

AGRICULTURE NEWS *January 2009*



Cooperative Extension Service

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Campbell County Farming Community,

Another year has begun and, believe it or not, I've been your Extension agent for agriculture for 19 years. Where has the time gone? As I have said in the past, I consider myself extremely fortunate to live and work in such a great community. Thanks to each of you for your continued support of "our" Extension Service agriculture programs. Special thanks to the County Ag Council, Cattle Association Board of Directors and Horse Network Directors who continue to provide tremendous leadership and support to Extension Service programs.

The 2008 growing season started out on a positive note with ample rainfall. Things were looking really good until early August at which time Mother Nature once again shut off the water supply and for the most part left us "high and dry" for the remainder of the year. 2008 brought with us record input costs especially in the areas of fertilizer, fuel and feed prices. These high input costs coupled with declining livestock prices have had a negative impact on farm profitability. More important than ever before, knowing your cost of production and managing input costs will be a necessity in making a profit from the farm in 2009.

As usual, the first newsletter of the New Year will focus on upcoming educational programs. Many of these educational programs will address specific issues that were identified during the fall ag issues planning meetings. Please take this opportunity to review the list of educa-

tional programs and mark your personal calendar with the date, time and location for programs that are of interest to you. Don't forget to take the comprehensive list of programs and attach it to a prominent place (usually the refrigerator) as a reminder of upcoming meetings. By attending these educational programs, hopefully you will become better informed and better prepared to make the needed changes and decisions that will make your farming operation "**much**" more productive and profitable in 2009. Additional programs, field days and tours will be developed throughout the year.

Please pay close attention to the meeting locations for all agriculture programs. Most but not all will be at the Campbell County Environmental Education Center off of Race Track Road.

If there are any additional issues that you would like the Extension office to address or if I can be of any assistance to you, just give me a call at 572-2600, 694-1878 (home) or 816- 9139 (cell). Thanks and best wishes to you and your family for a productive and profitable 2009.

Happy New Year!!!!!!

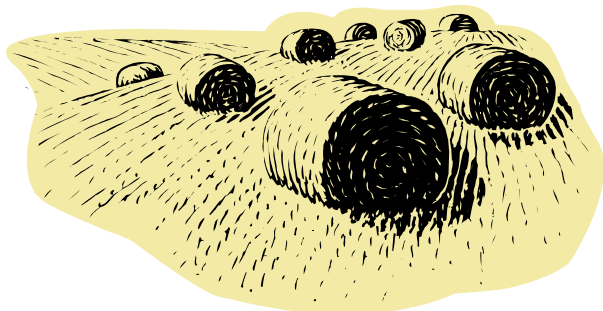
Don Sorrell
Campbell County Extension Agent for
Agriculture and Natural Resources

29th Kentucky Alfalfa Conference

The 29th annual Kentucky Alfalfa Conference will be held on February 19 from 8:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Cave City Convention Center in Cave City, Kentucky. Topics of discussion will include:

- Art and Science of Haymaking*
- RFV vs RFQ - Which is Better?*
- Alfalfa Seed Price and Seeding Rate: Impact on Production Cost*
- Alfalfa Hay for Horses: Myths vs. Reality*
- Alfalfa as a Grazing Crop*
- Keys to Success with Alfalfa Balage*
- Roundup Ready Alfalfa and Future GMO's in Alfalfa*
- Cost and Return of Alfalfa Hay Production*
- Blue Ribbon Alfalfa Panel*

Registration fee is \$15 which will cover lunch and proceedings.
 Call the Extension Office at 572-2600 for carpooling information.



2009 Kentucky Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting

The 2009 KCA Convention will take place January 8-9 at the Hyatt Convention Center in Lexington, KY. Some of the program highlights will include:



Thursday, January 8

- 11:00-9:00 Registration
- 1:00-4:00 LIVE—Stockmanship & Stewardship Demonstration
- 1:00 Trade Show Opens
- 7:00-10:00 Allied Industry Game Night

Friday, January 9

- 7:30-6:30 Registration
- 8:00 Trade Show Opens
- 8:30-11:30 Opening General Session
Market Overview for 2009—Dr. Nevil Speer, WKU Professor of Animal Science
- Beef Check Off Report
- 11:00-2:30 LIVE—Stockmanship & Stewardship Demonstration
- 1:00-2:00 Kentucky Beef Council Program
- 2:00-4:30 Forages at KCA
How I Use Forages
Selecting Clover Varieties
Weed Control Options for Pastures
Teff: What is it? Where does it fit in Kentucky?
Extended Grazing & Reducing Stored Feed Need
- 3:00 - 4:00 BQA Training Session
- 4:30 - 6:00 Internet Feeder Calf Sales
- 6:30 Evening Extravaganza

Registration fee is \$50 (includes trade show)
 For more information or to pre-register go to:
www.kycattle.org

Beef Cattle Timely Tips

FALL CALVING HERD

- ◆ Get ready for the fall breeding season. Cows with calves should be fed 25-30 pounds of good quality hay per day or its equivalent. Supplement with grain, if needed, and minimize hay waste. If you are limiting hay intake or feeding poor quality hay, be sure to supplement adequately.
- ◆ Have Breeding Soundness Evaluation (BSE) performed on bulls (even if you used them last spring).

