

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

OF COWS AND PLOWS



OCTOBER 2011

**Cooperative
Extension Service**

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Grains & Gains

*Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler, Extension Beef Specialist,
University of Kentucky*

Where did the seasonal price drop for commodity feeds go? Historically, soybean hulls and corn gluten feed drop to near season lows in July. That did not occur this year and prices continue to be strong through the fall. This will certainly have many asking how can I feed my cattle cheaper. My only word of caution is that you often get what you pay for if you are not careful.

Feeding programs this fall will need to be evaluated closely. Working with enterprise budget sheets and watching the cattle markets, determine what you can afford to feed this year. Partial feed costs of gains can give you an idea of how two feeding programs may differ. For example, investigating the relationship between feed conversion values and feed costs, the cost of gain can be compared for two programs or diets. Currently, the cost of a 50:50 soyhull and corn gluten feed mix is near the \$225-\$250 range. With hay valued at \$70/ton, the diet cost may be \$175-\$225/ton for typical feeding programs in the state using soyhulls and corn gluten feed programs. At first glance, we might say that things don't look too bad. At a 6:1 feed conversion, feed cost of gain is only \$0.60-\$0.75/lb. Well, consider feed conversions for feed yard placed cattle weighing < 700 lbs when placed was 6.4 on average as reported by Land O'Lakes for 2010. A diet consisting of 40-60% fescue hay plus

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KY Beef Conference

The annual KY Beef Conference "Planning Today for Tomorrow's Market," is October 25th and will be held at the Fayette County Extension office from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. This year's conference will feature information on current marketing trends, management practices of production, and ways to improve the marketability of Kentucky calves. Randy Blach from Cattle-FAX (always a favorite) will be the featured speaker. He's got a great track record for predicting the cattle markets.

Registration is \$10.00 per person to cover the cost of a buffet lunch and refreshments. Call the Extension Office (502) 695-9035 if you plan to attend. ☀



KSU Third Thursday Events

October 20, 2011: **Sheep & Goat Fall Field Day**

November 17, 2011: **Small Farm Conference &**

AgrAbility

<http://organic.kysu.edu/TTTSchedule.shtml>

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soyhulls and corn gluten feed is not gaining to have feed conversions near 6:1. It is difficult to predict what level of performance you will observe on your farm, but a conversion of 8:1 would be reasonable. This paints a different picture. Feed cost of gains are pushing that \$90-\$100/cwt range.

		Ration Cost, \$/ton			
		\$175	\$200	\$225	\$250
Feed to Gain	6	\$0.58	\$0.67	\$0.75	\$0.83
	7	\$0.68	\$0.78	\$0.88	\$0.97
	8	\$0.78	\$0.89	\$1.00	\$1.11
	9	\$0.88	\$1.00	\$1.13	\$1.25
	10	\$0.97	\$1.11	\$1.25	\$1.39

Table 1. Impact of diet cost and feed conversion on feed cost of gain (\$/lb of gain).

It certainly doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that feeding a diet that costs less will provide a greater opportunity to increase profit margins. Naturally, we start shopping around for a better deal on feed. Let's assume the best deal is \$25/ton less than the typical 50:50 soyhull and corn gluten feed blend. You should be asking why this feed is so much less and looking at what is in this feed. Often these are coproduct blends. It is not uncommon today for these to include cottonseed hulls and rice mill feeds. These feeds have their places in diets, but be smart. For those that are hand feeding supplements in the range of 1-1.5% of body weight, I would suggest you avoid feeds that contain cottonseed hulls and rice mill feed. These coproducts are lower in digestibility, contain less energy and will have poorer feed conversions. For instance, cottonseed hulls have a book value for Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) of 45% and 4-5% crude protein. This week Missouri reported prices for cottonseed hulls of \$205 to \$265/ton. This is expensive forage replacement if you consider that typical fescue hay will test better than this. Thus, the initial sticker price is lower, but if the feed conversion happens to be increased by 1 lb of feed per pound of gain, you may not actually save much.

