



# Blaine County Agricultural News

Blaine County OSU Extension Service, 212 N. Weigle, Watonga, OK 73772 June-July 2007  
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## OSU Offers Free Wheat Soil Testing

The OSU Extension Service is offering a free soil testing program for wheat producers. Producers will be able to submit up to 5 surface and subsurface samples and receive the soil tests results free of charge (\$60 value). Rules for the 2007 Free Soil Test Program:

1. Free soil testing will be offered to wheat producers from June 15 to August 1, 2007 by Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Services.
2. Surface (0-6") and subsurface (6-24") soil samples will be collected by farmers from fields intended for wheat production this fall.
3. Each producer is limited to 5 pairs (surface plus subsurface) of samples.
4. Samples have to be packaged by County Extension offices and sent to the Soil, Water and Forage Analytical Laboratory in Stillwater for analysis. Samples sent by individuals will not qualify for this promotion.
5. Wheat producers must attend the soil testing educational meeting in August and complete a survey to receive their soil test reports.
6. Producers who submit samples and do not attend the educational meeting in August will be billed \$12 per sample.

For more information contact the Blaine County OSU Extension Office at 580-623-5195.

## Using "Oklahoma Gold" or "Oklahoma Super Gold" for Replacement Heifers in Mid to Late Summer

Fall born replacement heifers have been (or soon will be) weaned and will be at a very critical growing period. It is important that they reach the target weight of 65% of their mature weight by the start of the breeding season. Currently summer pastures are green, growing, and adequate in protein content. However, warm season pastures such as native grass or bermudagrass can be expected to be declining in forage quality in the hot, dry days of July, August, and September. Also these grasses will be reaching plant maturity which accelerates the decline in protein content.

Therefore, the young heifers must receive supplemental protein to continue to grow at the necessary pace of 1.3 to 1.5 pounds per head per day going into their first breeding season. An economical solution would be to give these heifers 1.5 to 2 pounds per head per day of the protein supplement called Oklahoma Gold. This is an OSU-developed protein supplement scheme that consists of a high protein (38% - 45%) pellet that contains the label-recommended dosage of one of the ionophores. Ionophores are feed additives (monensin or lasalocid) that improve feed utilization, inhibit coccidiosis, and enhance the onset of puberty in growing heifers. Research from Texas A&M in the 1970's indicated that heifers receiving an ionophore reached puberty about 2 weeks earlier than counterparts that did not receive an ionophore. Inclusion of the ionophore in the growing program should cause a few more heifers to be cycling early in the breeding season. Light-weight or young, weaned heifers that need an added boost while still on late summer pasture may benefit more from the Oklahoma Super Gold supplementation program. "Super Gold" consists of feeding 3 pounds per head per day of a 25% crude protein pellet. These usually contain wheat midds as a base part of the ration. Once again, an ionophore is included at the proper dosage and will be beneficial to these young growing heifers. Plan ahead for late summer supplementation of fall-born replacement heifers.

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or status as a veteran, and is an equal opportunity employer.

## Cattle Market Factors to Watch This Summer

By Derrell S. Peel

The recent fed cattle price drop from the mid \$90s to the low \$90s occurred sooner than expected and raises questions about whether markets are merely weakening seasonally or as a result of something more fundamental. Feeder cattle markets remain generally strong and, while no clear threats can be identified at this time, there is a lengthy list of factors that could inject volatility into cattle markets in the coming weeks and months.

The recent weakness in fed cattle prices is tied to a corresponding slump in boxed beef prices, the latest in a series of rollercoaster of increases and decreases in wholesale beef prices this year. The current drop in boxed beef price raises questions about **beef demand** going into the summer. Memorial Day holiday beef sales appear to have been rather lackluster. Sluggish macroeconomic indicators, high gas prices and weaker pork exports are likely contributing to beef demand pressure. Anticipated increases in broiler production in the second half of the year will add additional pressure to meat supplies.

Fundamental to the general strength in cattle prices are cyclically low cattle inventories, extended this year by drought disrupted herd expansion in 2006. The question of the extent to which **herd expansion** resumes this year will have implications beyond this year but also immediately as renewed heifer retention will further limit feeder cattle supplies in 2007. Forage conditions are significantly improved in the Southern and Northern Plains this year but the **drought** has emerged as a major factor in the Southeast. While cow herd expansion has clearly resumed in the center part of the country, offsetting liquidation in the Southeast may temper herd expansion once again. Overall levels of beef production depend on cattle supplies and also on **carcass weights**. Carcass weights have been lower since severe winter weather reduced feedlot production in January and February and carcass weights are expected to remain below year ago levels due to the continuing impacts of high feed prices.

