

The Cattle Corner



BAXTER COUNTY U OF A COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE NEWSLETTER

February 2019

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From the County Agent's desk...

Hello, Baxter County cattlemen, cattlemen, and grass growers. Here's an introduction of sorts. My name is Brad Runsick, and effective Wednesday, January 16th, I've taken over Mark Keaton's old role as the Baxter County Extension Agent. I come

to you from Fulton County, where I've spent the last 7+ years serving as the agent there, but I'm not new to Baxter County. In 2011, I transferred to Fulton County from Searcy County, where I had spent 3 years as their agent. The transfer to Fulton County happened largely because I was getting married to my wife, Amber, and Mountain Home is where she already lived and had a job, so here is where we decided to settle down. Needless to say, my daily commute got significantly shorter!

So, fast forward to present-day. My wife and I have two daughters, Kate (4) and Charlotte (nearly 11 months). Presently, she teaches high school family and consumer sciences at Norfolk High School. We're members of the Riverside church of Christ in Gassville, and we live in Salesville.

A little about myself: I grew up east of Batesville, around Cord/Newark area, on a farm where my Dad ran about 30-40 head of momma cows and cut about 60 acres of bermudagrass hay on family farm land in the flat country across the Black River in Jackson County. So, as you might can imagine, cattle and forages are my passion when it comes to agriculture and what knowledge I hope to bring to this job, in particular. After leaving home, I

headed off to college at Arkansas Tech in Russellville to get a bachelor's degree in agriculture business, spent some time managing parts stores in Greenbrier and Little Rock, a summer working on an offshore drilling rig in the Gulf, and a master's degree from the U of A in Fayetteville in plant science. In my free time, I like to bowhunt, fish, golf, backpack, or run the occasional long distance race that I'm rarely prepared for. But most of the time, I'm at home just being Daddy and picking a guitar, mandolin, or most recently, a banjo.

This newsletter will primarily focus on cattle and forages but will also include occasional information on sheep and goats. Since most of my work and projects that I have results for are from Fulton County, at least a few of these first few newsletters will contain some of those project results for content sake. And speaking of that, I'm always on the lookout for farms and fields to do some demonstration projects on. If you've got a place and are willing, especially one with high visibility on a roadside, let me know. I look forward to serving as your agent for years to come. Please don't hesitate to call or come by. Many days, I'd like nothing more than to get out from behind this desk and get out and look at some farms and walk a hayfield or two. Let me know how I can help you or your operation.

STOCKPILE FESCUE PROJECT RESULTS

The stockpile fescue project that we started back in late August/early September has since been turned in on, and here are the preliminary results. For now, we only have the yield results, but not quality yet. However, stockpile fescue that is started around the first of September will typically test out at around 20% crude protein and high 60s% TDN (energy) – more than good enough to meet lactating cows needs with no additional feed supplementation. We rarely, if ever, see hay tests that analyze out that good.

These 12 acres of stockpiled fescue yielded 2,900 lbs dry matter/acre. That's the equivalent of nearly four, 725 lb. round bales. The cost associated with the project was the nitrogen fertilizer application at a total of \$35/acre and minimal diesel expense.

So, in short, through stockpiling, the landowner is able to get the equivalent of 48 bales of hay for the cost of 12. Additionally, the intent is to strip graze across this field with temporary electric fence, making the grazing efficiency even better, as much as 70%. Losses associated with cutting, raking, baling, storing, and feeding hay often is much greater than just a 30% loss. And, don't forget that quality of the stockpile is far greater even above average hay. As of early December and just prior to turning in to graze, it tested at 16% crude protein and 63% TDN (energy). Better quality forage means that fall calving cows that are being bred back come back in heat earlier than those with poor body condition after being dragged down from a calf and consuming low quality forage.



On this project, we estimated 87 days grazing, saving \$121.50/AU (animal unit) for a total saving of \$1670, compared to feeding hay and supplement. An animal unit refers to 1000 lbs. of grazing livestock. This is used instead of a per head basis, since animals of different weights have different daily dry matter intakes.

