Osage County Agriculture Newsletter

OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

November/December 2021

Reminders

- Make sure to get your forage samples sent in so that we can help you prepare for winter supplementation. We have a great program we use to break down how much you will need to supplement.
- Cheyenne Patrick & Rick Clovis can either come take your samples or you can come in to the Extension office and check out a hay probe. Let us know what we can do to help.

Differences in Stocking of Introduced and Rangeland Forages

By Daren D. Redfearn, Terrence G. Bidwell, Published 2017

Although the concepts of stocking rate determination are similar for introduced and rangeland forages, there is one major difference in estimating stocking rate: allowable use (percent utilization of available forage) is lower for rangeland forage. This can not be emphasized enough; introduced forages can be utilized to a higher degree than rangeland forages if adequate moisture and fertility are available. Working through some examples for both types of systems should help clear up any misunderstanding. Utilization does not equal consumption by the animal for any kind of forage. Utilization includes decomposition, waste, and consumption by insects and other herbivores.

Stocking Rates on Introduced Forages

Introduced forages are generally non-native species that have been selected for rapid growth and grazing tolerance. Introduced forage grasses common to Oklahoma include bermudagrass, tall fescue, Old World bluestem, weeping lovegrass, various cereal grains, and ryegrass. Oklahoma producers also use several introduced legumes, including alfalfa, hairy vetch, and numerous clover species (red, white, arrowleaf, rose, berseem). Most introduced forages will tolerate a heavier degree of grazing pressure than rangeland forages because of their rapid regrowth capabilities. Although many introduced forages are tolerant of close grazing, not all the forage produced can be removed. Some residue must be left for the plant to carry out basic metabolic functions.

For more information visit fact sheet ID PSS 2871 or visit with your county agent.

Stocking rates are so important!!!!!

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In This Issue:

Cow/Calf Corner

November 1, 2021

In this issue:

Fall Cattle Markets and Forage Conditions

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

October brought significant rain across most of Oklahoma after a very dry September. The rains came in the form of a significant fall severe weather season. A total of 31 tornados were reported in the state in October, a new record for the month and more than for the entire year from January through September.

Wheat planting is finishing up in Oklahoma. The latest Crop Progress report showed a total of 73 percent planted as of October 24, slightly behind the five-year average of 80 percent for the date. Considerable progress was made in wheat planting the last week of October. While wheat for grain-only is still being planted or is newly planted, wheat for forage or dual purpose has progressed significantly with recent rains. Driving across Oklahoma recently I observed wheat in stages from planting to barely emerged to several inches tall. Most wheat pasture will not be ready for grazing until December, later than usual, but I have heard reports that some wheat grazing may begin by mid-November.

Rain and the revived prospects for wheat pasture has lifted calf and stocker prices in October. Prices bottomed earlier than usual in the first week of October and have increased counter-seasonally the last three weeks. For example, prices for 450-500 pound, M/L No. 1 steers were $167.32/cwt. the first week of October, and averaged $175.69/cwt. the last week of October (Oklahoma combined auctions).

Nationwide, the drought continues as winter approaches. Drought developed through 2020 and average drought conditions currently are slightly worse than the drought conditions at this time last year. Although there has been some regional changes in drought situation, the overall picture has not changed much. The country started this growing season with the worst average pasture and range conditions on record and is ending the year in the same condition. The reemerging La Niña increases the chances for moisture in the northern half of the country and Canada but simultaneously increases the odds of drier conditions redeveloping in the Southwest. In any event, not much will change regarding forage supplies in the next 6-7 months. The one exception is the potential for wheat pasture and other cool-season forages in the southern plains, which will need additional moisture through the winter.

November will bring big runs of spring-born calves, although in some drought regions, calves moved out earlier. In total, feeder cattle numbers are expected to be smaller going forward as cattle inventories continue to shrink cyclically. Several OQBN preconditioned calf sales are upcoming. Check http://oqbn.okstate.edu/ for more information.

