VOL 2 ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2023

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION - FRIO COUNTY

FRIO COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

Dear Agricultural Producers:

We are pleased to be able to provide you with information contained in this newsletter. The Frio County Agriculture & Natural Resources Newsletter is a Monthly newsletter beginning January 2023. Best efforts have been made to include Agriculture & Natural Resources information that should be of interest to you and helpful in the management of your agricultural operations. A wide variety of educational publications are available upon request or by accessing the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension website at www.agrilifeextension.tamu.edu. Our office hours are from 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m., (Monday-Friday). It is recommended that office visits be scheduled in advance or by appointment as there will be times that I'm not in the office.

You are encouraged to read this newsletter and keep informed of all on-going agricultural events and activities. Try to do your best to attend Extension educational programs, workshops, etc., throughout the year as they are sponsored by your local Extension committees for your educational benefit. We would like to acknowledge the Extension Agricultural Specialists and cooperators including: The Cattleman, TSCRA, The Peanut Grower, AgriLife Today, Aggie Horticulture, and the Texas A&M Beef Cattle Browsing, who contributed and provided the educational information for this educational newsletter. For any further questions regarding your agricultural operation, please contact the Frio County Extension Office (830) 334-0099, located at 400 S. Pecan St. Pearsall, Texas, or e-mail brianna.gonzales@ag.tamu.edu. Visit the Frio County AgriLife Extension website at https://frio.agrilife.org.

Sincerely,

Brianna Gonzales

Brianna G. Gonzales
County Extension Agent- Agriculture & Natural Resources
Frio County

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION 12

Inside this issue:

-Monthly BQA Tip.....(Page 2)

-CROP WEATHER/Egg Prices...(Page 3)

-Some Points to Consider About Cattle Water.....(Pages 4-5)

-Wildlife & Horticulture.....(Page 6-7)

-Frio County AgriLife Extension- Last Chance CEU's.....(Page 8)

-Agricultural Pesticide Waste Collection Event.....(Page 9)

-HAPPY VALENTINES!.....(Page 10)

Helpful Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Websites:

agrilifeextension.tamu.edu
texaswater.tamu.edu
aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu
livestockvetento.tamu.edu
animalscience.tamu.edu
texashelp.tamu.edu
SouthTexasRangelands.tamu.edu

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BQA TIP

- Rumen acidosis is a condition in cattle when pH in the rumen drops to low for normal rumen function and microbial growth.
- Acidosis can lead to reduced animal weight, liver abscesses, foot abscesses, founder, and death.
- Acidosis is most often caused by a sudden increase in feeds that contain a large amount of rapidly fermentable carbohydrates like wheat, barely, corn, oats, grain sorghum, wheat midds, rice bran, soybean hulls, and similar feedstuffs.
- To help prevent acidosis it is important to gradually increase the amount of these feeds in the diet.
- Also feeding whole corn is safer than steam flaked cor.

For more information please visit:
https://texasbeefquality.com/bqa-tips/
or animalscience.tamu.edu.

Egg prices continue to set all-time per-dozen price records, and a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert does not expect that trend to reverse in the near future. David Anderson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension economist, Bryan-College Station, said inflationary pressure and the worst avian flu outbreak in U.S. history have combined to send egg prices upward over much of the last year. For a year-to-year comparison, prices reached $4.25 per dozen on average in December 2022 across the nation, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture retail egg report. A dozen eggs was $1.79 at the same time last year. The previous peak price occurred in September 2015 – $2.97 per dozen – and was also attributable to an avian influenza outbreak.

Anderson said he has been inundated with media requests on the subject as the topic of egg prices has become a major talking point among the consuming public. “One reporter in Houston interviewed a backyard producer who told them this is the first time ever that it’s been cheaper to produce eggs than buy them at the store,” he said. “The situation with egg prices is something people are following now, but I think it is also something that happened over the course of time with several factors aligning.”

Avian flu driving egg prices upward

Higher production and logistical costs like feed and fuel have contributed, but the top factor driving egg prices to record highs is an ongoing outbreak of avian influenza, Anderson said. The highly pathogenic viral disease hit the U.S. poultry industry in early 2022 and cases continue to pop up at poultry farms nationwide. The USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA-APHIS, reported almost 58 million commercial poultry birds, including broiler and egg-laying chickens, turkeys and various fowl have been lost to the virus, now reported in 46 states. The USDA estimated around 43 million egg-laying hens were cut from the U.S. flock through December. The disease hits egg-laying chicken flocks harder because birds are in production much longer than broiler chickens, which increases their risk of exposure to the pathogen. The losses resulted in U.S. egg inventories that were 29% lower than January 2022, according to the report.