FALL PLANTED SUMMER ANNUALS PROJECT

The goal with planting annuals in the fall is to extend the grazing season to cut back on hay feeding, particular in a year where the hay crop has been less than ideal. For this project, we've used browntop millet, pearl millet, and spring 'Jerry' oats. Plots were suppressed with glyphosate at a rate of 1 quart/acre and cost of \$3.25/acre prior to seeding to prevent competition from the fescue, crabgrass, and broadleaf weeds that were present. It received 54 lbs./acre of nitrogen within the first week. Pearl and browntop millet were planted with a no-till at a rate of 26 lbs./acre and costs of \$39 and \$20 per acre, respectively. Spring 'Jerry' oats were planted at a rate of 120 lbs./acre with a no-till drill at a cost of \$38/acre.



None of these have much cold tolerance, so they need to be grazed by Oct-Dec. Yield and quality results to follow later this fall, both before and after first hard freeze.

With this project at Glencoe, AR, we planted three common summer annuals – pearl millet, browntop millet, and spring 'Jerry' oats. The sprayed plots were suppressed with 1 quart/acre glyphosate prior to seeding. The results are as follows. Note: The crude protein and TDN samples were taken only from the plots that were first suppressed with glyphosate.

Forage Species	Canopy Height		DM Yield (lbs/ac)		% Crude Protein	% TDN Total Digestible Nutrients (Energy)
	Sprayed	Unsprayed	Sprayed	Unsprayed		
Browntop Millet	20"	13"	2010	1030	15.65%	59.80%
Pearl Millet	30"	12"	1850	320	16.69%	63.18%
Jerry Oat	10"	5"	710	90	24.06%	76.53%

WINTER TO-DO LIST

- Cattle energy needs are higher when it's wet and cold. Feed accordingly
- Be sure to winterize any and all pumps, sprayers, etc. Anything that has the potential to freeze up and break will.
- As long as the ground isn't frozen, winter is a great time to get out and get soil sampling done. Having results in January/February makes it a lot easier to plan versus waiting until April to take samples.
- Frost seeding of clover is a great way to improve forage quality next spring. Broadcasting clover seed onto snow is an excellent way to sow clover. As the snow melts, the seed goes with it, allowing good seed-soil contact. Need to ensure that the pH and fertility is right before spending too much on seed.
- I know it seems early, but the time to spray is right around the corner. Thistles are easily controlled with 1 quart of 2,4-D amine per acre if sprayed in late Feb./early March. With the cold temperatures, it just takes a little longer to see results, but the herbicide will work.
- Applications of glyphosate (Roundup, Cornerstone, etc.) in late Feb. and early March will work wonders on cleaning up bermudagrass fields. It'll take care of all that cheat, ryegrass, and winter annual weeds which are stealing spring rain, nutrients, and sunlight from the Bermuda. Not to mention, removing those weeds gets the bermudagrass out of dormancy earlier, providing early grazing or hay cutting. The herbicide won't affect the dormant bermudagrass.

LATE WINTER-EARLY SPRING SPRAYING

Brad Runsick, CEA – Agriculture

It is only February, but now is the time to start thinking about spring weed control. Get out those sprayers, and make sure that everything is in working order because Mother Nature only leaves some short windows for spring spraying. Depending on temperatures, we're only about 6-10 weeks from late winter/early spring spraying. Winter annual weeds, such as buttercup, and perennials, such as thistles are just itching to germinate and/or greenup during this time. Here in about 6 weeks, a lot of producers will look out across their pasture as they drive by and say, "There's aren't any weeds out there. I believe I'll wait another month or so." However, underneath that dormant base of grass, little ½"- 1" winter annuals that have just started their lives and thistles rosettes would easily be controlled with 2,4-D.