SPRING CALVING HERD

- ◆ Divide the cow herd into groups for winter feeding --
 - * first-calf heifers, second-calvers and thin mature cows
 - * the remainder of the dry cows which are in good body condition
- ◆ Begin feeding the lowest quality forage to dry cows which are in good condition during early winter and save the best hay for calving time or for weaned calves.
- ◆ Body condition is important, plan an adequate winter program for cows to be at least body condition score 5 (carrying some flesh with ribs covered) before the calving and breeding season. This will help them to breed early in the spring. Thin cows should be fed to regain body condition prior to winter. Don't let cows lose weight/condition.

Well, for one thing, it comes on the heels of the ban on horse slaughter which was well-intended by folks who have visions of mustangs running wild out west. That's great but the vision of horses that now aren't being cared for isn't as good. What happens when you can't afford to feed animals and no market exists?

Concern for the well-being of animals is noble and universal. A well-orchestrated attempt to shut down farming isn't. So what should we, as cattle producers, do? I am reminded of what Dr. David Roselle, former president of the University of Kentucky, said when the basketball program was being investigated. The first reaction was to "circle the wagons" but he said "we will defend that which is defensible." Not a bad answer. We, ourselves, must come up with our own standards for animal care and production, and we must assure our well-fed friends that we care about animals, too. However, actual cases of cruelty or poor care must be eliminated from our production system, by us.

Beef cattle producers don't do caged-type production but I remember as a young 4-H'er when my sow had a nice litter of pigs (I needed the money for school) then laid down and mashed all of them. Boy, how I wished for a farrowing crate. I have watched sows give birth outside after making a nice "bed" only to be dismayed when they would turn around and eat the pigs. Another mortgage payment gone. But, people that have never been on a farm can't begin to understand that.

We can buy food from other countries, of course. Those countries may not have as many environmental restrictions, FDA guidelines or anything like a USDA inspection service. Food safety and wholesomeness must be assured. Who does that best? We do.

There is an old acronym that also applies – NIMBY (not in my backyard). Why don't we (as some have suggested) just depend on other countries for production agriculture? We could import food and fuel and export technology. We do need to be part of a global economy. I don't think that we should trust other countries to feed us. Talk about dependence. Food is the ultimate political football.

The Southeastern cattle industry is mainly a pastoral business with feeder calves as our product. This shouldn't be much of a problem for us but ... what would happen if we didn't have a market for our product?

So what do we in the cattle business need to do? In my opinion, we treat our animals humanely, assure the public that we do it better than anyone else and support our organizations that defend us. We need to be organized – they are.

During 2009, we should resolve to "police" and protect our industry. Otherwise, folks with a belly full of safe, wholesome food (maybe even tofu turkey) and no understanding of or appreciation for production agriculture will make laws that have a profound effect on our livelihood.

We're On Trial with a Jury of Our "Peers"?

Dr. Roy Burris, Beef Extension Specialist, University of Kentucky

The passage of Proposition 2 in California has served notice to animal agriculture that we are on trial ... just not with a jury of our peers. You see, agriculture is a distinct minority now and urban voters can enact laws which impact our lives with little understanding of agricultural production.

So what about Prop 2 which outlawed confining cages for egg-laying hens and restrictive pens for veal calves and pregnant sows? It wasn't about beef cattle and it was in California. The president of the Humane Society of the United States said that "all animals deserve humane treatment, including animals raised for food." So, why would that make us nervous?

MID-SOUTH STOCKER CONFERENCE

The 2009 Mid-South Stocker Conference is February 24 and 25, at Lake Barkley State Resort park in Cadiz, KY. The conference theme is "Stocker Solutions for Challenging Times." The conference offers practical information to aid stocker operators in planning and managing their operations to maximize profit.

The conference gets under way at 1 p.m. Feb. 24 with a tour of local stocker operations: Scott Jolly Farm, Fox Creek Cattle Company, Sorrell Farms (no relation), King Livestock Express and Tim Cato Farm. The tour will conclude with a reception at the convention center with a flat-iron steak meal and discussion on the impact of the beef check-off.