Cattle and other livestock industries continue to keep a watchful eye on feed markets. Although corn crop conditions are quite good at this time, feed prices are expected to continue impacting

cattle production. The next month or six weeks will be critical in determining the level of **corn production** this year. There is considerable uncertainty about growth in ethanol demand for corn and continued adjustments in crop production in coming years.


**International trade** in beef remains a source of both promise and frustration. Access to the South Korean market continues to develop in fits and starts. Recent errors in shipments to Korea highlight the challenges of implementing detailed trade agreements for both governments and trading partners in both countries. Japan has so far resisted efforts to further liberalize beef trade requirements with the U.S. Plans are underway to address restrictions with Canada with respect to animals and beef from animals over 30 months of age. These changes are not expected to have major market impacts but uncertainty remains over the details of the new rules, the timing of rule changes and legal challenges that may result.

Lastly there are the continuing discussions for the new **farm bill**. Crop farming and energy related discussions may have significant implications for animal agriculture. Additionally, there are numerous proposals that will have direct impacts on animal agriculture including mandatory country of origin labeling, animal ID, and restrictions on cattle ownership and marketing arrangements. Both the timing and details of farm bill legislation are uncertain at this time.

This newsletter is one way of communicating educational information to the citizens of Blaine County in the area of Agriculture and Rural Development. For free subscriptions, contact the Blaine County Cooperative Extension Service at 580-623-5195.

The information given is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service is implied. This information was produced at a cost of 1 cent per page for a total of \$10.00.

Editor,

  
Alvin Woodruff  
Extension Educator-Ag/4-H & CED  
Blaine County

## Look Back at the Calving Season and Start to Make Improvements Now

By Glenn Selk

Only 1 to 2 months ago the spring calving cows were calving, the temperature was cold and the calving pastures were muddy. Experience would say that you do not want to ask cow calf operators how calving is then, because the response would be less than objective, reflecting bone-chilling cold and not enough sleep.

If you wait too long, perhaps until this fall, time will have mellowed most of the events and one soon has difficulty matching a calving season with particular problems. Now is perhaps the best time to make a few notes on what to change for next year.

The first step is to list the dead calves. Hopefully, your cattle are in a record system that will provide that information. If not, grab a piece of paper and pencil and list the calves. Your calving notebook should have the dead calves checked off and a brief notation on what happened to each. Until all the calves are listed, the shock of lost opportunities has not had its full impact.

Can you identify a pattern of problems? Was most of the death loss right at delivery and involved two-year old heifers? This could indicate that sire selection needs to be done more carefully, with attention being paid to low birth weight EPD sires for heifers. Perhaps the heifers were underdeveloped. This could contribute to more calving difficulty than necessary. Do you provide assistance to heifers after they have been in stage II of labor for one hour?

Was the death loss more prevalent after the calves had reached 5 days to 2 weeks of age? This of course often means that calf diarrhea (or scours) is a major concern. Calf scours will be more likely to occur to calves from first calf heifers. Calves that receive inadequate amounts of colostrum within the first 6 hours of life are 5 to 6 times more likely to die from calf scours. Calves that are born to thin heifers are weakened at birth and receive less colostrum which compounds their likelihood of scours. Often, these same calves were born via a difficult delivery and adds to the chances of getting sick and dying. All of this means that we need to re-assess the bred heifer growing program to assure that the heifers were in a body condition score of 6 (moderate flesh) at calving time.

Do you use the same trap or pasture each year for calving? There may be a buildup of bacteria or viruses that contribute to calf diarrhea in that pasture. This particular calving pasture may need a rest for the upcoming calving season. Plus it is always a good idea to get new calves and their mothers out of the calving pasture as soon as they can be moved comfortably to a new pasture to get them away from other potential calf scour organisms. An excellent discussion of a method

used to reduce calf diarrhea is available from the University of Nebraska website. Go to this link: [http://vbms.unl.edu/extension/ext\\_beef.shtml](http://vbms.unl.edu/extension/ext_beef.shtml) online and learn more about the Nebraska Sandhill method of reducing calf scours.

Thanks to Dr. Kris Ringwall of North Dakota State University for this excellent suggestion to study the calf records now and start to make adjustments.

