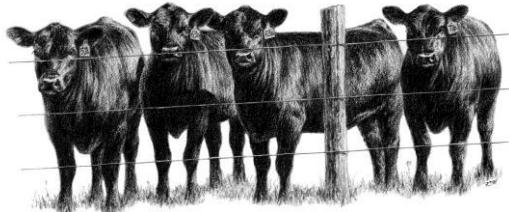


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# The Back Forty News



## FULTON COUNTY U OF A COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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

Happy 2021 Fulton County Producers! I hope you had a great holiday season and that this new year brings you continued success. 2020 is finally behind us and I look forward to continuing my work with you in 2021. For the new year, I am looking to expand my work even further so please, do not hesitate to give me a call if you have any questions. As your county agent, it is my duty to answer questions and encourage a better understanding of agriculture for us here in

#### Fulton County.

So, to start the year off, I strongly recommend taking soil samples from your pastures, lawns, and gardens, if you haven't done so already. While we accept soil samples all year, your best bet is collecting samples during the months of November and December. The minute those results come back, I will sit down and determine exactly what fertilizer your ground needs, so you don't have to "GUESS". I know it's easy to do the same ole application of 250 lbs./acre of 17-17-17, but you could seriously be shorting yourself OR you could be over doing it. Soil testing COULD greatly reduce fertilizer expenses and/or improve your pasture ground for higher yields. It is a free service we offer to the public, so please utilize it often. Now, with that in mind, some cool-season pastures will need a round of fertilizer starting next month, so collecting samples now ensures your results are back in your hands prior to recommended treatment times. Also note that our soil lab is always busy, but during the growing seasons, it can take quite a bit longer to get results back. As always, for any soil testing questions, give me a call at 870-895-3301.

## **Private Applicator Training (PAT) for Restricted Use Pesticides**

Local farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers who wish to renew an existing pesticide license or receive a first-time private applicator license will have the opportunity to do so by completing this required training. For those of you who are up for recertification, you should have received a letter from the State Plant Board indicating when your license expires. If you have received this letter, then according to our records and the State Plant Board records, your license is about to expire.

**Two training opportunities will be held at the Fulton County Fairgrounds Hickinbotham-Miller Building on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The first training will begin at 9:00 a.m. and the other at 6:00 p.m. Please note, this training is NOT for certification of commercial (for-hire) pesticide applicators! Pre-Registration is required by calling 870-895-3301. You must call and pre-register to attend. Attendance will be limited to 9 people, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Social Distancing and Masks are required. Masks may be removed once seated.**

**There is a \$20 class fee (checks made to UACES or exact cash preferred) per person that MUST be paid at the door before the training.** This fee does not relate to the licensing fee charged by the State Plant Board. It is only for the training. The fee for licensure is \$10 for a 1-year license or \$45 for a 5-year license. These fees will be paid by you after the training and sent to the State Plant Board for licensure, not the Fulton County Extension Office.

### **Online Option**

1. Go to: courses.uaex.edu
2. Click on the Login Button to Create an Account
3. Click on "Course Categories"
4. Click on "Pesticide Application Training"
5. Click On "Private Pesticide Applicator Online Certification"
6. Pay
7. Complete the training
8. Send in Paperwork and license fees to AR Dept. Of Agriculture

## **Spring “BANGS” Vaccination Clinic**

Plans are being made for a Spring “BANGS” vaccination clinic but have not been finalized. The timeframe we are looking at is in late March or early April, however this is subject to change. Once a date is finalized, I will broadcast that date to you through this newsletter and other media outlets such as, The News (newspaper), KSAR, and our county Facebook page (link on last page of this newsletter).

Please remember, “BANGS” vaccinations are for heifers between 4-12 months of age and are given by our local Livestock and Poultry Technician. As always, if you have any questions regarding Brucellosis in livestock or regarding this clinic, feel free to give me a call at 870-895-3301.

**\*Please note that due to COVID-19, program dates are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.\***

## **Beware of “Grass Tetany”**

Cory Tyler – Fulton County Extension Agent

As we make our way through mid-January, now is a great time to start offering a higher magnesium mineral to cattle to help fight off “Grass Tetany”. While the disease commonly occurs in older lactating cows, it can also be seen in cows with very poor body condition. Annually, this illness is prevalent throughout February, March, and April, but could last into May, depending on weather conditions. Since “Grass Tetany” is commonly observed during that time frame, forages effected include cool-season varieties.

