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EAH e-Newsletter
for Livestock Agents

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Beef Cattle Budget Access

by: Dale Miller

The link to access the Beef Cattle Budgets from The Agricultural and Resource Economics Department website has changed. The beef budgets can be accessed through the departmental web page with the following steps:

1. Go to the ARE-NCSU web page at http://www.ag-econ.ncsu.edu/
2. Click on "Extension" http://www.ag-econ.ncsu.edu/extension.htm
3. Click on "Publications/Presentations/Online Materials" (under the picture).

You will see a list of items under the heading Agribusiness Management. There is a subheading for Budgets, and a subsubheading for Dairy/Beef.

4. Click on "Beef Budgets"

This will pull up a page listing the

ATTENTION AGENTS:

by: Dale Miller

For agents who have producers who may want information on the new Organic Labeling regulations.

http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/

Livestock Agents

by: Roger McCraw

You may wish to file the following "Year Letter" designations. Most breedassociations now require calves that are to be registered to have a tattoo that includes a letter to designate the year of birth. Year letter designations are:

NOTE: Letters I, O, Q, and V are not used.

1995 = E
1996 = F
1997 = G
1998 = H
1999 = J
2000 = K
2001 = L
2002 = M
2003 = N
2004 = P
2005 = R

Magazines On-Line

by Roger L. McCraw

Listed below are URL's for several farm magazines that may be of interest to you. You may be able to get the information you need from the electronic version and not have to subscribe for hard copies.

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BEEF
http://www.homefarm.com/

■

HAY AND FORAGE GROWER
http://www.homefarm.com/hfg/default.htm

■

SOUTHEAST FARM PRESS
http://www.homefarm.com/sefp/default.htm

■

BEEF TODAY and FARM JOURNAL
http://www.agweb.com/

■

DROVERS JOURNAL
http://www.drovers.com/

■

PROGRESSIVE FARMER
http://www.progressivefarmer.com/

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CONTROLLING CATTLE LICE

by: Beecher C. Allison

Millions of dollars in revenue are lost by the cattle industry each year due to cattle lice. These monetary losses occur through a loss of blood caused by the lice, resulting in anemia, increased susceptibility to disease, poor feed conversion, reduced milk production and reduced reproductive performance.

This results in reduced weight gains and increased cost of gain on stocker cattle and lighter weaning weights and lower percent calf crop weaned in the cow/calf operation.

Lice also cause skin irritation resulting in cattle rubbing on fences, feed bunks, etc., and causing damage to these facilities.

There are four species of lice that infect cattle in this area with which we must concern ourselves. Three of these species, commonly called the long-nosed louse, the short-nosed louse and the little blue louse, are blood-sucking lice that pierce the skin and feed on the blood of the host animal. A fourth species, commonly known as the biting louse or red louse, feeds on scales of skin of the host animal, resulting in skin irritation.

Cattle lice are a seasonal pest with the population decreasing during the warm months when cattle hair begins to thin and become oily. As few as five percent of a herd may have lice during the summer months.

In the fall when temperatures begin to cool, cattle hair begins to thicken, their skin becomes dry, and the lice population begins to increase. During the winter months cattle are usually in closer contact with one another, increasing the chance for lice to spread from an infested animal to another animal.

Cattle are the only host of cattle lice. The cattle louse spends its entire life on the host animal and can only survive a few days if separated from the host animal. The adult lice mate on the host animal and the female then attaches eggs, or nits, to the animal's hair near the skin. In about two weeks these eggs hatch into nymphs which feed in exactly the same manner as adults. About two weeks after hatching, the young female louse begins laying eggs. Lice can pass from egg to adult in three to four weeks. Eggs that fall off the host animal will not hatch unless the weather is hot and then the young must find a host within two to three days or they will die.

The common signs of lice infestation of cattle do not become readily apparent until the lice population has increased substantially already causing extensive and monetary loss. These common signs are cattle becoming unthrifty and rubbing against objects to relieve the itching, which sometimes results in patches of hair being rubbed off. Lice themselves do not cause much hide damage, but irritate the skin to the point that the animal scratching against objects lowers the quality of the hide. Lice can be detected upon close examination and are most often found around the head, neck, shoulder and tail head areas.

