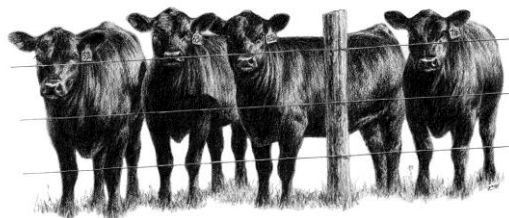


# The Back Forty News



FULTON COUNTY U OF A COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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Spring 2018

## From the County Agent's desk...

Spring has sprung, as they say. If you haven't already done so, we're on the tail end of spraying season for winter annual weeds and thistles. It absolutely needs to be done by mid-April. A good, general recommendation is 1 quart of 2,4-D amine per acre. Use 0.5% surfactant as part of your spray volume. Waiting until those thistles start to perk up in the least is going to result in reduced control, unless you use a stronger herbicide. In some places, using glyphosate (Roundup) in bermudagrass can still be very effective at cleaning up cheat, fescue, ryegrass, and broadleaf weeds, but you need to look very, very closely at the bermudagrass to ensure that it isn't breaking dormancy yet. At the time of me writing this, it hasn't, but by the time you get it and read it, bermuda may be starting to think about waking up from its winter dormancy. It takes a few nights above 60°F for that to happen, and we haven't quite seen that yet. For more information on spring weed control or sprayer calibration, give me a call or come by at 870-895-3301.

### Controlling Sericea

Brad Runsick, Fulton County Extension Agent

There's no doubt that sericea lespedeza grows readily here in Fulton County. Whether or not that's a good or bad thing is up for debate. Just like anything, there are two sides to this coin. For the sake of this article, we're going to discuss how to control it if you don't want it in your fields. Every year, I get calls from landowners wanting to know what to do to control it, and 9 times out of 10, they're way too late to do much about it that year. As with all weed control with herbicide, timing is everything.

So, what to do about it if you want to control it. Sericea can absolutely take over a pasture or hayfield. It can get by on lower fertility fields, and it is a prolific reseeder. Over time, a pasture that isn't managed will wind up with only sericea and not much of anything else. It will shade out other forages, leaving behind lots of bare ground once it is gone. A really management intensive rotation grazing and stocking rate has to be right to keep it in check. If it's not grazed by the time it gets above 10-12" tall, it becomes mostly useless for grazing.



The good news is: It is easily controlled, but the timing has to be right. In most years, that's going to be the first couple of weeks in June, but every year differs. Get out there and look for it. Early in the year, it blends in very well with desirable forages, but believe me it's still there. If it was there last year, you can bet that you'll have sericea again. Herbicide should be applied when plants are 12-15" tall, before they bloom. In fescue fields, apply 1.5-2.0 pints/acre PastureGard HL. Remedy at 1-2 pints/acre works well too. In fields that are primarily bermudagrass and if you have access to a boom sprayer, metsulfuron 60 DF at 1.0 oz./acre is excellent on sericea. Metsulfuron will harm fescue, though. As always, use a non-ionic surfactant at 0.25-0.50% of tank volume. Spray volumes need to be at least 10 gallons per acre. If you need any help calibrating a sprayer or calculating a treatment for a given field, don't hesitate to give me a call, and I'll be glad to come out.

### Spring Brucellosis (Bangs) Vaccinations

The spring brucellosis vaccinations are coming up soon. Livestock and Poultry technician, Franky Sharp, and I will tentatively be out on Tuesday, April 24th. If you have heifers to be vaccinated, please let us know by Monday, April 16th. Return the enclosed cut-out card to our office at P.O. Box 308, Salem, AR 72576 or call us at 870-895-3301. Include detailed directions to where the heifers will be. **Please don't assume that Franky and I**

**necessarily know where you'll be. We both visit lots of farms throughout the year, and the names and locations start to run together sometimes!**