Take a look at a feed that is \$225/ton and a feed conversion of 8:1 versus one that costs \$200/ton and a feed conversion of 9:1. Both yield the same cost of gain of \$1.00; you just have to handle more buckets of feed to gain the same amount of weight.

With high feed costs this fall, be sure to test your hay and determine what you need to supplement to meet your desired performance level. When investigating other feeds, read the feed tags, learn what is in the feed and shop smart. Don't overpay for lower energy feeds that may have poorer feed conversions. Be sure to consult your county extension agent or nutritionist for additional assistance in developing a cost effective feeding program this fall. ☀️

Cow Slaughter and Herd Dynamics This Fall

Dr. Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

Cow slaughter continues at a pace well above last year in the Southern Plains. Beef cow slaughter in federal Region 6, which corresponds to the worst drought area, is averaging 150 percent of year ago levels for the past eight weeks. For the year to date, beef cow slaughter in the region is 123 percent above a year ago. Beef cow slaughter in all other regions for the year to date is down 6 percent, resulting in a total national beef cow slaughter that is 101 percent of last year. However, beef cow slaughter outside of Region 6 is 4.5 percent above year ago levels for the past eight weeks resulting in total beef cow slaughter higher last year for the past few weeks.. Additionally, significant numbers of cows have moved out of Texas and Oklahoma to other regions, though it is hard to know how many cows have been relocated. All of this likely means that cow culling for the remainder of the year will not follow typical seasonal patterns both inside and outside of the drought areas.

In the drought regions, it seems clear that most of

the cows normally culled for age or productivity reasons have long since moved to market and are part of the increased slaughter already documented. Additionally, many younger or still productive cows have also been sold, either to slaughter or to new owners in other regions along with some relocation of cows by owners in the drought region. This raises the question of what to expect in the drought area for the remainder of the year. Though most of the normally culled cows have already been sold, continued dry conditions will presumably force additional cow liquidation through the fall. One would presume that most producers have by now determined if it is feasible to keep cows through the winter or not and that additional movements might be at a slower pace than summer levels.

However, there are reports that pregnancy evaluations are, in some cases, showing significantly reduced pregnancy rates due to the effects of the drought and this may lead to some additional culling this fall.

Drought liquidation may have an impact on beef herd culling in other regions for the remainder of the year. Beef cow slaughter in regions outside the drought area is also up the past eight weeks. Forage conditions in most of the rest of the country have ranged from very good to average and increased slaughter is likely not the result of poor forage conditions. However, the movement of drought region cows into other regions may be changing normal culling patterns. Producers with good forage may be culling early to take advantage of the opportunity to trade out cull cows for young cows from the drought zone or take in lease cows needing a new home. Additionally, many heifers held for replacement in the drought region have also been liquidated making more replacements available to producers in other regions. The availability of heifers and breeding cows from the drought area may help accelerate the herd expansion already in place in northern regions of the country.

The drought ensures that beef cow slaughter this year will be close to, or perhaps above, year ago

levels on a national basis. The total beef cow herd will decrease by 2-3 percent this year. The regional impacts will be much more dramatic with herd growth likely in the Northern Plains and northern Rocky Mountain regions and double digit reductions in herds in Texas and Oklahoma. ☀

September Eden Shale Pasture Walk

The third Eden Shale Pasture walk was held on September 6, 2011 at the Eden Shale Research farm in Owenton, KY. Dr. JD Green, UK weed specialist, discussed fall weed control options and Dr. Ray Smith presented information on warm season grasses for Kentucky pastures.

David Davis, Masters student, explained his research project which is investigating the role of maturity of switchgrass hay on apparent digestibility when fed to beef steers. As the plant matures, lignin concentration increases while digestibility decreases. Less energy is available to the animal. Davis shared information from previous studies. Switchgrass is also commonly used as a biofuel crop.



