


MESSENGER-INQUIRER

 Cooperative
Extension Service



Farm Update

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES
EDUCATION

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October 28, 2023

Timely Tips for Beef Cattle Management

As winter approaches, taking a little extra time with your beef cattle will pay dividends. For spring-calving herds, schedule a pregnancy examination of cows if not done previously. Winter feeding costs can be minimized by eliminating open cows now. Pregnancy status (pregnant versus open) can be determined using palpation, transrectal ultrasonography, or blood sampling. Stage of pregnancy can only be determined by palpation or by ultrasonography performed by a veterinarian. A new chute-side blood sampling kit (Alertys from IDEXX) is available for use. It provides yes/no pregnancy data in 20 minutes for about \$8-10 per cow.

Evaluate the body condition of your cows and improve their condition prior to winter. It takes about 75 pounds to increase body condition a full score. If you have already done a preweaning working, revaccinate (booster) calves as needed. Treat calves for internal and external parasites. If you vaccinate calves yourself, be sure to store, handle, and administer vaccines properly. Wean calves before cows lose body condition and obtain weaning weights of your calves. Remember weaning is the time to do your first round of culling and selecting breeding stock. You can eliminate obviously inferior calves, especially those with wild or nervous dispositions. Consider the number of heifers that you will need to save for your cow

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

herd. Bulls that are old and unsound. can be culled now. It is not too early to begin thinking about replacements.

For fall-calving herds, the calving season should be in full swing for fall-calving cows. Check cows frequently. Identify calves and the males should be castrated and implanted. Take accurate records of calving and calving performance. Put fall-calving cows on accumulated pasture before the breeding season. Be sure to save some grass in the breeding pastures. It is time to get everything ready for the fall breeding season, too. Line up semen, supplies, etc. now and get your bulls ready to go (don't forget their breeding soundness evaluation). Breeding soundness exams are vital to reducing the risk of reproductive performance and must be conducted 30-45 days before every breeding season.

Contact a veterinarian and schedule pelvic area examinations and reproductive tract scores for your potential heifer replacements. Use pelvic area measurement to identify larger heifers with smaller than normal pelvic areas so you can remove them from the breeding pool. Reproductive tract scores can be used to identify immature heifers for culling. Typically, heifers with a reproductive tract score less than 3 have limited ability to conceive early in the breeding season.

Grain Crop Protection Webinar Series

The University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is conducting a series of four informative webinars on field crop protection, starting next Thursday, November 2. Hosted by the Southern Integrated Pest Management Center, these webinars feature UK Cooperative Extension Service pest management specialists delving into critical plant pathology, weed science, and entomology topics.

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This series is for anyone who wants to learn about the latest UK research on grain crop pest management. Information discussed in these webinars will be helpful as farmers and advisors make decisions on what practices to implement in 2024.

The one-hour webinars are scheduled to take place every Thursday morning in November via Zoom, beginning at 9:00 a.m. CST. Pre-registration is required for each session, at <https://www.kygrains.info/events/2023/11/2/2023-fall-crop-protection-webinar-series>.

Nov. 2, 2023 - Webinar #1: "Do multiple corn fungicide applications pay?" with Kiersten Wise, extension plant pathologist.

Nov. 9, 2023 - Webinar #2: "What have we learned from nearly two decades of research on soybean with foliar fungicides?" with Carl Bradley, extension plant pathologist.

Nov. 16, 2023 - Webinar #3: "Managing the offensive spread of weeds" with Travis Legleiter, extension weed scientist.

Nov. 30, 2023 - Webinar #4: "Insects in field crops during two years of partial drought and heat wave" with Raul Villanueva, extension entomologist.

Certified Crop Advisers can earn one hour of continuing education units per webinar. Kentucky pesticide applicators are eligible to receive one continuing education unit in Category 1A (Agricultural Plant) per webinar.

Grazing after Frost

With a look at the upcoming forecast, I'd like to offer this reminder. Use caution when grazing pastures that have johnsongrass, sorghum, sudangrass, or wild cherry in them after frost because toxic levels of prussic acid may develop. Standing plants killed by frost are normally safe to graze after one week. Beware of areas in fields that may not have been affected by the

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

initial freeze but may be killed by later frosts. Hay that has dried enough to be safely baled will not contain toxic levels of prussic acid.

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