But what exactly is “Grass Tetany”? In short, the disease causes extremely low levels of magnesium in cattle, a mineral that is necessary for certain bodily functions. Factors that strongly influence the disease can be indirectly related to heavy fertilization of pastures and young rapidly growing forages. While fertilizer is needed for soil health and plant growth, over applications of fertilizer (specifically potash) has the potential to cause an excess buildup of potassium in plants. Also, plants that are young and rapidly growing already contain a large amount of potassium, so the addition of fertilizer can raise the potassium content even higher. When that occurs and cows consume a forage with that high amount of potassium, it can quickly decrease the dietary absorption of magnesium in the cow’s gastrointestinal tract and cause “Grass Tetany”. Other factors that encourage the disease are cool and damp days and heavy stress on cattle such as hauling, penning and/or heavy lactation.

The earliest symptoms of “Grass Tetany” can include a decrease in appetite, low milk production, isolating themselves from the herd, an unusual increase of alertness, and a stiff/unsteady gait. However, if the disease progresses, you will notice additional symptoms, such as muscle tremors (spasms), increased breathing, and an increased heart rate. At this point, if care is not given, cows will likely die, and negative financial impacts can be felt. Symptoms can progress slowly or swiftly, so when symptoms occur, act quickly by contacting your local large animal vet to help diagnose the problem. From there, he or she can give instruction on treatment decisions and prescribe medication or supplements to be administered if it is needed. As always, read the product label before use.

So, what can producers do? First, start by offering that high magnesium mineral this time of year. Commonly, a mineral containing a minimum of 10% Magnesium should do the trick. While, some producers offer it on an “all year” basis, others only provide it during the higher risk months of February, March, April, and May. Whatever route you choose, have it out for your herd at least thirty days prior to the threat of “Grass Tetany” occurring. Secondly, fertilizing pastures should be based solely on the most recent soil test that have been taken. For grazing pastures, sampling every three years is appropriate. However, hay fields should be tested on a yearly basis. Anything past those recommended dates should be re-sampled. Updated soil test easily eliminates the fertilizer guessing game, can potentially reduce the cost of money spent on fertilizer and more importantly, help you apply only what is needed. Finally, if your herd is at risk for contracting “Grass Tetany”, consult your vet immediately to develop an action plan. For all other questions regarding providing minerals for livestock, soil testing, or fertilizing pastures, contact your local extension office and they will be glad to sit down and help you out.

### Online Fact Sheets for Reference:

“Grass Tetany” FSA3084 - <https://www.uaex.edu/publications/pdf/FSA-3084.pdf>

“Beef Cattle Nutrition” MP184 - <https://www.uaex.edu/publications/pdf/mp184/chapter5.pdf>

# **Winter Feeding of Sheep and Goats**

Chelsey Kimbrough, Ph.D., Specialty Livestock/Youth Education Specialist

Knowing the nutritional requirements of females during the various stages of production allows producers to ensure females are performing at optimal levels. Since females are typically in late gestation and/or lactating during the winter months, when their nutritional needs are the highest, it is even more important to ensure the females are obtaining the proper roughages and/or grains in their diets. Below are some general rules of thumb to consider for your females during the various stages of production. Some things to keep in mind are sheep and goats should consume 2-4% of their body weight on a dry matter (DM) basis to meet their nutritional requirements. Several things should be taken into consideration when figuring the nutritional requirements of females: age, stage of production, body condition score (BCS), and number of offspring. In order to fully understand how much roughage and grain should feed, it is important to know the nutritional composition of the roughage in order to know how much grain to feed.

## **Early to Mid-Gestation (First 15 weeks)**

The main goal during this phase of production is to maintain the body condition of mature females and increase the body condition of young females as they are still growing. Thus, it is best to separately feed the mature and young females.

