ALFALFA COUNTY EXTENSION

Alfalfa County Cooperative Extension News

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In this issue

Feedlot Situation Improving

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

The latest USDA Cattle on Feed report pegs May 1 feedlot inventories at 11.725 million head, 104.7 percent of last year. A more useful comparison is to 2019 levels with the 2021 May 1 total down 0.7 percent from May 2019. After a February feedlot inventory that was the highest of any month since February 2006, strong marketing's the past two months have reduced feedlot inventories below 2019 levels in April and May. April feedlot placements were larger than expected at 127.2 percent of year ago placements. However, April placements were 1.1 percent smaller than April 2019 placements.

April feedlot marketing's were up 32.8 percent year over year and up 0.5 percent from the 2019 level. The April marketing's total was the highest April level since 2008. This follows the March marketing's total that was the highest for March since 2000. These marketing levels confirm that feedlots are making progress working through large feedlot inventories. Feedlot inventories have declined 3.2 percent since the February peak. On average, feedlot inventories typically increase early in the year to an April peak before beginning a seasonal decrease into late summer. The current relative marketing rate suggests that feedlots will pull inventories down on a sustained basis in the next two or three months and reflect cyclically tighter cattle numbers at some point in the second half of the year.

The bottleneck in fed cattle markets this year has been the capacity constraints that limit the ability of beef packers to process feedlot cattle. Limited packing infrastructure, combined with chronic labor issues have made it impossible for packers to process cattle at an even faster rate. Total cattle slaughter is up 1.8 percent for the year to date compared to 2019. Comparisons to 2020 are not meaningful given the massive pandemic disruptions last year. Year to date steer plus heifer slaughter is up 1.6 percent compared to 2019. Average weekly steer plus heifer slaughter for the first 18 weeks of 2021 is 496,051 head, up 2.0 percent from 2019 levels. In fact, the 2021 year to date weekly average is the highest since 2011.

A look a daily slaughter statistics reveals the beef packing capacity challenges. Although the average weekly total is larger thus far in 2021, daily averages reveal the struggles to maintain slaughter levels. Compared to 2019, average daily slaughter is down four of five days per week, with Mondays down 4.3 percent, Wednesdays down 1.0 percent, Thursdays down 1.3 percent, and Fridays down 7.1 percent. Tuesday slaughter has averaged 3.1 percent higher thus far in 2021 compared to 2019. The big change is Saturday slaughter, which has averaged 62.7 percent higher thus far in 2021 compared to 2019. Maximum weekly slaughter thus far in 2021 is 3.5 percent less than 2019 despite a larger weekly average. Maximum daily slaughter is lower for all days except Tuesday, which is 0.3 percent higher thus far this year. Even Saturday slaughter, which is averaging 62.7 higher this year compared to 2019, has a daily maximum that is 25.6 percent less than 2019. All of this means that packers have less total capacity but are using the available capacity more consistently thus far in 2021. The reliance on Saturday slaughter this year will be increasingly difficult to maintain going forward. Not only are labor agreements and the willingness of labor to work Saturdays a concern, but persistent Saturday shifts reduce opportunities for packing plant maintenance and could lead to more breakdowns and disruptions in operations at some point.

The feedlot situation is improving but it will take additional time to process current feedlot supplies and the stress and challenges at the packing level will slow the process for at least several more weeks.

Beef Cow Herd Calendar

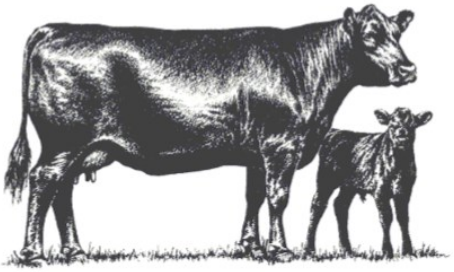
June

Fall Calving

1. Wean calves in June or July, when warm-season grasses begin to deteriorate in quality.
2. Pregnancy check cows and bred heifers. Consider culling problem or low performance cattle.
3. Vaccinate all weaned calves kept as stockers or replacement heifers with 7-way Clostridial bacterin, Leptospira bacterin, and IBR, BVD, PI3, and BRSV vaccine (consult with a veterinarian on this vaccination program and other diseases that may be a problem). Deworm if necessary.
4. Implant calves to be kept as stockers, but not replacement heifers.

Spring Calving

1. If a high percentage of cows return to heat after 40 days of breeding, have bulls rechecked for fertility and cows and bulls examined for reproductive diseases by your veterinarian. Change bulls, if necessary, and re-evaluate the previous year's nutrition program.
2. Follow vaccine program outlined for May, if not done at that time.
3. Implement high protein, limit fed creep (OK Silver) for calves, if so desired.
4. Deworm cows and calves on improved pastures.