Egg demand peaks around Easter

Wholesale prices continue to rise, which indicates retail egg prices have not peaked, he said. The teetering flock numbers couldn’t come at a worse time for consumers. The January USDA egg report showed prices were steady to slightly lower than December, but yearly prices for eggs often peaks each spring due to Easter holiday egg hunts and baking, he said. “We have a built-in holiday-driven demand for table eggs,” he said. “That demand bump is on the horizon, but the higher prices are also a signal to consumers to use less, so it will be interesting to see if there will be a demand adjustment this Easter.”

Weekly Crop Report - South Region

Weather conditions were dry with cooler temperatures and daytime high temperatures in the mid-80s. Northern and western parts of the district were very short on soil moisture while eastern areas were very short to short. Southern parts of the district reported adequate soil moisture levels. A freeze caused winter burn in rangelands and pastures, and available grazing was minimal. Some producers reported good ryegrass and oat growth for grazing. Supplemental feed was necessary for livestock. Feed prices remained high, and hay prices were increasing due to demand. Livestock were in good condition. Producers were preparing fields for spring planting, while a few in areas with soil moisture were planting early. Spinach fields were being planted and harvested. Citrus, sugarcane and cool-season vegetables were being harvested. Some acres of fall corn were being harvested as well. The amount of dead, dry plant materials in fields and pastures raised wildfire concerns.

FARM & RANCH - agrilifetoday.tamu.edu

Some Points to Consider About Cattle Water

The lack of water from forage is more important than we credit. How many people would think of going out to work for a few hours without a jug of water to drink from periodically? The water in the grazed forage is the cow's "jug of water" that rehydrates her while she is out on the range or pasture. Heat stress can be less of a problem in years when the forage is actively growing and green even though ambient temperatures may be high because of water intake from grazed forage. But this year is different. The risk of heat stress is greater because we have high ambient temperatures combined with dry dead forage. The cow's "jug of water" is relatively empty this year and the risk of heat stress and water-related problems are greater.

Dr. Sprowls indicated that water deprivation, water intoxication and water quality all play a role in cases they have investigated. These three may act independently but often they are interrelated.

1. **Water deprivation** occurs when cattle cannot consume an adequate amount of water. Water is a nutrient just as protein, vitamins and minerals and reduced water intake results in reduced performance. Water deprivation can be fatal or can lead to circumstances that can be fatal (see water intoxication below).

Most would immediately associate this with a well that cannot pump enough water to keep up with cattle needs, or a breakdown of a well or watering system, or a pond or creek drying up. These certainly are of great concern but water deprivation can occur in circumstances when we perceive there is an adequate amount of water available.

Water quality can affect palatability of water and reduce consumption. In some cases, consumption may cease. So, the supply of water may be adequate but the cattle are deprived because they cannot or will not consume enough of the water. Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) and Total Soluble Salts (TSS) are two water quality measures that in themselves can lead to poor performance and possibly death. But TDS and TSS are also related to water intake. As the concentrations increase, water intake is reduced. Salinity of water limits intake just as salt in feeds can limit intake. Hence water quality can lead to water deprivation.

Cattle behavior may lead to water deprivation. Cattle develop preferences for grazing sites, loafing areas, and, if more than one watering point is available, they may develop a preferred watering location in a landscape. So, a grazing area with multiple watering points may appear to have an adequate supply of water. However, if cattle have a preferred site and that site breaks down, dries up, or the water quality declines and reduces consumption, then water deprivation will occur.

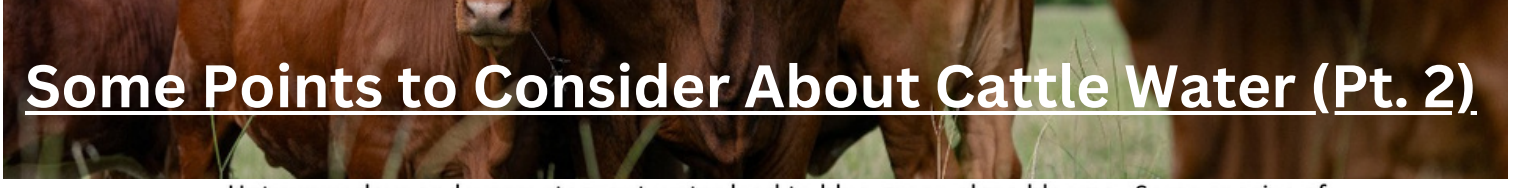
Cattle with no familiarity of a grazing area can also suffer deprivation. Do not assume cattle will find water. When cattle are moved to new pastures, take them to water and observe their consumption to determine if they willing consume the water.