There are several benefits to an early spraying. You'll reduce the nutrient and water competition with your desirable species, allowing them to kick off spring with some good greenup. Also, spraying these weeds when they're young and tender allows for lower rates of herbicide. A pint of 2,4-D will kill more seedlings now than it will in mid-April. The downside is: you may get another round of germination after your first spraying. If so, spray it again. A pint of 2,4-D amine is only about \$3/acre chemical cost. You can curtail this, somewhat, by allowing as much winter annuals to germinate as possible before that first spraying. Just don't let the earliest germinating ones get much over 3-4". However, you probably need to plan on a mid-April to June spraying in addition to this one anyway to catch the ragweed, horse and bull nettle, wooly croton (goatweed), and Sericea lespedeza. If you need any help calibrating a sprayer, feel free to give me a call, and I can come out and help you out. I do ask that everything be in working order when I get there. For more information concerning weed control or sprayer calibration, give us a call here at the Baxter Co. Extension Office at 870-425-2335.

GRASSLAND EVALUATION CONTEST FOR YOUTH

I'm looking to recruit some Baxter County kids to participate in the upcoming Arkansas Grassland Evaluation. If your kid, grandkids, or neighbor kids might be interested, get them in touch with us as soon as possible. Even if they aren't currently enrolled in 4-H, we'll get that done and be glad to have them.

Grassland Evaluation is open to junior and senior 4-Hers, ages 9-19. Youth participate in hands-on, real world scenarios to answer questions about forage production, plant identification, wildlife habitat, and soils.

The deadline to sign up will be Friday, February 15th with near weekly practices beginning after the first of the year. We'll plan what days based on the schedules of those participating. The state contest will be held somewhere around Conway on Wednesday, May 1st. The top 5 teams are eligible to go to the national level, Mid-America contest that is held in Springfield the first week of June.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR PLANTING LEGUMES IN GRASS PASTURES AND HAY FIELDS

Dr. John Jennings, Extension Forage Specialist

Adding legumes to grass pastures and hay fields offers many benefits to forage system sustainability. Legumes in grass pastures improve animal performance, increase nutritional quality of hay and pasture, extend grazing seasons, and reduce the need for nitrogen fertilizer. In a recent survey (2011) over 40% of Arkansas producers reported having added clover to pastures within the past five years and over 25% planted clover in fescue pastures to reduce fescue toxicity in their livestock.

Site selection is important for maintaining good legume stands. Avoid shallow, droughty soils and sites with very low soil fertility or heavy weed infestation. Legumes can be planted into fescue and cool-season grass sods during fall or in late winter. Planting in late winter (February to early March) is sometimes called "frost-seeding" because freezing and thawing of soil helps work the legume seed into the soil surface. Good clover stands can be established with a no-till drill or by broadcast seeding. No-till drills should be calibrated and set to plant the seed no more than 1/2" deep. Fields should be clipped or grazed as closely as possible to remove the grass canopy and excess thatch before planting. In heavy grass residue, no-till drills perform poorly and broadcast seed will not reach the soil surface. A closely-grazed grass stubble of two inches or less is ideal. Roughing up the short sod by pulling a harrow, tire drag, or even a cedar tree across the field exposes soil and improves legume establishment. Seeds that drop onto a slightly loosened soil surface will become anchored in place by action of frost or rain. White clover is the most popular clover in Arkansas. Seeding rate is 2-3 lbs/acre. Red clover is a better option for hay production. Seeding rate is 8-10 lbs/acre.

Adequate soil fertility is necessary for good root growth and stand persistence. Nitrogen fertilizer is not needed for establishing legumes in grass sods. To get fertilizer and lime recommendations for overseeding legumes, ask for soil test code #116 "Legumes Over-seeded into Grass Sod" when submitting soil samples to the county Extension office.

Weed control in mixed grass/legume pastures is a common concern. Reducing the reservoir of weed seeds in the soil before planting legumes should be of primary focus since few options are available for controlling weeds once legumes are established in pastures. Several good herbicides and management practices can be used to reduce weed populations in grass pastures prior to planting legumes. Heavy grazing pressure may control certain weeds.

After legumes have been planted, pastures should be grazed early in spring to reduce grass competition while the clover seedlings are emerging. It is recommended to continue grazing the grass canopy until the legume plants begin to emerge to control competition from the grass and allow more sunlight to reach the new seedlings. As new seedlings emerge, remove livestock until the legumes reach sufficient size for grazing or hay harvest. Sufficient size of the legume will vary with species and intended use of the legume. If the legume is being used for grazing, turn-in livestock when the legume is about 6" -10" in height and remove the livestock when it has been grazed down to 3". Rotational grazing will allow for more total yield produced over the growing season and will aid in maintaining the stand.

