Osage County Agriculture Newsletter

OSAGE COUNTY EXTENSION

May/June 2023

Cow/Calf Corner

May 15, 2023

In this issue:

Drought and Forage Challenges Continue in 2023

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

Persistent drought in major beef cattle production regions continues to have a significant impact on the cattle industry despite improvements in drought conditions in other parts of the country. USDA -NASS released two reports recently that indicate that forage challenges continue in the central and southern Great Plains.

The weekly Crop Progress reports include range and pasture conditions in each state, from May-October each year. The U.S. average of poor to very poor pasture conditions in early May was 37 percent, less severe than one year ago across the country. The first week of May showed that the worst pasture conditions, measured as the percent poor and very poor, are in the states of Kansas (64 percent); Nebraska (68 percent); Oklahoma (54 percent) and Texas (52 percent). Kansas and Oklahoma are in significantly worse shape this year compared to last year with poor/very poor ratings of 41 and 39 percent, respectively one year ago. The Nebraska rating slightly improved from last year at 68 versus 73 percent poor/very poor, while Texas is less bad compared to the 74 percent poor to very poor rating one year ago.

The latest monthly crop production report from NASS also included the December and May 1 hay stocks. For the beginning of the hay crop year, May 1, U.S. hay stocks were down 13.4 percent year over year and were down 26.4 percent from the ten-year 2012-2021 average. Compared to the ten-year average, in Kansas, May 1 hay stocks were down 25.5 percent; Nebraska was down 51.6 percent; Oklahoma was down 62.3 percent; and Texas was down 41.3 percent. Collectively, these four states account for 25 percent of U.S. May 1 hay stocks on average. In 2023, these four states accounted for 18.7 percent of total May 1 hay stocks and are down by 44.9 percent compared to the ten-year average for the four-state total.

Not only were the May 1 hay stocks very limited in these states, but continued drought is impacting 2023 hay production. On average, the states of Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas account for about 21 percent of total U.S. hay production. These states ranked (1) Texas; (4) Nebraska; (5) Kansas; and (7) Oklahoma for hay production in the last decade.

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Internal Parasite Control in Spring Calving Herds
Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension Beef Cattle Breeding Specialist

No Bull – The Value of Castration for Calves
Kellie Curry Raper, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Economist

Reduced hay production this year in this region has implications well beyond the borders of these four states.

These four states accounted for 9.3 million beef cows on January 1, 2023, just over 32 percent of the total U.S. beef cow herd and include four of the top ten beef cow states, Texas (1), Oklahoma (2), Nebraska (4) and Kansas (6). Delayed, slow and limited pasture and hay growth in these areas is likely still provoking some cattle liquidation. Total beef cow slaughter through April this year is down 11.2 percent from last year's elevated level. However, it is likely that reduced beef cow slaughter in drought-free areas is masking some additional herd liquidation in these worst drought areas. In Oklahoma, for example, the auction volume of cull cows and bulls is up 21.9 percent year over year for the first 19 weeks of 2023. The much-anticipated herd rebuilding and corresponding market conditions in the beef cattle industry cannot begin in earnest until drought conditions ease significantly in these major beef cattle states.

Derrell Peel, OSU Extension livestock marketing specialist, explains why rising beef prices could be on the way on SunUp TV at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5XX_nzVnXo

Internal Parasite Control in Spring Calving Herds

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

Modern beef cattle production is a business. As such, the expense of each production input should be weighed against the profit potential it creates. Successfully managing a commercial cow-calf operation is based on making the best economic decisions on a day-to-day basis. Making good decisions each day is the result of planning, anticipating what will happen and reacting positively to what does happen. With this in mind, this week's topic is parasite control. For spring calving herds, it's the time of year to turn out on warm season grass pastures. ***For spring born calves, decisions on when to administer the first round of vaccinations, castration, growth implants and parasite control will impact the profit potential of those calves in the months ahead.***

Veterinarians and producers realize the potential negative impact parasites can have on cattle performance, health, well-being and economic return. Parasitism can have subclinical effects such as suppression of the immune system, reduced weight gain, reduced conception rates and reduced milk production. As well as clinical effects such as anemia, diarrhea, rough hair coat and death.

Adult Cattle

Although immunity to internal parasites develops with maturity in most cattle, adult cattle (over two years of age) still harbor internal parasites and can be a major source of pasture contamination. While it is difficult to justify the practice of deworming adult cattle strictly for the performance benefit to the individual animal, untreated adult cattle are a significant source of pasture contaminations for young cattle. A non-treated cow-calf pair can deposit millions of eggs onto a pasture during grazing season.

Young Cattle

Milk is the primary source of nutrition for young calves. These young calves learn grazing behavior from their dams starting at a few weeks of age. ***A good rule of thumb to use: young calves will benefit from deworming medication at approximately two months of age or at 200 pounds of body weight. Studies have shown deworming the cow and her calf at this time provides significant economic return.*** Calves younger and lighter than this typically don't need to be treated for internal parasites; however, in cases of severe drought or lack of milk production from the dam, young calves will start to graze earlier and accordingly develop internal parasite infections earlier negatively impacting their growth. If calves are two months of age or more than 200 pounds at spring grazing turnout, it is safe to assume they will start to acquire internal parasite infections on day one of grazing.