The following day's program includes a trade show and topics related to successful stocker operations by nationally recognized experts in the stocker industry. Topics will include: value of veterinarian services, survival and sustainability of stocker operations, marketing outlook, implications of lower phosphorus in fertilizers and minerals, COOL—implications for stocker operations, marketing outlook and a panel discussion.

Pre-registration for the conference is \$95 per person/\$150 per couple and must be made by Feb. 16, 2009. Registration the day of the conference will be \$145. Registration forms, hotel information and other materials are available at <http://www.midsouthstockerconference.org>. Make checks payable to Montgomery County Extension and mail to John Barteo 1030A Cumberland Heights Road, Clarksville, TN 37040-6901. Call me at 572-2600 to carpool.

The Kentucky Agricultural Economic Outlook for 2009

Kentucky's Agricultural Economy

Lee Meyer, Craig Infanger & Larry Jones

2008 Review: The year started with a strong base - Kentucky's farm cash receipts for 2007 were up 10% from a year earlier. Cash receipts are estimated to increase another 7% for 2008, to \$4.7 billion. This is a \$1.2 billion, or a 34% increase from 2001.

Estimated receipts from livestock, which include equine, cattle, dairy, poultry, hogs and small ruminants, probably declined during the year due to lower prices for horses and cattle, and smaller sales due to drought. The livestock total is estimated at \$2.7 billion, about 57% of the total. Crop receipts rose about 40% during 2008, adding over \$600 million to the 2007 level.

Crops made up about 43% of the total, compared to 37% five years ago.

High crop prices contributed to the high row crops cash receipts. Income forecasts by crop include the following: tobacco - up 13% to \$375 million, the highest level since 2004; corn - up 51% to \$701 million; soybeans, up 41%; and wheat up three times the 2007 level.

Net farm income shifted dramatically between livestock and crops. Inputs for all enterprises jumped - feed purchased for livestock was up about 20% and fertilizer costs rose by more than one-third. Of course fuel prices, up by 25%, added to the increasing costs of production. In spite of these higher costs, net farm income rose by more than 10%.

2009 Outlook: The mix of income between crops and livestock is not expected to change much. Overall cash receipts are predicted to decline slightly (2%) to \$4.6 billion. Livestock receipts are forecast to increase about 2% to \$2.7 billion on the strength of the poultry industry and modest improvements in the equine industry. Cattle and dairy are likely to continue to decline. Income from the crop side of the ledger is forecast at \$1.9 billion, down 6%.

Kentucky's net farm income for 2009 will probably continue to improve over the 2008 level. While cash income is predicted to decline slightly, there is considerable uncertainty about the costs of inputs for crop production. If they do drop, net farm income from crops could improve. Feed purchases for livestock should drop by 10 to 20%.

Cattle

Kenny Burdine & Lee Meyer

2008 Review: 2008 was another tough one for beef cattle producers as both production costs and dry weather squeezed profit levels. Feeder cattle prices flirted with 2007 levels in the spring and summer, but fell dramatically into fall and winter. Talk of financial crisis, recession and layoffs forced the cattle complex to reassess where consumer demand was likely to be. The result was much softer than previously expected fed cattle prices. Even cheaper corn wasn't able to offset this negative effect as feeder cattle prices followed the beef complex down.

While producers dealt with softer prices, they were also dealing with production costs higher than they had ever seen. Fertilizer likely had the largest effect as it impacts both pasture maintenance and hay production costs, but feed and fuel prices also remained high for most of the year. The net of all these factors was an incredibly challenging year that saw red ink flow for most beef cattle producers.

2009 Outlook: Despite the widespread pessimism and challenges that currently exist, most supply-side fundamentals are fairly positive for feeder cattle. Corn prices have dropped, cattle on feed numbers are below historical levels, and all indications are that we are decreasing the size of the U.S. cow herd. With so much uncertainty in the U.S. economy, demand will be the wildcard in 2009. It is our expectation that prices will rally from fall 2008 levels to spring of 2009. Price levels in 2009 will likely start the year below 2008 levels, but will be stronger in the fall on a year-over-year basis.

Agriculture Council Suggestions for 2009

The Campbell County Ag Council is a group of local farmers and Ag business individuals who met during the fall of 2008 to discuss agriculture programs and activities for 2009. The following is a summary of their suggestions. The Extension Service, Cattle Association and other ag interest groups will address many of these issues in 2009 using classroom programs, demonstrations, field days and tours.