Derrell Peel, OSU Extension livestock marketing specialist, provides an update on wheat pasture and guidance on navigating higher feed costs this winter. Livestock Marketing (10/23/21) - YouTube

Body Condition Scoring of Cows

Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension Beef Cattle Breeding Specialist

The body condition scoring system (BCS) is used to assess body energy reserves in beef cows. The BCS system used for beef cattle ranges from 1 to 9. A score of 1 indicates cows that are thin and emaciated, cows of BCS 9 are fat and obese. Pictures and definitions of the BCS system can be found in Chapter 20 of the 8th edition of the OSU Beef Cattle Manual.

When condition scoring cows, producers should look beyond age, frame size, depth, length pregnancy status and hair coat. The condition scoring system is intended to provide a consistent system to quantify relative fatness regardless of these other factors that create difference in cows‘ appearance. There is a strong relationship between weight and BCS. For each unit change in BCS, cows should gain or lose approximately 7% of their BCS 5 weight. For example a cow that weighs 1,200 lbs. at a BCS 5 should reach a BCS of 6 at 1,284 lbs. or drop to a BCS 4 at 1,116 lbs.

Why is BCS Important?
One of the major constraints in the improvement of reproductive efficiency in cows is the length of post-partum anestrous. If cows are to maintain a calving interval of one year, they must bred back within 80 – 85 days after calving. In both old and young cows, it is well established that BCS at calving time determines the rebreeding performance of beef cows in the subsequent breeding season. Cows maintaining body weight, therefore having ample energy reserves before parturition, exhibit estrus sooner than cows losing weight. Body weight change during pregnancy is confounded with fetus and placenta growth. Therefore, the estimation of body fat by use of BCS is more useful in quantifying the energy reserves of beef cows. The process of fetal development, delivering a calf, milk production and repair of the reproductive tract are all physiological stresses. These stresses require the availability and utilization of large quantities of energy to enable cows to rebreed in the required 85 days. Cold and/or wet weather often faced by spring calving cows adds additional environmental stress resulting in energy intake that is below body maintenance needs. The cow compensates by mobilizing stored energy or adipose tissue which is why adequate BCS at calving is so critical to reproductive performance.

The Goal
Producers should manage their calving season, genetics, grazing system, supplementation program and herd health to achieve an average BCS of 5 to 6 (target 5.5) in the mature cow herd at calving time. The goal for first calf heifers is a BCS of 6. Typically the greatest reproductive challenge in beef cattle is the breed back of two-year old females raising their first calf, lactating for the first time and still growing themselves, accordingly the higher BCS of 6 is recommended.

References

Beef Cattle Manual. Eight Edition. E-913. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension. Chapter 20.

Dr. Glenn Selk talks about the importance in BCS of heifers at calving for rebreeding on a classic Cow-Calf Corner on Sunup TV. Cow-Calf Corner - Winter BCS Maintenance (12/1/18) - YouTube

Hay Storage-Minimizing Loss

Marty New, SW Area Livestock Specialist

Traveling throughout the state I often observe how many round bales we produce and the numerous ways they can be stored prior to feeding time. Since the large round bale was introduced, it has become the most common form of baling hay. This is primarily due to low-labor demand and fewer storage requirements than the traditional small square bale. Most round bales are typically stored outside and unprotected because of their ability to shed moisture. It's not always easy to control weather related losses, but producers can minimize storage losses. Dry matter loss of hay is generally a function of moisture, temperature, and time.

Research has shown storing round bales outside and unprotected can be much greater than producers realize. Losses have can range from 5-40% due to bale quality, storage conditions, and length of storage. Bale shape and density can aid in minimizing loss. A good shaped and dense bale with a good core will decrease "squatting bales" and rejected hay while aiding in transporting well shaped bales. Creating a good "thatch" layer will shed water decreasing the amount absorbed in the bale. Wrapping bales with net vs. twine impacts dry matter loss. Net wrapped bales maintain the bale integrity and reduces losses compared to twine through the storage period.

Effect of wrapping method on storage losses over time		
	Dry Matter Loss (% of total)	
	1st Cutting (149 days)	2nd Cutting (356 days)
Sisal Twine	16.3_c	22.9_c
Plastic Twine	9.05_b	15.1_b
Net Wrap	6.8_a	8.0_a

Minimize dry matter loss by storing your hay on the best well drained surface available to reduce moisture absorption into the underside of the bales. As much as 12 inches of the bottom of the bale can be lost through the wicking action. Elevating bales from contact with the soil surface is optimum but not necessarily practical in most operations. Storage sites free from sources of shade (tree lines, along barns, buildings, etc) allows for good airflow and sun exposure to reduce the amount of spoilage.