The biology of lice make them easy to control since they cannot fly, cannot survive off the host animal for more than a few days and their entire life cycle is found on the host animal. To achieve this control, however, treatment should begin in the fall before a massive lice infestation occurs. If you treat your cattle for grubs in September or October with a systemic insecticide, this is also the first step in lice control as these grubicides are also effective in lice control.

If you live in an area where cattle grubs are a problem and you did not treat

for grubs in the fall, the systemic insecticides for grub control cannot be used for lice control during the winter because of the host-parasite reactions that may occur from killing the grub at this stage in its life cycle. In this case a product should be used that is effective on lice but not grubs. There are several approved insecticides on the market for use in treating cattle for the control of lice in the form of pour-ons, spot-ons, sprays and dusts. When treating cattle for lice, every animal in the herd should be treated, as one untreated animal may reinfect the whole herd.

All new additions to the herd should be isolated and treated for lice several days before being introduced into the herd. One treatment with most approved systemic insecticides will usually kill all lice that are past the egg stage and are feeding; however, a second treatment will be necessary two to three weeks later to kill the newly hatched lice that were in the egg stage or not feeding at the time of the first treatment.

If only one treatment was made in the fall then the need for a mid-winter treatment is very likely because some lice survive the one treatment in the fall to reproduce and cause a winter build-up. Even using the best control measures possible, a few lice may survive. During the winter months the few lice that survive can reproduce rapidly, resulting in a lice infestation that requires treatment during the winter.

Beef producers should always be on the watch for signs of lice infestations on their cattle and treat them when necessary. The economic losses caused by cattle lice are much greater than the nominal cost of lice control.

Past EAH e-Newsletters

Farms and Ranches Decline in 2000

by: Roger L McCraw

Below are some interesting excerpts from a recent USDA report on the number and sizes of farms in the US. This material was adapted from a report entitled "Farms and Land in Farms - February 2001" which was released February 23, 2001, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The full report, along with other USDA statistical reports, is available on the web at:

http://www.usda.gov/nass/

The number of farms and ranches in the United States in 2000 is estimated at 2.17 million, down 0.9 percent from 1999. The decline in farms and ranches occurred primarily in agricultural operations with less than $10,000 in sales. This is the largest decline in farms and ranches since 1991 when just over 29,000 operations were lost. Total land in farms, at 943.0 million acres, declined 0.5 percent or 4.4 million acres from last year. The average size of farm increased 2 acres from 432 acres in 1999 to 434 acres in 2000.

The U.S. number of agricultural operations in the economic sales class $1,000-$9,999 declined 1.8 percent to 1,173,650 in 2000. Farms and ranches with sales in the $10,000-$99,999 economic class increased slightly from 1999 to 649,350 operations while the number of farms and ranches with sales over $100,000 rose 0.1% to 349,080. The impact of adverse weather, lower commodity prices, and competition for land contributed to the overall reduction and consolidation of farms and ranches during 2000.

The North Central Region's loss of farms was the largest with a decline of 9,200 operations, 1.1% less than was estimated in 1999. The South Region lost 7,000 farms and ranches, 0.8% fewer than the previous year. The number of farms and ranches declined 2,690 or 0.9% in the West Region and 1,100 or 0.8% in the Northeast Region.

The number of farms and ranches during 2000 declined in 27 States, remained unchanged in 19 States, and increased in 4 States. States losing 1,000 farms during the year were Alabama, California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin. Of the four States showing increases in the number of farms and ranches, only Oklahoma increased significantly, adding 1,000 operations.

Texas, although losing 500,000 acres of farm and ranch land in 2000, continues to lead the Nation with 130 million acres in farms and ranches. Other States showing significant decreases in agricultural acreage were Arizona (800,000), New Mexico (700,000 acres), Mississippi (300,000 acres), and Montana (300,000 acres). Overall, farm and ranch acreage declined in 20 States, remained unchanged in 29 States, and increased in 1 State.

