and now ranks fifth warmest overall.

Rainfall totals were also unusually light across the state. The July monthly total of 0.72 inches ranks third driest, surpassed by the 0.69 inches recorded in both 1980 and 2000. This is

the fifth consecutive month in which precipitation totals were among the 10 driest for that month, says the Texas A&M professor.

Among the other rainfall records set this month: least year-to-date precipitation (6.53 inches; historical average 16.03 inches; previous record 9.36 inches in 1917); driest consecutive 8, 9, and 10 months on record (7.25 inches, 8.35 inches, and 9.17 inches respectively); and driest 12 months ending in July (15.16 inches, previous record 16.46 inches in 1925).

“These statistics rank the current drought as the most severe one-year drought ever for Texas,” Nielsen-Gammon explains. “Never before has so little rain been recorded prior to and during the primary growing season for crops,

plants and warm-season grasses.

Nielson-Gammon notes that the most severe Texas drought overall is still the 1950-1957 drought. During the most intense year of that drought—1956—Texas set its all-time record for lowest 12-month precipitation, 13.69 inches ending in September.

“But in 1956, much of the rain fell in the spring when crops were being established,” he says. “The current 12-month total (from 2010 to 2011) is dominated by rain that fell early last fall, and the ground had already dried out in many parts of the state by planting time.”

“The outlook is not entirely grim,” he reports. “September can bring increased chances of widespread rain from tropical disturbances, as well as the occasional cold front.”

La Nina's Influence on Weather

Taken From: AgriLife TODAY news story

College Station— Recent predictions by the national Weather Service of a 50 percent chance there will be another La Nina in the southern Pacific Ocean this fall can be taken two ways—with optimism or pessimism, said Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon, Texas A&M University professor and Texas state climatologist.

Some may view the prediction with a sense of gloom, but before they get too pessimistic, they should remember the Weather Service is saying there's “only” a 50 percent chance, Nielsen-Gammon said.

The contribution of the very strong La Nina pattern of mid-2010 to the worst drought in Texas history, continues to be felt throughout the state, according to Texas AgriLife Extension Service personnel reports.

“To look on the optimistic side, there is an equal 50-percent chance of having no La Nina at this time,” he said. “And even if there is a moderate La Nina, it doesn't necessarily mean we will definitely have a dry winter again, it just means it will be more likely.”

It's also important to remember that the large computer models used by the Weather Service are predicting “a weak to moderate” La Nina, Nielsen-Gammon said. “Not nearly as strong as the forecasts were saying at this time last year.”

In comparison, the La Nina that developed in mid 2007 and lasted into 2009, was a moderate one, and though it was associated with a dry summer, it was not nearly so devastating as the current weather pattern, he said.

If you view the cup as half-empty, and assume that we will have another La Nina starting this fall, it still shouldn't herald as a severely dry year as what we're currently experiencing, he said.

But, Nielsen-Gammon warned, better than worst doesn't guarantee the hardship the agricultural sector is experiencing will just go away. Abnormal La Nina or not this fall, a second year of even moderate drought would leave many water supplies in even worse shape.

“We already have had an ex-

tremely dry year, so we should see more precipitation next year, but there is still a very good chance it won't be good enough to take us out of the drought, and we will still be having problems with dry conditions even into next summer,” he said.

More information on the current Texas drought and wildfire alerts can be found on the AgriLife Extension Agricultural Drought Task Force website at:

<http://agrilife.tamu.edu/drought/>

You know a drought has gone on too long when:

- The dry spell of the '50s seems like a pleasant memory
- You long for the winter you broke ice for your cows
- Mesquites packed their bags and headed for Minnesota
- You have to pick ticks off the fish before you scale them
- Ranchers are selling beef jerky on the hoof

Changes to Texas Cattle Trichomoniasis Regulations

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) recently adopted changes to its cattle Trichomoniasis (Trich) rules. Trich is a venereal disease of cattle caused by protozoa that can cause abortions and infertility, subsequently causing economic losses for the producer.

Interested producers, veterinarians and stakeholders provided suggestions to the TAHC over the previous year to help improve the Trich program. A TAHC Trich working group met in May to review the submitted suggestions and provided recommendations for the TAHC to consider. The working group suggestions that were accepted and recently passed by the TAHC went into effect on August 14.

The following is an overview of rule changes for the Texas cattle Trichomoniasis program.

1. Texas will no longer accept “virgin” bulls for entry from other states. All breeding bulls 12 months of age and older must have a negative Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Trich test prior to entry.

2. Texas will no longer accept a negative culture test(s) for entry of breeding bulls into the state. Only PCR tests will be accepted.

3. Untested *out-of-state* bulls are now allowed entry into Texas if consigned directly to Trich certified feedyard facilities, and accompanied by a permit issued by an accredited veterinarian from the state of origin.

4. A “Control Herd Plan” option has been created that allows large cattle operations up to three years to eradicate Trich from their herd. The enrolled herds are allowed to test once per year (preferably prior to breeding season) instead of two or more times as normally required, but in exchange they must consult with a veterinarian and enter into a plan designed to remove the disease from the herd. In the interim, all bulls leaving the herd must be sold for slaughter or feeding for slaughter only until their quarantine is released.

5. The TAHC will now allow an approved laboratory to “pool” individually submitted samples (up to 5) for PCR testing, to count as one of the two

tests normally required to release a herd from quarantine. Pooled samples will still not be allowed for change of ownership testing however. This change was designed as a cost saving measure for producers, and must be approved in advance by TAHC regional management in consultation with the owner or veterinarian.

Questions about the new regulations may be directed to TAHC staff:

Region 3 (Fort Worth, TX)

Phone: 817-244-2597

Region Director: Dr. Max Dow

Supervising Inspector: Bobby Crozier

For more information about Trich visit:

http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/animal_health/trich/trich.html

New rangeland plants database

can now be accessed at:

rangeplants.org



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Improving Texas.*

We're on the Web!
<http://parker-tx.tamu.edu>

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service educates Texans in the areas of agriculture, environmental stewardship, youth and adult life skills, human capital and leadership, and community economic development. Extension offers the knowledge resources of the land-grant university system to educate Texans for self-improvement, individual action and community problem solving. The AgriLife Extension Service is a statewide educational agency and a member of the Texas A&M University System linked in a unique partnership with the nationwide Cooperative Extension System and Texas County Commissioners Courts.

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