General Recommendations:

1. Treat cattle for grubs between July 1 and October 1 (before larvae reach the back).
2. Continue fly and tick control program.
3. Cut native grass for hay before July 1. Do not mow or graze again until after frost.
4. If additional summer grazing or hay is needed, fertilize weeping lovegrass with 30 to 60 lbs. N/acre.
5. Rotation graze or harvest bermudagrass for hay at about 30-day intervals (rest four weeks, graze one week).
6. Begin grazing sudan and sudan hybrids at 18 to 24 inches in height.
7. Continue anaplasmosis control program.
8. Begin OK Gold for stocker calves and fall born replacement heifers. Oklahoma Gold consists of one pound per day of 38-41% natural protein with a feed additive such as Bovatec®, Gainpro® or chloratetracycline. See extension educator or feed supplier for further details.

July

Fall Calving

1. Wean calves and vaccinate as recommended in June.
2. If not completed, pregnancy check cows and bred heifers, make culling decisions and vaccinate stockers and replacement heifers.
3. Place weaned calves on good quality pasture and watch closely for health problems.

Spring Calving

1. Remove bulls after 70 to 90-day breeding season.
2. Continue to creep graze calves on sudan pasture.
3. Watch the herd closely for health problems.
4. Continue creep for calves (OK Silver).
5. Deworm intensively grazed cows, if needed.
6. Body condition score cows and if thin, consider weaning calves early and/or supplementing cows.
7. Complete marketing or retained ownership plan for calves.

General Recommendations:

1. Water is extremely important in hot weather. Make routine checks of the water supply.
2. If additional summer grazing or hay is needed, fertilize Bermudagrass with 40 to 60 lbs. N/acre.
3. Harvest sudan and sudan hybrids for hay in the boot stage (normally three to four feet in height). Top dress with nitrogen to promote growth. It is a good idea to run a routine nitrate test on a field before harvesting hay.
4. Treat for cattle grubs after heel fly activity ceases and before larvae reach the back, between July 1 and October 1.
5. Continue fly and tick control program.
6. Continue anaplasmosis control program.
7. Remove intensive early stocking (IES) calves from native grass by July 10.
8. Supplement stockers and replacement heifers with OK Gold feed.

Garden Tips for June

General Landscape

- Find someone to water plants in the house and garden while on vacation. Harvesting vegetables and mowing the lawn are a must and imply that someone is home.
- Mulch ornamentals, vegetables, and annuals to reduce soil crusting, and to regulate temperatures and moisture during hot summer months. Mulching will reduce about 70 percent of the summer yard maintenance.
- Remain alert for insect damage. Add spider mite to the list. Foliage of most plants becomes pale and speckled; juniper foliage turns a pale yellowish color. Shake a branch over white paper and watch for tiny specks that crawl. Watch for first generation fall webworm. (EPP-7306)

Turfgrass

- Fertilize warm-season grasses at 1 lb. N per 1,000 square feet. Do not fertilize fescue and other cool-season grasses during the summer.
- Dollar spot disease of lawns can first become visible in mid-May. Make certain fertilizer applications have been adequate before applying a fungicide. (EPP-7658)
- Seeding of warm-season grasses should be completed by the end of June (through July for improved varieties such as Riviera and Yukon to reduce winterkill losses. (HLA-6419)
- Brown patch disease of cool-season grasses can be a problem. HLA-6420)
- White grubs will soon be emerging as adult June Beetles. Watch for high populations that can indicate potential damage from later life cycle stages as grubs in the summer.

Fruit and Nut

- Renovate overgrown strawberry beds after the last harvest. Start by setting your lawnmower on its highest setting and mow off the foliage. Next thin crowns 12-24 inches apart. Apply recommended fertilizer, preemergence herbicide if needed and keep watered. (HLA-6214)

Trees and Shrubs

- Vigorous, unwanted limbs should be removed or shortened on new trees. Watch for forks in the main trunk and remove the least desirable trunk as soon as it is noticed. (HLA-6415)
- Pine needle disease treatments are needed again in mid-June.
- Remove tree wraps during the summer to avoid potential disease and insect buildup.
- Softwood cuttings from new growth of many shrubs will root if propagated in a moist shady spot.
- Protect trees from lawnmowers and weed eaters by mulching or using protective aerated covers.

Flowers

- Pinch back leggy annuals to encourage new growth. Fertilize and water appropriately.
- Feed established mums and other perennials.
- When picking fresh roses or removing faded ones, cut back to a leaflet facing the outside of the bush to encourage open growth and air circulation.
- Stake tall perennials before toppling winds arise.

Weed Control in Vegetable Gardens

By: David Hillock

Weeds rob vegetables of valuable water, light, and nutrients. Weeds often harbor insects, diseases, and nematodes that can damage vegetables and greatly reduce yields.