## Wheatland Stocker Conference

August 22, 2007

8:30 a.m. – Enid, OK

Cherokee Strip Conference Center

### - Topics -

- ❖ Everything You Wanted to Know about Ethanol Co-Products – Dr. David Lalman & Dr. Chris Richards
- ❖ Myriad of Factors Affecting the Beef Markets - Dr. Derrell Peel
- ❖ Assessing Wheat Pasture Lease Agreements – A. L. Hutson
- ❖ What I Have Learned in the Stocker Business
- ❖ Preventive Health Programs in Stocker Cattle - Dr. Brad White
- ❖ The Big Picture of Treating Respiratory Disease in Stocker Cattle – Dr. Mike Apley

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**Pre-Registration - Due: August 17, 2007**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Complimentary Lunches: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact the Blaine County Extension Office at 580-623-5195 or Enid Extension Office at 580-237-7677 to pre-register!

## Summer Grassy Weeds in Bermudagrass

Summer grassy weeds are a serious problem for Oklahoma Bermudagrass Producers. Seed heads of foxtail, dallisgrass, and field sandbur are easily found in Bermudagrass hay and decrease the hay's value. Johnsongrass is another concern in Bermudagrass hay meadows and grazed pastures since it will accumulate prussic acid and thus poison livestock that consume it. Management of these summer weedy grasses is quite difficult and should consist of a multiple-practice strategy that includes proper fertility, grazing management or timely haying and finally an effective weed control program. Remember that with the exception of Johnsongrass, these summer grassy weeds are annuals and there only means of survival is to set seed the previous year.

Fertility and crop management are the most critical items for producers to focus on. Once these factors are appropriately addressed, a weed control program including herbicides and mechanical means of control could be considered. Herbicides alone will not solve the grassy weed problems. The first step in managing summer weedy grasses in Bermudagrass pastures or hay meadows is a proper fertilizer program. Many grassy weed infestations are a direct result of poor soil fertility program brought on by insufficient applications that resulted from high fertilizer prices in recent years. Granted, many grassy weed infestations are at levels that fertilizer alone will not solve the problem, but without proper fertility, the Bermudagrass crop will not repopulate these areas once the weeds are controlled.

Submit a soil sample to your County Extension Office to determine fertilizer and liming needs. In general, it takes 50 pounds of nitrogen to produce one ton of Bermudagrass forage. It is also important to check soil phosphorus and potassium levels since nitrogen use efficiency will be very low if phosphorus and potassium are deficient. Soil test index values of 65 for phosphorus and 250 for potassium are considered adequate for bermudagrass forage production. Bermudagrass is pretty acid tolerant, but if the soil pH level drops below 5.0, it may limit forage growth. Therefore, lime applications may need to be considered. In short, fertility, fertility, fertility! Crop management can consist of many factors, but an

important management practice that can prevent the invasions of summer grassy weeds is proper grazing or proper harvest timing. Overgrazing results in a less competitive Bermudagrass stand and provides an environment conducive for invasion of grassy weeds. Many summer annual grassy weeds primarily emerge in the spring or early summer. Removing too much forage the previous fall or harvesting too early in the spring results in an open canopy during the time these weeds emerge. This timing gives weedy grasses an early competitive advantage and allows them to become more robust.

A general rule of thumb for Bermudagrass grazing is to begin grazing when the forage height is 6 inches and remove livestock when the bermudagrass grazing height is 2 inches. Well fertilized Bermudagrass should regrow to that 6 inch level in about 2 to 4 weeks following removal. Additional recommendations for summer grassy weed problems can be obtained from your Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The Extension Office will also take your soil sample for analysis for your bermudagrass production levels.

Oklahoma Ag Technology Field Day  
August 9, 2007  
Grady County Fairgrounds and Events  
Center  
Chickasha, OK

Educational programs and demonstrations regarding precision agriculture technology will be scheduled throughout the day. The field day will feature the latest precision agriculture technologies and experts that have developed, evaluated, and used these technologies. Educational topics include Sensor Based Nitrogen Management, Strategies to Reduce Sprayer Drift, Economics of Sprayer Control Systems, Selecting a GPS Guidance System, and Using Technology for On-Farm Comparisons. Along with the educational programs, participants are encouraged to use the 'ride and drive' area to try out the latest GPS guidance systems. There will also be demonstrations of automatic boom section control and automatic boom height control for sprayers. You can miss this one of a kind field day. Lunch will be available on site.