Program Area: Livestock and Forage Production

- Beef Marketing**
- Develop niche markets
 - Feeder Calf marketing/CHP-45
 - Grass fed beef/freezer beef
- Beef Production:**
- Worming products/parasite control
 - Heifer development
 - Dealing with high feed costs
 - Alternative feeds
- Hay/Pasture**
- Intensive/rotational grazing
 - Hay and Pasture management
 - Forage demonstration on large plot area—lime, weed control, invasive species
 - Maximizing pastures for weight gain
- Fertility**
- Impact of high fertilizer costs
 - Value and utilization of livestock manure
 - Fertilizer efficiency and use/break even point

Program Area: Crop Production

- Alternative crops/enterprises
- Soil testing and fertility management for field crops
- Updates on bio-fuel and switchgrass

Program Area: Natural Resources Management

- Water systems for livestock
- Pasturing woodlands
- Identification and control, bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, multiflora rose
- Economic alternatives for improving land use/productivity
- Cost share—NRCS/EQIP/ Phase I
- Land clearing for pasture

Other Program Suggestions:

- Educate/promote agriculture to the general public/farmers
- Improve the economic viability of agriculture
- Agriculture sale and want to buy ads

Agriculture Tours:

- John Deere facility
- Local processing (slaughter) facility
- 2-day tour opportunity/July-August
- Community education of farms/working farms
- Agri-tourism business visits
- Amish visit - soil fertility
- Woodford Co. UK farm

Sell or Buy Ads

One of the suggestions from the fall Ag Council meetings was to start a "sell or buy" advertisement (ad) in the agriculture newsletter. With no real guidelines for such an ad I would like to suggest the following. If you have something agriculture related that you want to sell or buy then give me a call. I will need some basic information about what you are wishing to sell or buy and a telephone number to connect buyer and seller. I will include this information in the agriculture newsletter for two consecutive months. After this time I will remove two month old ads unless I hear that you have not made a sale or purchase. At your request I will continue your advertisement.



I have three requests:

For Sale:

1978 2440 John Deere Tractor, 60 horsepower, 5500 hours, 500 on engine overhaul, 245 self leveling quick attach loader with 6 foot bucket and bale spear. Vince 635-3387 or Greg 635-7755

For Sale:

Corn Silage at \$50/ton and 4'x5' round bales at \$35 per bale. Corn silage loaded and weighed at farm. Round bales stored inside or under tarp. Call Kendall at 620-4314.

Want to buy:

Small fishing boat. 694-1878 (This is for agriculture recreational purposes) 694-1878.

WHEN TO USE ANTIBIOTICS

Source: Roberta Dwyer, UK Veterinary Science Professor

Certain diseases in cattle, like pneumonia, foot rot and pinkeye are caused by bacteria. Dairy and beef cattlemen usually treat these illnesses with antibiotics. Some antibiotics kill bacteria, while others inhibit bacteria growth. It's important to know when an antibiotic will help and what drugs might work best for certain conditions. Work with your veterinarian for a proper diagnosis and recommendations for the most effective treatment. Remember that antibiotics have no effect on viral infections.

The two main classes of antibiotics are bactericidal, where they kill the bacteria, and bacteriostatic, where they inhibit or slow down the bacterial growth. Bactericidal product examples include penicillin, Excenel, Baytril and A180. Bacteriostatic products include tetracycline, sulfas, erythromycin, Micotil and Nuflor. The bacteriostatic products rely on the animal's immune system to help eliminate bacteria.

In general, you should not mix drugs from these two classes or use them at the same time. Some products can be used effectively together because they are synergistic, such as two bacteriostatic products like tetracycline and sulfa

boluses for treating foot rot. If you give a bactericidal and a bacteriostatic drug at the same time, they will not work well together and may not be as effective as just giving one of the drugs. An example is giving penicillin and tetracycline. We want to avoid this combination.

Whenever you use an antibiotic, a proper withdrawal time must be observed before the treated animal can be sold to avoid any meat residues. There are different withdrawal times for different products, and the time is also dependent on the dose given to the animal. Higher doses require longer withdrawal times. It is illegal to sell an animal before adequate withdrawal time has been observed. Any carcass containing drug residues will be condemned.

Here are 10 good tips for antibiotic use:

1. Identify all animals treated.
2. Record all treatments (date, animal ID, dose given, route of administration, person giving treatment, withdrawal time).
3. Strictly follow label directions for product use.
4. Use newer technology antibiotics when possible.
5. Select antibiotics with short withdrawal times when equivalent.
6. Never give more than 10 cc per injection site. If a dose is more than 10 ml, split it into multiple sites.
7. Avoid Extra Label Drug Use (ELDU) of antibiotics.
8. Avoid using multiple antibiotics at the same time.
9. Don't mix antibiotics in the same syringe.
10. Check ALL medication/treatment records before marketing.



Cattle producers know that healthy animals are the foundation of safe food. Disease prevention to keep livestock well is a key to your success. When cattle get sick and antibiotic treatment is necessary, producers and veterinarians should take great care to use drugs in a responsible way.