PRECONDITION YOUR 2019 CALF CROP FOR GREATER CALF VALUE AT MARKET

Shane Gadberry, Extension Beef Specialist

During fall 2018, value added calves fetched nearly \$10/cwt over non-value added calves with a gross added value of \$56/calf. What makes these calves different? Health history and weaning management. Here are a few steps to consider if you want to be a value added player.

The first step in marketing value added requires a visit with your sale barn to determine the programs the barn offers for preconditioned calves. Many barns around the state offer special sales to attract additional buyers looking specifically to purchase preconditioned calves. Marketing preconditioned doesn't have to be restricted to special sales either. Some markets may choose to market value added calves as a regular part of their weekly sale.

The second step in marketing value added is to become BQA certified. County Extension agents provide BQA classes. Certification is required to participate in some value added programs.

The third step in marketing value added is determining a health and management plan up to and following weaning. There are several commercial plans available through vaccine companies. Arkansas Extension also launched the Natural State Preconditioned Calf Program also known as GoGREEN. Calves meeting health and management requirements and weaned at least 45 days before market qualify for the GoGREEN tag. Begin visiting with a veterinarian, Extension agent, or pharmaceutical company representative about health protocols now. Establishing a health protocol now is important because some vaccine choices can influence the vaccine needs of the entire cow herd. One example is modified live vaccines. Using modified live vaccines in pre-weaned calves have strict label requirements about cow herd vaccination and timing.

The fourth step in marketing value added is determining a weaning management plan. Buyers looking for preconditioned calves generally want calves to be weaned at least 45 days. Calves can be weaned to a drylot or fenceline weaned to pasture. Both have their strengths and limitations. Buyers also like calves that know how to eat and drink from troughs. In general, aggressive feeding after weaning won't be profitable. Calves weaned to pasture will benefit from a little

supplementation; whereas, calves weaned to drylot may require greater amounts of supplement depending on hay or silage quality. The local county agent is also a good source of information on post-weaned calf management.

On April 16th, the livestock and forestry research station near Batesville, Arkansas will be hosting a field day specific to the idea of preconditioning. Mark your calendar and plan to attend.

For more information about marketing your calves through the GoGREEN program, contact your county Extension agent and visit our website www.uaex.edu/gogreen.

BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE (BQA) TRAINING

To participate in the GoGreen program, the rancher must first be Beef Quality Assurance certified. The first Beef Quality Assurance certification training for Baxter County will be held on Tuesday, February 19th at 5:30 p.m. at the Baxter County Fairgrounds. The deadline to RSVP is Monday, February 8th. Contact the Baxter County Extension Office at 870-425-2335 to register. The training is also available online at www.bqa.org to complete at your own convenience.

BAXTER COUNTY EXTENSION

U of A DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE TRAINING

WHERE + WHEN
FEBRUARY 19, 2019
5:30 P.M.
BAXTER COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
1507 FAIRGROUNDS DRIVE
MOUNTAIN HOME, ARKANSAS 72653

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 8TH
RSVP TO ATTEND BY CALLING US @
870-425-2335

BQA CERTIFICATION IS FREE

COST IS \$10.00 FOR 3 YEAR ENROLLMENT IN
GOGREEN PRECONDITIONED CALF PROGRAM

GoGREEN
with the
Natural State
Preconditioned
Calf Program

WHY + WHAT
BQA TRAINING REQUIRED FOR PARTICIPATION
IN THE NATURAL STATE PRECONDITIONED CALF
PROGRAM. LEARN BEST MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES. POTENTIAL TO ADD VALUE TO
MARKET ANIMALS.

BEEF **Q** Beef Quality Assurance

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution. If you require a reasonable accommodation to participate or need materials in another format, please contact Benton or Carroll County Extension Office as soon as possible. Dial 711 for Arkansas Relay.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad A. Runsick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Brad Runsick

Baxter County Extension Agent

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