2. **Water intoxication** occurs when cattle (or any other animal, including humans) overconsume water and usually occurs following a period of reduced water consumption or increased water loss from the body. The cattle are dehydrated and consume an excessive amount of water. Electrolyte balance in the body is disrupted and water intoxication occurs and can be fatal. In cases of acute water intoxication, dead cattle will be found near the watering site.

Water intoxication typically follows water deprivation. So, a key to avoiding water intoxication is avoiding water deprivation.

Limiting water intake when cattle are moved to a new water source may be next to impossible. But if cattle are dehydrated, it may be worth the effort to allow them to drink but then find a way to limit the amount immediately consumed.

3. **Water quality** can directly cause problems in cattle or may indirectly cause problems. High consumption of sodium, calcium, magnesium salts and sulfates can lead to unthriftiness and in some cases can be fatal. Nitrates in the water may also be of concern. Coupled with reduced water intake these issues can become even more of a concern. Water quality can indirectly affect performance and health by reducing water consumption which exacerbates heat stress and can lead to water intoxication once cattle locate or can access palatable water.



Some Points to Consider About Cattle Water (Pt. 2)

Hot sunny days and warm stagnant water lead to blue-green algae blooms. Some species of blue-green algae are toxic. Consumption of the algae or the toxins from the algae can be fatal. The dead animals are usually found close to the watering site. Oftentimes the algae is concentrated on the downwind side of the pond as a result of wave action. Dead rodents, birds or fish along the downwind side of the pond may indicate the presence of blue-green algae. Limiting access to the downwind side of the pond by cattle may reduce risk of toxicity. Copper sulfate can be used to limit algae growth but caution must be exercised because excess copper sulfate can lead to stream pollution and can harm fish and plant life.

4. Don't rule out t**oxic plants** that may be present around watering locations. The immediate area around ponds and tank overflows is disturbed and the moisture profile in the soil is better than out in the pasture. Even though drought conditions exist, disturbance and moisture are conducive to weed growth. Pigweed, kochia, Russian thistle, dock, buffalo burrs, etc. can grow in these areas, they are green, and may be attractive to cattle. If cattle deaths are occurring, see what has been grazed off around the watering area. Water may not be the culprit.

Considerations:

- As ponds draw down, check water quality to determine if problems may be present
- When moving cattle to new pastures, always drive them to the water sources so they know where the water is located
- Observe cattle at watering sites to see if they are readily consuming the water
- If a grazing area has multiple water sources and one or more of those breaks down, dries up, etc., it may be necessary to push cattle to the other sources of water
- When working cattle, do not hold them for long periods in pens without water
- Make certain weaned calves are familiar with water locations
- As ponds draw down, salt and other inorganic materials become more concentrated in the water. It may be necessary to remove salt licks from the pastures to avoid salt toxicity and/or reduced water consumption
- Do not use salt-limited feeds if water intake is a concern
- Realize that introducing cattle to water after a period of reduced water intake has risks
- If deaths are occurring and water is a suspect, do not initially rule out any aspects of deprivation, intoxication, water quality, or toxic plants. Reexamine what has occurred for the few days leading up to the deaths and then try to identify the causes.

For more information on water quality for livestock see:
Water quality: Its relationship to livestock. http://animalscience.tamu.edu/images/pdf/beef/beef-water-quality.pdf

Some measures of water quality for cattle

Item	Expected[1]	Possible Cattle Problems[2]
PH	6.8 - 7.5	Under 5.5; Over 8.5
Dissolved solids	500 ppm or less	Over 3,000 ppm
Total alkalinity	0 - 400 ppm	Over 5,000 ppm
Sulfate	0 - 250 ppm	Over 2,000 ppm
Total bacteria/100 ml	under 200	Over 1 million
Total coliform/100 ml	less than 1	Over 1 for calves
		Over 15 to 50 for cows
Fecal coliform/100 ml	less than 1	Over 1 for calves
		Over 10 for cows

WILDLIFE

Dr. Jacob Dykes
Assistant Professor & Extension Wildlife Specialist

Whether you're a deer hunter or not, everyone appreciates antlers. I mean how could you not be fascinated with bony spikes growing from an animal's head? At this point (pun intended), antlers are an iconic symbol across the globe and can be found plastered on everything from the cave walls of Neanderthals to the back glasses of pickup trucks. But for hunters, antlers can be something more, a sign of hard work and proper management paying off.