Nitrate test strips are used to determine possible nitrate toxicity issues

Dr. Smith discussed the use of warm season annuals for grazing livestock. Samples of forages, such as millets, sorghum, sudangrass, and sorghum-sudan hybrids, were used to discuss the specific uses of each forage. Dr. Smith discussed benefits of grazing warm-season forages through the hot summer months. The possible problems, such as prussic acid toxicity and nitrate toxicity, were covered and discussed. Participants used nitrate test strips to test plants for nitrate content. If there is

(Eden Shale Pasture WalkContinued on Page 4)

12th Annual
Kentucky Women in Agriculture Conference



**Our Farms to Your
Homes**

October 26-28, 2011
Crowne Plaza - Campbell House
Lexington, KY

Conference details and registration forms are available at: <http://www.kywomeninag.com/conference.php>

This year's conference includes pre-conference tours and the ever-popular **Taste of Kentucky Proud Event** featuring Kentucky Proud food and vendors as well as comments from candidates for Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner.

Conference scholarship applications are due October 1, 2011 and the application is online at: http://www.kywomeninag.com/attachments/File/kwia_conference_scholarship-form.doc

Overview Agenda

Wednesday, October 26

- 8:15 a.m. Pre-conference Bluegrass Farm Tour (\$25, advance registration)
- 7:30 p.m. Evening Activity - Coupon Clipping Class (no cost, advance registration required)

Thursday, October 27

- 8:00 a.m. Registration / Buffet Breakfast
- 8:45 a.m. Conference Call to Order / KWIA Business Meeting
- 9:30 a.m. Opening Session
 - Presentation of Colors - *Locust Trace FFA*
 - Remarks - *Todd Harp, Locust Trace Ag. School*
- 10:45 a.m. Concurrent Sessions
 - "Hearth to Harvest" / "Diversified Farming"
- 12:30 p.m. Luncheon & Awards
 - Panel: *Women in Charge*
 - Karen Woodrich, USDA NRCS Conservationist
 - Julie King, *Fastline Magazine*

Sharon Burton, owner/editor *The Farmer's Pride*

- 2:00 p.m. Concurrent Sessions
 - "CommonGround"/"Value-added Food System"
- 5:00 p.m. Taste Event Will Call Opens
- 5:30 p.m. *Taste of Kentucky Proud Event* (\$10 members & guests / \$20 non-members)
- Kentucky Proud food and vendors
- Comments from Candidates for Ag. Commissioner

Friday, October 28

- 8:00 a.m. District Networking Breakfast & Ssssion
- 9:45 a.m. Inspirational Speaker - Melissa Jenkins Smith "*I Choose to Be Happy*"
- 10:30 a.m. Closing Session ☀

(Eden Shale Pasture WalkContinued from Page 3)

a concern of possible nitrate toxicity, samples can be sent by your veterinarian to the University of Kentucky Diagnostic Center, the Breathitt Veterinary Center, or a commercial forage testing lab. It is important that the sample arrives at the lab in a condition similar to the condition grazed. Keeping the sample cool and getting it to the lab in a timely manner will produce the most accurate results. A paper bag is ideal to transport the sample to the lab.



Dr. J.D. Green shows samples of thistles.

Dr. JD Green discussed weed control for certain weeds that are prominent in the Eden Shale Region. Control methods for poison hemlock, tall ironweed, cocklebur, and

various types of ragweed and thistle were the focus of the discussion.

For more information on pasture weed control, contact your local county extension agent. ☀

Effects of a Freeze on Forages


When plants freeze, changes occur in their metabolism and composition that can poison livestock. But you can prevent problems.

Sorghum-related plants, like cane, sudangrass, shattercane, and milo can be highly toxic for a few days after frost. Freezing breaks plant cell membranes. This breakage allows the chemicals that form prussic acid to mix together and release this poisonous compound rapidly. Livestock eating recently frozen sorghums can get a sudden, high dose of prussic acid and potentially die. Fortunately, prussic acid soon turns into a gas and disappears into the air. So wait 3 to 5 days after a freeze before grazing sorghums; the chance of poisoning then becomes much lower.

Freezing also slows down metabolism in all plants. This stress sometimes permits nitrates to accumulate in plants that are still growing, especially grasses like oats, millet, and sudangrass. This build-up usually isn't hazardous to grazing animals, but green chop or hay cut right after a freeze can be more dangerous.