Mulching, hoeing, and hand-weeding are methods that can be used to control most of the weeds in the garden and to eliminate the problems of applying an herbicide and the possibility of herbicide injury to the garden crop. Good soil preparation, adequate control of weeds before planting, and planting crops when the soil is warm enough to get them up rapidly are all good practices that will help maintain a minimum amount of labor for weed control. Many Oklahoma gardeners in rural areas have ample space for gardening. If this is the case, be sure to leave enough space between rows to allow room for cultivating equipment.

Cultivation and hoeing should be done when weeds are small because weeds compete with the crops for light, water, and nutrients. Also, when weeds are large, they are much more difficult to remove without damaging the crops. Cultivation and hoeing should be done shallowly so that injury to the root system of the crop plants will not occur. Hand-weeding in the crop row is usually necessary.

Other cultural methods for weed control include:

- Crop selection – pick a crop and growing season where the plant will emerge rapidly, shade the soil, and prevent weed seed germination.
- Close spacing of vegetable crops can inhibit weed growth when the leaves overlap at maturity. In a raised bed, keep this in mind for spacing plants.
- Mulches of either organic (clean straw/hay, paper) or synthetic (plastic) will shade the soil surface, controlling most annual weed species.
- Sanitation of the garden at the end of the season is critical. Remove and destroy remaining weeds and their seed heads.

Cover crops are ideal to shade out weeds, even bermudagrass. Bermudagrass can be shaded and discouraged by the dense canopy of a cover crop such as sudangrass, sorghum or buckwheat. Establishing a cover crop regimen early can help with the success of shading out competitive weeds. Winter cover crops can prevent soil erosion, runoff and cool-season weed establishment, while adding valuable organic matter.

Weeds may also be controlled with herbicides. However, chemical weed control in the home garden is difficult because of the diversity of the crops grown in the garden. It is hard to find an herbicide that is selective enough to remove a specific weed without the potential or probability that it will also kill or damage some of the crops in the garden. With several types of plants located close together in a small area, some may be seriously damaged by any herbicide that you might select. However, there are a few formulations available which make them safer and easier to use. For example, glyphosate foam is easier to use and poses less risk to desirable plants. Some preemergence herbicides can also be used successfully in the garden when transplants are used or after seeds sown have emerged and matured. Visit your local garden center or county extension office for information on current preemergence herbicide products.

The best weed control in the home garden is a sharp hoe and good mulch.

Oklahoma Quality Beef Network

The Oklahoma Quality Beef Network (OQBN) is a joint project of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association (OCA). OQBN is a network of beef producers, educators, veterinarians, and industry professionals committed to increasing producers' access to value added marketing opportunities and improving the quality of cattle produced in Oklahoma by increasing communication between all segments of the beef industry.

The OQBN sale date for Cherokee is November 3rd, 2021.

Requirements

To enroll calves in the OQBN:

- Calves must be home raised
- Bull calves must be castrated and healed
- Calves must be dehorned and healed
- Calves must be weaned 45 days or longer
- Beef Quality Assurance Certification required by producer
- Calves must be tagged with a program-compliant ear tag
- Must follow one of three vaccination protocols

The OQBN Vac-45 verification program is available to all producers who meet requirements with their ranch raised calves and is not limited to OQBN verified cattle. Cattle that have been verified in another program qualify for participation in OQBN at no charge other than the cost of the tags and enrollment fees.

Once verified through OQBN the option to market cattle in a certified sale is available. There is no obligation to market cattle through a certified sale. Producers are still able to market their cattle when, where and how best fits their marketing plan.

To enroll cattle into the OQBN program, visit our Marketplace store to pay for registration/tags per head of cattle. Also complete the Enrollment/Certification form and turn it in to the OQBN office no later than 21 days prior to the OQBN Vac-45 sale date. Once your paperwork is received, you will receive OQBN ear tags for your cattle. These tags will be necessary to participate in an OQBN Vac-45 sale. You will be contacted by an OQBN representative to participate in the verification process.

For more enrollment form and vaccine record or more information about OQBN please call the Alfalfa County OSU Extension Office!

TRACTOR & MACHINERY OPERATORS

CERTIFICATON PROGRAM

Designed to meet labor requirements for 14 and 15 year old Youth

BE SAFE BE CERTIFIED

2021 Dates:
Tuesday, June 15th, 2021 8:30am – 4:30pm
Thursday, June 17th, 2021 8:30am – 4:30pm

Alfalfa County Fairgrounds
Cherokee, Oklahoma

Cost: **$40.00** payable to Alfalfa County OSU Extension Center

Pre-registration is required

Learn How to be safe
Controls for Your Tractor
Tractor Safety on the Farm
Tractor Safety on the Highway
The Instrument Panel
Daily Maintenance & Safety Check
Starting and Stopping Your Tractor
Hitches, PTO & Hydraulic Controls

For more information contact: Tommy Puffinbarger
Alfalfa County Cooperative Extension Service @ 580-596-3131

Participants are encouraged to maintain at least 6 feet spacing. If this spacing cannot be maintained with people outside your household, you should wear a mask.