Below you will find three of the many tables that you will find at the above mentioned url:

Number of Farms, Land in Farms and Average Size Farm

Number of Farms, by State and United States, 1998-2000

Land in Farms, by State and United States, 1998-2000

Outbreak of Foot-and-mouth disease in England

by: Roger L. McCraw

An outbreak of highly contagious foot-and-mouth disease has spread across England. This is the first appearance of foot-and-mouth in Britain since 1967. It is dealing a tough blow to the British meat industry that had just begun to recover from the crippling effects of "mad cow" disease (or BSE).

The development of blisters in the mouths and feet of cloven-hoofed animals characterizes foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). It is a virus-caused disease that can be spread by the wind (up to 30 miles), on vehicle wheels and on human clothing. FMD virus may be found in large quantities in milk from infected animals. Pasteurization, according to The Merck Veterinary Manual, does not destroy the virus. Foot-and-mouth affects pigs, cows, sheep, goats, deer and elk among other animals. Foot-and-mouth is harmless to humans. The Merck Veterinary Manual indicates that there are cases of FMD in humans on record, but it indicates that FMD is not a public health problem.

There is no known cure for FMD. Treatment may alleviate the symptoms of the disease, but it does not prevent the spread of infection.

It is believed that the current outbreak originated in Britain from contaminated meat imported from Asia and later fed to pigs. It was first identified last week among 28 pigs at an abattoir in Essex in the southeast of England.

Officials immediately imposed a European ban on exports of British animals, fresh meat and milk. The government has also banned all transport of livestock within Britain in an attempt to stop a further spread of the disease.

To date about 500 cattle, 2000 pigs and 250 sheep suspected of having or being at risk of infection with foot-and-mouth have been slaughtered. Carcasses of the dead animals are being incinerated in pits near the farms where they had been kept. The 1967 outbreak developed into a major crisis and led to the slaughter of nearly half a million animals.

FMD is endemic in Asia, Africa, parts of Europe, and most of South America. North and Central America, the Caribbean, Australia, and New Zealand are free of FMD. There have been no cases of FMD in the US since 1929.

Area Beef Conferences Proposed for 2001-2002

by: Matt Poore

As all agents are aware, lack of travel funds for traditional extension activities has reached a crisis level. We need to continue delivering programs, but need to do it while further reducing the funds we expend. All the campus beef specialists enjoy traveling individually to the counties to speak at cattlemen's association meetings, but our ability to do that in the future is going to be very limited. We need to consider ways to still get out to deliver information, but to do it in a more efficient way.

In the past, we have had area beef conferences around the state which allowed us to provide a number of high quality presentations to a large audience. For various reasons most of the area conferences were discontinued, but it is clear to us that reviving them is one way we could more efficiently deliver programs. The concept would be to determine the areas where conferences would be held, get agents to appoint a chair, have the chairs communicate with specialists to develop a list of speakers/topics, and then have specialists travel together to each conference to deliver their talks. The program at each site would be pretty much the same. Powerpoint presentations and handouts from these talks would be of high quality and would be provided to the agents for use in delivering local programs later in the meeting season.

We propose the following approach and time table. In spring (March-April) we will work with various agents to determine the locations and counties involved in the 2001-2002 conferences. At that time agents would need to organize themselves and designate a program chair. After that is done, specialists will communicate with the chairs (probably in June) to develop the schedule and a list of topics/speakers. We would envision having the conferences during November-January. If the schedule is completed by September, conference dates can be placed on the NCCA Calendar.

For your information, regular area beef conferences used to be held in Shelby, Albemarle, Greensboro, Statesville, Rocky Mount, Wilkesboro, Clinton, Oxford and Boone. Not all of those were held every year, and we don't just need to do it the way we used to, but that will give new agents an idea of what was done in the past. Excellent area conferences are put on each year in the far west and the northeast by area specialists Beecher Allison and Richard Lichtenwalner, and those will continue under their direction as they have in the past.

We realize that this takes some of the individuality out of the area conferences that we used to have, but it also would be an efficient way of delivering information. Let us know what you think about the concept by e-mailing Matt_Poore@ncsu.edu and you will hear more about this in the near future.