1. Free access to pasture; 2.5-4 lbs. of hay/day
  - o Unless forage is of poor quality or females are thin, it is not necessary to supplement feed.
2. Free choice minerals
3. Fresh, clean water

## **Late Gestation (Last 6 weeks)**

This is a critical time for females as 70% of the fetal growth occurs during this phase of production. Proper nutrition is also important during this time to help prevent pregnancy toxemia (ketosis) and milk fever (low blood calcium). Other factors that are affected by nutrition include offspring birth weights, offspring mortality rates, lower milk yields, and dystocia (birthing difficulties). Females should have a BCS of 3-3.5 on a 5-point scale. Once again, it is best to separate the mature and young females as they are competing for feeder space and the young females are still growing.

1. Feed 4-5 lbs. of hay/female/day plus...
2. 0.5-1 lb. of grain/female/day
3. Free choice minerals
4. Fresh, clean water

## **Early Lactation (First 6-8 weeks)**

The highest nutritional requirements occur during this stage of production for females, especially if they are nursing multiple offspring. If possible, separate females according to the number of offspring they have (singles vs. twins vs. triplets) and feed them accordingly. Again, ideally separate the mature and young females.

1. Feed 4-6 lbs. of hay/female/day plus...
2. 1 lb. of grain/offspring being nursed
3. Free choice minerals
4. Fresh, clean water

## **Lactating Dairy Does**

1. Feed free choice hay plus...
2. 1 lb. of grain for every 3 lbs. of milk produced in mid-lactation
3. 1 lb. of grain for every 5 lbs. of milk produced in late lactation
4. Free choice minerals
5. Fresh, clean water

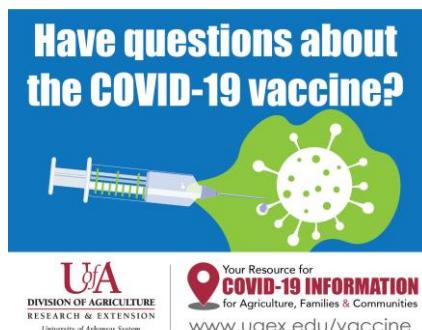
During the winter months, producers rely heavily on feeding hay as a roughage source in order to meet nutritional requirements of sheep or goats. The first question a producer must ask themselves is, "What is the nutritional composition of the hay I'm feeding?" This is important to understand in order to provide the proper supplementation, if needed, to your sheep or goats. Contact your County Extension Agent to find out more about hay testing and understanding your hay analysis. When feeding vitamins and minerals, a loose, free choice premix is preferred to blocks. The ratio of calcium to phosphorus should be 2:1 and vitamins A, D, and E should be available. If soil is selenium deficient, seek out a premix fortified with selenium to prevent white muscle disease in offspring. Also, during late gestation ensure females are obtaining the proper amounts of calcium. Remember when purchasing a premix if you are a sheep producer, to purchase one that is formulated for sheep in order to prevent copper toxicity. Having a relationship with a veterinarian is also important during this time of production for females. They too can help ensure your flock or herd is achieving the optimal nutrition during the various stages of production, as well as, aid in helping to prevent abortions and other diseases by providing recommendations for coccidiostats and antibiotics that could be mixed with supplemental feed.

## **Fulton County Seeking New Master Gardeners**

Have you ever considered becoming a Fulton County Master Gardener? If you are interested, we now are offering a self-paced online training that can be completed from the comfort of your own home! Typically, the fee for this course is \$125 but can now be completed at the reduced price of \$75! If you apply now, individuals will have until May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to complete the 5-part course covering various topics. Once completed, individuals will be assigned a certificate of completion and recognized as an Arkansas Master Gardener. To maintain Master Gardener status each year, you will need to volunteer a minimum of 40 hours per year by helping with garden projects, workshops, and other educational activities. While 40 hours per year seems like a high number, it can easily be achieved. If this is something you have thought about or if you have more questions about becoming a Fulton County Master Gardener, please give our office a call at 870-895-3301. We look forward to answering any questions you may have!

## **COVID-19**

Do you have questions about the new COVID-19 vaccines? We have answers. Visit [www.uaex.uada.edu/vaccine](http://www.uaex.uada.edu/vaccine) to learn about vaccine types, timing and what to expect. #COVID19 #vaccines #Moderna #Pfizer





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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.