Vaccinations are free of charge. Heifers must be at least 4 months old but not older than 12 months old to be eligible for vaccination. We will use the same procedure as in the past and notify you by letter before you are scheduled for vaccinations. You will need handling facilities to confine and work the calves. Also, you or a

Return by: \_\_\_\_\_

To: County Extension Agent – Staff Chair

In reply to your inquiry, I have \_\_\_\_\_ heifer calves, 4 to 12 months of age, which I would like to have vaccinated for Brucellosis (Bang's Disease).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Community \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Farm \_\_\_\_\_

CES-443 Brucellosis Vaccination Reply Card (8-01)

representative for you must be present at the time of vaccination or the technician will not vaccinate the heifers. If no one is there, we'll have to move along to the next stop. Remember, the time that we schedule for your stop could be give or take an hour or so. It depends on how fast or held up we are at prior stops.



### 4-H Rabies Clinic



The Fulton County 4-H Rabies clinic will be held on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> from 8-10 a.m. at the Salem High School parking lot. Half of the proceeds go to benefit the Fulton County 4-H Foundation. Please consider using this opportunity to get your dogs and cats vaccinated for this year and support your county 4-H program at the same time! There is no need to call ahead to pre-register. Just show up that day with cash or check ready! The clinic is being held in conjunction with Shaw Veterinary Clinic.

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**Scouting for Freeze Injury to Bermudagrass Forage**

Dr. John Jennings, Extension Forage Specialist

It has been some time since winter temperatures were cold enough to cause concern for injury to bermudagrass pastures and hay fields, but this winter's weather is in that category. Cold injury to bermudagrass is hard to predict because soil moisture and snow cover interact with temperature to increase or reduce cold injury. In general, moist soil conditions during the cold temperature period reduces cold injury and dry soil conditions during extreme cold increases potential for cold injury. The water in moist soil tends to hold heat better than dry soil. Think of it this way – dry, cold conditions tend to freeze-dry plants and roots. The longer the cold, dry weather lasts the more potential for cold injury. Snow cover insulates the soil and protects plants from extreme temperature fluctuations. Conditions are still very dry statewide and as of this writing, 50 counties are under burn bans. That along with the repeated cold temperatures plunges will likely cause cold injury to some bermudagrass fields.

Assessing cold injury can't be done in the field until the bermudagrass begins breaking dormancy. Very cold-sensitive varieties may suffer complete winterkill whereas others may exhibit slower and later greenup than normal. This will increase weed pressure and reduce season-long yield. Low soil fertility increases cold injury potential especially low soil potassium levels. The relatively mild winters in the upper south over the past several years have allowed varieties of moderate freeze tolerance to escape injury that will occur with a cyclic return to more severe winter conditions. Fewer cold-tolerant seeded varieties are available than cold-tolerant sprigged varieties. Some of the best bermudagrass varieties grown along the Gulf Coast are prone to winterkill and winter injury in Arkansas.

Some cold sensitive varieties planted from seed include Arizona Common, Jackpot, and Giant. These are commonly included in seed blends to provide quicker cover and first year yield, but tend to winterkill over time leaving the more cold-tolerant variety of the blend. Giant bermudagrass is very cold sensitive and winter kills easily. Jackpot has shown poor cold-tolerance on several farms in north Arkansas. Common survives well in the southern half of Arkansas, but may likely show winter injury this spring across north Arkansas. The most common cold-tolerant seeded variety is Wrangler. Its cold tolerance is on par with many of the cold-tolerant hybrids grown in north Arkansas. Other commonly grown seeded varieties with moderate cold-tolerance include Cheyenne, CD-90160, and KF-194. All three have lower cold tolerance than Wrangler, but have been grown successfully in north Arkansas. The two numbered varieties are used in many seed blends sold in recent years.