Because of the numerous factors involved in developing a practical, cost effective parasite control program, it is advised that cattle producers work closely with their veterinarians to develop a customized control program that results in the most optimum benefit to their operation. More detail can be found on the topic of internal parasite control in chapter 37 of the OSU Beef Cattle Manual.

No Bull – The Value of Castration for Calves

Kellie Curry Raper, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Economist

A look at previous numbers collected by OSU Extension specialists indicate that, in 2013, 10.3% of the lots coming through the livestock auction at selected weaned and feeder calf sales were lots containing bulls. That number dropped to 7.1% in 2014, 4.7% in 2020 and 2022 data indicate that only 5% of lots at these selected sales contained uncastrated males. With the exception of a blip at 12% in 2021 - likely attributable in part to an untimely extended arctic blast - this decrease is a trend in the right direction.

Castration of bull calves prior to marketing has long been encouraged by Extension educators and the recommendation is backed by objective research, from multiple perspectives.

From a health perspective, calves castrated at less than three months old experience lower stress levels, less sickness, and lower rates of death loss (Campbell). From an animal welfare perspective, older calves experience more stress at castration and a longer period of stress-related impacts relative to calves castrated at birth or at branding. Bull calves also show more aggressive behavior while uncastrated, implying greater risks of injury for other animals and for humans. From a beef quality perspective, calves weighing more than 500 pounds at castration generally have carcasses with less marbling and lower tenderness ratings. In addition to potentially missing out on quality grade premiums, from an economic perspective, bull calves castrated past 3 months of age will weigh 20 pounds less, on average, at slaughter and will take 12 days longer to reach slaughter weight in the feedlot relative to a calf castrated at less than 3 months of age, resulting in a higher cost of gain at the feedlot.

Finally, from a cow-calf operator's perspective, bull calves are usually discounted at the sale barn relative to steers of the same weight, impacting your bottom line. And that discount typically grows as calf weight increases. Williams, et al. (2012) found that bull calves were discounted an average of $5.77/cwt relative to steer calves at feeder cattle auctions in Oklahoma in 2010. More recent data indicates a discount for bull calves in the range of $11/cwt to $12/cwt. For a 500-pound calf, that's a difference in revenue ranging from approximately $30-$60 per head. Those discounts are for bulls and steers of the same weight. What if the bull calf gains at a faster rate than the steer while he is on my ranch? This implies that I can sell more pounds of calf at marketing if the bull and steer are the same age at marketing. That higher weight also implies, however, that the bull's price will be impacted not only by the bull discount, but also by the price slide for selling into a heavier weight category. How much more would a bull calf have to weight to make up for those price impacts? Burdine (2021) illustrates that bull calves would have to be 67 to 100 pounds heavier than the steer calf of the same age to account for the bull discount and price slides of $10/cwt or $15/cwt, respectively.

If you don't regularly castrate male calves prior to sale, consider whether you have the resources to add it to your standard calf management protocol. Unlike some management practices, buyers can easily observe this one, making it an easy one for "marketing your management" and one that has a relatively high return for your efforts. If you need assistance with the how-to and when of castration, contact your county extension educator.

Burdine, Kenny. "The Steer-Bull Price Differential: A Historical Perspective." Economic and Policy Update (21):8, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky, August 30th, 2021.

Campbell, Stacy. "When to Castrate Calves Could Affect Weight Later On." http://beef2live.com/story-castrate-calves-affect-weight-later-0-112823. Published November 10, 2015.

Garden Tips

- By now you should have your soil tested and fertilized if needed.
- Now is when you want to be planting watermelon, cantaloupe, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, and sweet potatoes, etc.
- Make sure to avoid planting too closely together, this can lead to disease spreading and can interfere with normal plant development
- Check out this link to find more information on when to plant and how to properly manage your home garden!

https://extension.okstate.edu/fact-sheets/oklahoma-garden-planning-guide.html

If you have any questions about your garden, give Cheyenne a call! 918-287-4170

OSAGE COUNTY EXTENSION

Homesteading Series

5:30-7:30 PM




$20 for all four classes that will be held at the Osage Co Extension office, all supplies will be provided. These classes will be limited to 25 people in order for everyone to have a good learning experience.

Please have registration and payment to the Osage County Extension by June 22nd. Payment must be made to hold your place in the class

This series will cover the basics of sustainable homesteading practices from Extension educators and experts in the homesteading practices

June 27th: Cooking with different beef cuts

July 25th: Backyard Chickens

July 13th: Bread and Butter making

August 3rd: Laundry soap making & Macramé

For more information contact Cheyenne at 918-287-4170 or at cheyenne.patrick@okstate.edu

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Special Accommodations: Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact Cheyenne Patrick at 918-287-4170 at least two weeks prior to the event

Homesteading Series Registration

June 27th, July 13th, July 25th, August 3rd

$20.00 for all four classes

Name:_____ Date:_____

Phone number: _____Email:_____

Payment: ☐ Cash ☐ Check

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 5th-8th: Osage County 4-H camp

June 16th, 17th, 18th: Osage County Cattlemen's Convention June 27th: Homesteading series starts 5:30-7:30pm

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