Alfalfa reacts two ways to a hard freeze, down close to twenty degrees, cold enough to cause plants to wilt. Nitrate levels can Research & Education Center Princeton, KY 42445

For more forage information, visit our UK Forage Extension Website at: <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage> increase, but rarely to hazardous levels. Freezing also makes alfalfa more likely to cause bloat for a few days after the frost. Then, several days later, after plants begin to wilt or grow again, alfalfa becomes less likely to cause bloat. So waiting to graze alfalfa until well after a hard freeze is a good, safe management practice.

Frost causes important changes in forages so manage them carefully for safe feed. (SOURCE: Bruce Anderson, University of Nebraska) 

Parasite Management in Goats

Terry K. Hutchens, Extension Specialist U.K.

Fall is the time of year when we often see unexpected deaths in goats due to internal parasites. Remember that the primary parasite of concern is a warm season or tropical parasite whose population increases exponentially from spring to fall. This particular parasite is deadly because of blood feeding.

It is important to get all the goats up in the fall and check each goat for anemia. The FAMACHA method of check the lower eyelids of each animal is an excellent method of determining anemia in livestock and the anemic condition can be related to the extent of internal parasite infection. We caution producers to avoid total herd deworming. Total herd deworming as well as frequent deworming hastens the development of anthelmintic resistance.

An alternative method is to deworm only those goats showing a FAMACHA reading of 3, 4 or 5. Goats with FAMACHA scores of 1 or 2 should not be dewormed, while goats showing moderate anemia, FAMACHA 3 should be dewormed with a less effective product having a moderate killing power where as your best deworm should be held in reserve and used on FAMACHA scores of 4 and 5. This will preserve the effectiveness of your best dewormer since FAMACHA scores of 4 and 5 occurs relatively infrequently.

The effectiveness of all the dewormers can be improved by moving the goats to a dry lot area, withhold feed for 12 to 24 hours prior to deworm. This will slow the metabolism of the animals down and extends the dewormer contact time.

Remember to assist the animals in maintain a high degree of natural immunity to these parasites by providing an adequate plane of nutrition. Goats in poor body condition, in late pregnancy or lactating are subject to higher incidences of parasite infection and should be fed to meet their nutritional needs in order to enhance the development of natural resistance to infection.

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Weigh each animal to avoid underdosing. Administering less than the needed amounts increases the rate of resistance development. Most of the deworming products used in goat production are off label. *They are not labeled for use in goats.* Therefore, producers must work closely with their veterinarian and use these products as directed by their veterinarian.

DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Any person who believes they have been discriminated against in any Cooperative Extension sponsored program or activity may file a complaint with the Secretary of Agriculture by writing to:

**USDA, Director
Office of Civil Rights
Room 326-W, Whitten Bldg.
14th & Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410**

A complaint must be filed no later than 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination.



We are sorry to announce that the 2nd Sunday event planned for October 9th at the Capitol has been cancelled. In planning for the event, we had a very low response from vendors and participants and felt it necessary to focus on the 2012 event.

FCCD Scrap Metal Drive

You have several weeks to start getting those piles of scrap metal gathered up and loaded. The Franklin County Conservation District's Scrap Metal and Appliance Recycling Drive will once again be held November 8-12. For details contact Eric at 695-5203 X 3.

You are encouraged to drop off all metal items and appliances for reprocessing. Old fencing, sheet metal, farm equipment, etc. can be disposed of by hauling it to the site during daylight hours. Items not accepted are batteries, wet paint, shingles, tires (BUT items with Freon can be accepted). Many of these items are recyclable and should be handled accordingly. To find out how to dispose of what is not accepted, contact Mark Barrett, County Waste Coordinator, at 875-8751.

FCCA Annual Member Meeting



Mark the evening of **October 13th** on your calendar for the Annual Membership meeting. Contact the office to let us know if you plan to attend so we can have a steak for you. Gregg Renthrow, UK Meat Specialist, will bring a side of beef and demonstrate the cuts and methods used to create the products that end up in your kitchen or on your grill. This is a very interesting and educational demonstration of what a butcher does. Learn where the different cuts come from and how the new cuts are created. Robert Frey, Frankfort Tractor Supply manager, will help sponsor the meal and be on hand to answer questions about the new store.