When grown in colder climatic areas, varieties with moderate to low winter hardiness can be expected to begin growth later in the spring and require time to re-develop the sod density they had prior to the winter injury. This delayed spring growth makes them susceptible to weed invasion that will negatively impact their ability to reform the sod cover. Cold sensitive varieties are at greatest risk the 1st winter after seeding. Thereafter, they tend to be less susceptible to winter injury, probably because of better developed root and rhizome systems. The winter hardy Wrangler will perform better than moderately winter hardy varieties in colder climatic areas but will not perform as well when winter injury is not a factor. Research in Haskell, Oklahoma in spring of 2001 following a cold winter showed much slower greenup of Cheyenne, CD-90160, and KF-194 than for Wrangler.

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The best rated sprigged bermudagrass varieties for cold-tolerance include Midland 99, Ozark, Tifton 44, and Greenfield. Newer varieties such as Vaughns #1 and World Feeder also have shown good cold tolerance. Each of those six varieties are grown in north Arkansas with little cold injury. Some sprigged varieties that are cold-sensitive include Coastal, Russell, Alicia, Jiggs, and Tifton 85. These varieties are grown only in south Arkansas. But the northern limit keeps creeping northward. Jiggs was included in trials at Booneville and commonly suffered severe winter injury. Tifton 85 is the highest yielding and highest quality variety grown in the deep south but has lower cold tolerance than Coastal. Forage specialists from Georgia, Texas, and Louisiana suggest its northern limit is near Shreveport, LA, but it is being grown in southern Arkansas.

Any variety with moderate or low cold tolerance, as well as those growing under fertility or other stress, should be checked closely this spring for signs of injury. Some practices that can improve recovery include proper fertility, judicious weed control, and proper grazing or hay harvest. Soil tests should be taken now to determine soil fertility levels. Fertilizer recommendations are specific for hay or pasture so be sure to note the intended use when submitting soil samples. Bermudagrass has very poor tolerance for shade so weed control is critical for winter damaged stands. Aggressive winter annual weeds or even ryegrass can form a heavy canopy in spring that delays bermudagrass greenup. The effect is much more severe on winter damaged fields. Many species of winter annual weeds are easily controlled with recommended herbicides or with properly managed grazing. Scout fields early and often to determine the best course of remediation. For more information, contact your county Extension office.

### **Weaning & Stocker Health Workshop**

Calf health, weaning strategies and the Beef Quality Assurance program are among the topics on the agenda for the April 17 Weaning and Stocker Health Workshop at the Livestock and Forestry Research Station in Batesville, part of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

"Weaning time is always stressful to calves, but there are ways to reduce the stress levels," said Don Hubbell, resident director of the Batesville Station. "Once calves are weaned it is important to continue with good nutrition and management to get those calves off to a good start.

"Drs. Powell and Ward will talk about reducing weaning stress and how to make timely health applications correctly," he said "Dr. Beck will present data on nutrition research for those calves after weaning to help promote health and production while the calves are going through the weaning process."

There's no cost to attend, but participants are being asked to RSVP by April 13, to ensure enough lunch is provided. For information or to RSVP for lunch, call Jenny Branscum at 870-793-7432, or email [jlbransc@uark.edu](mailto:jlbransc@uark.edu). *If you would like to ride with me to the workshop, I'll be planning to attend. I've got 3 spots in my truck that farmers could catch a ride. First come-first serve.*

The agenda:

- 10:30 a.m. - "Calf Health and Weaning Strategies" (At the working barn) Jeremy Powell, PhD, DVM, Animal Science Faculty, Fayetteville
- Noon - Lunch - Administration building

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 the Fulton County Extension Office as soon as possible. Dial 711 for Arkansas Relay.

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- 12:45 p.m. - "Understanding Beef Quality Assurance," Heidi Ward, DVM, Cooperative Extension Service, Little Rock
  - 1:30 p.m. - "Stocker Receiving Research at the Livestock & Forestry Research Station," Paul Beck, PhD, Southwest Research Extension Center, Hope
  - 2:15pm - Workshop Adjourned



Brad Runsick

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