Managing deer for antlers, big and beautiful antlers, has been a hot topic for quite some time and subject of great debate. One of the most common management strategies aimed at producing larger antlers is to cull smaller antlered deer. The hope is that only larger antlered deer will breed and thus pass on genetics for larger antlers. Unfortunately, it's not that simple and for a few good reasons. First, fawns inherit half of their genetic potential from mom, and there is no way to know if a doe's genetics will contribute to large antlers. Second, large antlers aren't 100% hereditary. In other words, just because dad had large antlers doesn't mean his son will. Third, young bucks disperse, so unless you have a lot of acreage it's unlikely bucks being produced on your property are sticking around anyway. The long and short of it is that you simply can't manage for genetics, sorry for the bad news…

It's not all bad though! There are things you can do to promote healthy deer herds and large antlered bucks. Large antlers require genetics, nutrition, and age. And although we can't do anything about genetics, we can work with nutrition and age. Manage the habitat to promote nutritional resources deer need to be healthy and grow large antlers.

You can supplement proper habitat management with food plots or a feeding program to add more deer groceries to the landscape. This can be especially important in an arid environment where rain can't be counted on to produce nutritious forage. And then there is age! Antler size increases with age. In fact, a buck's antler size doesn't peak until about 5-7 years of age. In many cases, bucks just don't live long enough to grow large antlers.

To wrap things up, focus on what works. Don't worry about trying to manage genetics. Instead, implement a management strategy that ensures deer have plenty of good quality food to eat and allow them to reach maturity. This will lead to healthier deer and large antlers.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Rangeland, Wildlife & Fisheries Management

RWFM.TAMU.EDU

FEBRUARY CHECKLIST

Dr. Larry Stein

Frost sensitive transplants such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant can be purchased and potted up into larger containers so as to have a larger plant with a great root system to set out in mid to late March.

Woody ornamentals can be fertilized with a 3 - 1- 2 slow release fertilizer toward the end of the month.

Complete pruning of fruit trees as they begin to bloom. Treat fruit trees with dormant oil prior to budbreak.

As live oaks drop their leaves collect them to use as mulch in your garden and flower beds.

Scalp your lawn toward the end of the month to remove any thatch layer that you may have and promote spring green up.

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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION 12

Learn more:
http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/

FEBRUARY CHECKLIST

Dr. Larry Stein

Continue to plant/transplant new trees, shrubs, etc.The sooner you get them planted, the sooner the plants can initiate new roots so they can really take off and grow when warmer weather comes.

Continue to stager plantings of leafy greens, leaf lettuce, kale, collards, etc.

We typically use Valentine's Day as the day to prune rose bushes and also plant your Irish potatoes. You still have time to plant your onion plants.

Pre-emergent herbicide needs to be applied and incorporated via water into your lawn to prevent spring weeds from germinating.

Those of you concerned about ball moss, can treat it now with a copper spray.

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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

LAST CHANCE CEU's

TUESDAY, February 7, 2023

8:00AM - 10:00AM

Frio County Extension Office
400 S. Pecan St.
Pearsall, Texas 78061

PROGRAM

Drift - 1.0 **General** - 1.0

($10.00 Registration Fee Required)

For More Information Contact:
Brianna Gonzales, Frio County Extension Agent 830-334-0099

Agricultural Pesticide Waste Collection Event

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 | 8 AM - Noon

City of Hondo Fairgrounds
733 FM 462 N
Hondo, TX 78861

Scan the QR Code for directions

Unwanted or Surplus Agricultural Pesticides?
Dispose of them Free and Anonymously without leaving your Vehicle!

MATERIALS ACCEPTED

- Outdated, Discontinued or Unwanted Agricultural Pesticides
- Insecticides
- Herbicides
- Fungicides
- Rodenticides
- Nematicides
- Growth Regulators
- Empty, Triple-Rinsed Plastic Pesticide Containers
- Empty or Partial Metal Drums

PESTICIDES MUST BE KEPT IN ORIGINAL CONTAINERS, EVEN IF THE LABEL IS NOT PRESENT.

Unknown pesticides will be sampled and identified on site.

MATERIALS NOT ACCEPTED

- Explosive ordinances and ammunition
- Petroleum-Based Products
- Paints
- Medical Wastes
- Radioactive Substances
- Household Chemicals and Waste
- Tires
- Fertilizers
- Propane or Butane Cylinders
- Fumigant Canisters
- Used motor oil and automobile fluids
- Auto Batteries
- Empty Totes
- Methyl-Bromide Cylinders
- Dioxins (2,4-5T, Silvex, TCDD, etc.)

For questions or additional information contact the Texas Dept of Agriculture (TDA) at (512) 463-7622, TDA San Antonio Regional Office at (210) 820-0288, or the Medina County AgriLife Extension Office at (830) 741-6180.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

CleanEarth

USAg Recycling

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

For more information please contact:
Brianna Gonzales-Frio County Extension Agent, at
(830) 334-0099
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Frio County AgriLife Extension

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