Orientation of the round bales in the storage site is another important consideration in minimizing loss. Bales should be stored in rows, butted end-to-end, and in a north/south direction with a southern exposure if possible. This orientation at least 3 ft. between rows will provide good sunlight and air flow, which allows for a faster drying time following a rain or snow event. It will also allow for easier vegetation control between row if needed, to reduce losses. "Mushroom Stacking" and "Pyramid Stacking" are other common storage practices which should be avoided. Each of these practices lead to large dry matter loss due to increased water infiltration, reduced airflow within the stack, and limited exposure to sunlight.

Loss of round bales stored outside and unprotected can be reduced by baling smart, with a good dense bale, good thatch layer, and net wrapping. In addition to storing bales in a well-drained site, with a slight slope, north/south direction with sun exposure.

References:
Round Bale Hay Storage fact sheet https://extension.okstate.edu/fact-sheets/print-publications/bae/round-bale-hay-storage-bae-1716.pdf

Shinners, K.J., B.M. Huenink, R.E. Muck, and K.A. Albrecht. 2009. Storage Characteristics of Large Round Alfalfa Bales: Dry Hay. *American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers.* Vol. 52(2): 409-418.

The Rancher's Thursday Lunchtime webinar series by Dr. Kevin Shinners https://youtu.be/yhyDl2Uz2CM http://beefextension.okstate.edu/files/BaleStorageOkSUPDF.pdf

Horticulture Tips

November 2021

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Department of Horticulture & Landscape Architecture

Oklahoma State University

GARDEN TIPS FOR NOVEMBER!

David Hillock, Consumer Horticulturist

Lawn & Turf

· Fertilize cool-season grasses like fescue with 1 pound nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft.

· Continue to mow fescue as needed at 2 inches and water during dry conditions. · Control broadleaf winter weeds like dandelions (HLA-6601).

· Keep falling leaves off fescue to avoid damage to the foliage.

Tree & Shrub

- Prune deciduous trees if in early part of winter. Prune only for structural and safety purposes.
- Wrap young, thin-barked trees with a commercial protective material to prevent winter sunscald.
- Apply dormant oil for scale infested trees and shrubs before temperatures fall below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Follow label directions.
- Continue to plant balled & burlap and containerized trees.
- Watch for arborvitae aphids, which tolerate cooler temperatures in evergreen shrubs.

Flowers

- Tulips can still be successfully planted through the middle of November.
- Leave foliage on asparagus, mums, and other perennials to help insulate crowns from harsh winter conditions.
- Bulbs like hyacinth, narcissus and tulip can be potted in containers for indoor forcing.

Miscellaneous

- Leftover garden seeds can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer until next planting season. Discard seeds over 3 years old.
- Gather and shred leaves. Add to compost, use as mulch or till into garden plots.
- Clean and store garden and landscape tools.
- Coat with a light application of oil to prevent rusting. Drain fuel tanks, irrigation lines, and hoses. Bring hoses indoors.

Fruits & Nuts

- Delay pruning fruit trees until next February or March before bud break.
- Harvest pecans and walnuts immediately to eliminate deterioration of the kernel.

November 30th– Native range management and internet tools for rangeland management with *Laura Goodman* and replacement heifers with Mark Johnson

December 7th– Forage/stocking rates and how to calculate for your ranch with Brian Pugh and Scott Clawson

January 18th– Topics to be announced on the following

February 10th– TBA

March 15th-TBA

April 12th-TBA

May 24th-TBA

Watch for dates on which programs will have meals sponsored

EXTENSION

Our office will be closed November 11th for Veterans Day, November 25th & 26th for Thanksgiving as well as December 23rd & 24th.

For more information on these programs, please contact the Osage Co. OSU Extension office!!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 15– Horse club meeting at 5:30 at the Extension office.

November 30th– Cattle series program at 6PM, at the Extension office

December 7th– Cattle series program at 6PM, at the Extension office

OSAGE COUNTY EXTENSION

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