Oklahoma State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, State and local Governments cooperating. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran and is an equal opportunity employer.

Farm and Ranch Stress Test

The farm stress test is designed to provide insight into sources of farm financial stress and the extent of stress. It highlights a few key financial measures and provides a visual interpretation of the numbers. Ideally, the numbers used in the stress test come from current financial statements (cash flow statement, balance sheet, income statement) developed in a manner consistent with Farm Financial Standards guidelines (www.FFSC.org). Any financial measure is only as good as the information used in calculating it. Honest insights require honest data. Consecutive years of financial measures developed in a consistent manner provide the best information about changes in financial performance and position of a business.

Financial ratios vary considerably among farms of different types, for instance, dairy operations and stocker operations. What may be critical for one farm might be tolerable for another.

No one measure can indicate farm financial performance or position. Instead, several measures must be calculated to give a more complete picture. Liquidity, solvency, profitability, and repayment capacity are areas for which financial measures are useful.

Liquidity is the ability of the business to generate enough cash to pay farm and family expenses (including debt payments) on time.

Solvency is the ability of the business to pay all debts if it were sold today. The debt/asset ratio measures the proportion of total farm assets owed to creditors. The current ratio indicates the extent to which current farm assets, if sold, would pay liabilities due this year.

Profitability measures the financial performance of the farm over a period of time, usually a year. Net farm income represents the return to land, labor, and management. The rate of return on assets is an index of profitability as is the rate of return on equity.

Repayment capacity focuses on the farm's ability to repay debt from farm and nonfarm income. A brief description of financial measures included in the stress test follows. Formulas for calculating the ratios are shown in the stress test.

Current ratio Current assets are those expected to be sold or used up in the coming year; current liabilities are those due in the coming year, including scheduled principal and interest payments on long term debt. The ratio indicates the extent to which current assets, if liquidated, would cover current farm liabilities. Thus, the higher the ratio, the greater is business liquidity. Lower ratios indicate the potential for cash flow problems. The ratio can vary significantly during the year, for instance, if a crop has been harvested but not yet sold. Dairies and other businesses with steady inflows of cash can support a lower current ratio than other types of farms.

Debt to asset ratio This ratio indicates the proportion of total assets owed to creditors. The higher the ratio, the greater financial risk the business faces.

Net farm income from operations. This value represents the return to unpaid labor, management, and owner equity. There is no single standard for farms of different sizes with different enterprises. Net cash income is adjusted for changes in inventory and depreciation. Changes in inventory (accrual adjustments) may add to income (increases in accounts receivable, prepaid expenses, cash investments in growing crops, supplies on hand) or decrease income (increases in accounts payable, taxes due, or other liabilities).

Rate of return on farm assets (ROA). ROA serves as an index of profitability. The higher the value, the more profitable is the business. ROA is most meaningful in year-to-year comparisons if assets are valued using their cost basis. ROA for agricultural assets is typically low compared to nonfarm investments.

Rate of return on farm equity (ROE). ROE also serves as an index of profitability. Like ROA, the higher the value, the more profitable is the business. ROE is most meaningful in year-to-year comparisons if assets are valued using their cost basis. If debt is being used advantageously, ROE will be greater than ROA. ROE can be compared to the return that could be earned in alternative investments, such as certificates of deposits, bonds, or stock mutual funds.

Debt coverage ratio. This ratio indicates the ability of the business to cover term debt. The higher the ratio, the greater the "cushion" to cover all payments. Capital lease payments should be included as part of term debt. What is a reasonable value varies with farm enterprises, diversification, management abilities, and stability of nonfarm income.

Operating expense ratio. This ratio indicates the proportion of total income used to pay expenses. The higher the ratio, the greater the financial risk in periods of low market prices.

Interest expense ratio. This ratio indicates the proportion of total income committed to interest payments. Farm operations are considered vulnerable once the ratio is 15 percent.

Asset turnover ratio. Profitable and efficient operations generate more revenue with a given set of resources. The ratio can vary substantially between farms of different types, but the higher the ratio, the more efficiently farm assets are being used.

Financial ratios condense a large amount of information into a convenient form for analysis. Both the magnitude of the measure and relationships between measures should be considered. For more information on farm financial statements and analysis, see OSU Fact Sheets AGEC-751, AGEC-752, AGEC-753, and AGEC-790. For copies, see osufacts.okstate.edu or contact your local OSU Extension Center to request educational programs on financial management.