A check for \$25.00 to join the Franklin County Cattlemen's Association can be mailed to the Extension Office, KCA or bring to the meeting. \$20 goes towards your KCA membership which gets you a copy of the Cow Country News every month among other things. Local membership keeps you up to date with local happenings, member meetings and opportunities such as bulk orders, tours, etc. The KCA operates on an October to October year but you can join anytime.

North American International Livestock Exhibition Show Schedule

<http://www.livestockexpo.org/>

Beef Cattle.....	November 12-18, 2011
Boer and Junior Wether Goats	November 16-17, 2011
Championship Rodeo	November 10-12, 2011
Dairy Cattle.....	November 4-8, 2011
Dairy Goats.....	November 4-6, 2011
Draft Horses	November 11-12, 2011
Giant Country Store.....	November 5-18, 2011
Llamas and Alpacas	November 4-6, 2011
Mules and Donkeys	November 10-12, 2011
Quarter Horses.....	November 2-10, 2011
Sheep	November 11-18, 2011
Swine.....	November 6-7, 2011

Free Soil Testing During September and October

Bring in this coupon, print one from our webpage, or stop by the Extension Office and pick up one. During September and October you can get up to FIVE free soil samples per address. That is a \$15.00 savings and you will be ahead of the game for Spring 2012. Beat the rush this Spring and get your soil tested today!

FREE SOIL SAMPLE COUPON

During the months of September & October, we are offering FREE soil testing. By testing in the Fall, you will be ready to plant in the Spring. Eliminate those long waits to get your results. Test NOW! Compliments of the Franklin County Cooperative Extension Service. Bring this coupon in with your soil sample(s) and receive **free basic soil testing.**

Redeemable only at the FRANKLIN COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE located at 101 Lakeview Court, Frankfort KY. (502) 695-9035

<http://ces.ca.uky.edu/franklin/>

LIMIT 5 (FIVE) FREE SAMPLES PER ADDRESS

NO COMMERCIAL SAMPLES WITH THIS OFFER

This coupon expires: October 31, 2011

Keenan R Bishop

Keenan Bishop
County Extension Agent for Agriculture
and Natural Resources



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**2011 Capital Area
SOLAR TOUR**
Saturday, October 1st
8:45 am to 4:45 pm

Join a Guided Bus Tour Featuring:

INSIDE OUT DESIGN— Office space designed with sustainability in mind. Includes solar electric system & native landscaping.

LOCUST TRACE AGRI-SCIENCE FARM—School dedicated to teaching agriculture with a focus on sustainability. Includes large solar electric array and Kentucky's largest evacuated tube solar water heating system.

Other sites demonstrating solar water heating, solar photovoltaics, solar tube daylighting, the Chevy Volt, an electric riding lawnmower, geothermal heating & cooling, & more!

FULL DAY: \$10/person – \$5/student - children 12 & under free
HALF DAY (morning or afternoon) – Half Price

Tour bus leaves from the Franklin County Cooperative Extension Office at 101 Lakeview Court in Frankfort at 9:00 am.
Pre-registration is required to reserve your seat on the bus.

To Register: contact Angela at 502-229-2008 or angela.mitchell@fewpb.net.

Tour Schedule & Site Descriptions Available at:
www.kysolar.org

Organized by the Frankfort Climate Action Network
www.FrankfortClimateAction.net
& the Kentucky Solar Partnership

Supported by Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest & the City of Frankfort.

Keenan Bishop
County Extension Agent for Agriculture and
Natural Resources

Contact the Franklin County Extension Office at (502) 695-9035 if you would like to receive our newsletter via email or email requests to debbie.bohrn@uky.edu or kbishop@uky.edu

If you **DO NOT** want to receive this newsletter or your address is incorrect, please notify us immediately.

If your address is incorrect and the newsletter is returned for three consecutive months, your name will be removed from our mailing list. All newsletters are also available online.