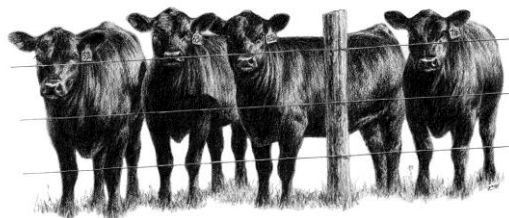


# The Back Forty News



FULTON COUNTY U OF A COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE NEWSLETTER



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October 2017

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

The rain that we got in June, July, and in some places, August, ran out in the past month or so. It never seems to fail that when we have a relatively wet summer, fall turns out dry.

Fortunately, that early rainfall resulted in quite a bit of forage growth for pastures and hayfields, and as long as fields weren't overgrazed, then many folks still have some grass. Most reports show that farmers got a decent first and second cutting on hay, but that third cutting, especially for bermudagrass fields is going to be a little lacking in quantity and quality. Once fall rains do return, we can anticipate that fescue will bounce back and provide ample grazing into December, particularly if fields are rotated and aren't overstocked.

There's little doubt that feeding less hay and doing more grazing is better for the cattle and your pocketbook. And, we put a lot of time, energy, equipment maintenance, fertilizer, etc. into planning and making a hay crop. Why not invest the same in winter grazing where the situation is applicable? Now is the time to sow ryegrass, cereal rye, or wheat for winter grazing. Less amount of time and money can be

invested in sowing winter annuals than it takes to make a hay crop, and the benefits to the cattle are better. Not to mention the benefit of not having to get out and put out bales of hay when it's 25 degrees, windy, and possible after dark. If you ever want more information on planting winter annuals (what to plant, what variety, how to establish it, etc.), then give us a call, and we'll be glad to walk your through the process. If you can learn how to make hay, you can learn how to establish winter annuals.

And, since we spent all that time making hay, why not know what its value. Folks probably get tired of hearing it, but I'm probably going to harp on it until the day I retire and then some. They'll put it on my headstone. "Here lies Brad. He never would shut up about testing your hay."

Hay testing saves money. Period. Poor hay that isn't supplemented correctly results in reduced reproductive rates and unthrifty cattle. If calving rate isn't consistently 80% or more, either some cows need culling, a bull isn't doing his job, or just maybe, nutrition prior to breed back isn't what it needs to be. Good quality hay is often sometimes supplemented with feeds that don't correct a deficiency or results in overfeeding of protein or energy that is also costly. It costs \$18 + postage, and I'll come out and take the sample for you where the hay is stored. Knowing what your primary winter feedstuff's value is and go from there on any other winter feeding. All it takes is for you to call, pick a date that will work, and I'll come out. Once we get results, we'll see what your herd needs, and we've even got a beef cattle nutrition expert on staff in our state office to help us out with ration balancing. Happy winter feeding!

**Upcoming Calendar of Events** (see articles for more Details)

<u>What</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Private Applicator Training for Purchasing Restricted Use Pesticides (PAT) -	Thursday, October 26 <sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.	Fulton County Fairgrounds Hickinbotham Miller Building	\$10 for the training (at the door) + \$10 for a 1 year or \$45 for a 5 year license (sent to AR State Plant Board)
Fall Brucellosis Vaccinations	Monday, October 30 <sup>th</sup> (times are scheduled and mailed to participating producers)	On farm	No cost
Backyard Poultry Workshop	Monday, November 9 <sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.	Fulton County Fairgrounds Hickinbotham Miller Building	\$10 (pay at the door)
Fall Pasture Field Day (Stockpiling Fescue and Sage Grass Control)	Saturday, December 2 <sup>nd</sup> at 1:00 p.m.	Two farm stops (Jerry Rice and Rob McCarty, between Salem and Viola)	No cost but please pre-register so we'll have an idea on headcount

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

Local farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers who wish to renew an expiring pesticide license or receive a first time private pesticide applicator license will have the opportunity to receive the required training. Some of the folks that are up for recertification will have gotten a letter from the State Plant Board notifying them that their certification is up. If you are receiving this letter, then according to our records and the Arkansas State Plant Board, your license is about to expire.

The training will be held in Salem on *Thursday, October 26th, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.* at the Fulton County Fairgrounds in the Hickinbotham-Miller building. This training is **NOT** for certification of commercial (for-hire) pesticide applicators!

There is a \$10 per person fee which *must* be paid at the door at the time of training. This fee is not related to the licensing fees charged by the State Plant Board. It is only for the training. The fee for the license is \$10 for one (1) year or \$45 for five (5) years. That amount you will pay in later to the State Plant Board, not the Fulton Co. Extension Office. Checks or exact cash preferred.

Other opportunities in surrounding counties are as follows:

Sharp County – Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.; Location: Ozarka College in Ash Flat, AR; Phone: (870) 994-7363

Baxter County – Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.; Location: Baxter County Fairgrounds in Mtn. Home, AR; Phone: (870) 425-2335

Izard County – January; Date, time, location TBD

## Fall Brucellosis (Bangs) Vaccinations

The fall brucellosis vaccinations are coming up soon. Livestock and Poultry technician, Franky Sharp, and I will tentatively be out on Monday, October 30th. If you have heifers to be vaccinated, please let us know by Monday, October 23rd. 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 (and you) will be. **Please don't assume that Franky and I necessarily know where you'll be when you call in. 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 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.

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 <span style="float: right;">(8-01)</span>

## Fall Pasture Field Day

Brad Runsick, Fulton County Extension Agent

On Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1 p.m., there will be a forages field day held here in the county. We will begin at 1 p.m. at Jerry Rice's farm on the south corner of Hwy 62. and Flint Springs Rd., where we'll talk about stockpiling fescue: how to do it, the benefits, and how to graze it. The farm is exactly 6.8 miles west, from the stoplight in Salem. From there, we'll make a short, ½ mile trip to the west to Rob McCarty's farm where we'll spend some time talking about broomsedge (sage grass) management and control. I expect that we'll spend roughly 30-45 minutes at each location and be finished up by around 3 p.m. The fescue stockpile site is where we've implemented the practice that we so often recommend, and the broomsedge control site has several plots where we've applied various rates of lime and/or fertilizer or cut the forage to see what works best for reducing the amount of sage grass present.

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There's no cost to attend, but we do ask that you call and pre-register by November 30<sup>th</sup>, so we'll have an idea on an anticipated head count. To register, just give us a call at 870-895-3301. We hope to see you there!

## Forage Lime Demonstration Results

Brad Runsick, Fulton County Extension Agent

We have made it to the 18 month, and likely final, mark on our pasture lime demonstration. With each of these plots being sampled, not only are we able to track the changes in the pH since we made the lime applications back in January 2016, but we're also able to see the phosphorus and potassium values. One unintended takeaway from this project is that it demonstrates how critical it is for soil sampling to be representative of the entire field and not just a few shovelfuls here and there.

### Variability in Soil P and K

Across all 45 plots, the soil P (phosphorus) and soil K (potassium) both ranged from Very Low to Optimum. For fescue pasture, at best, the need is just 175 lbs. /acre of ammonium nitrate at a cost of \$29.75 to boost yields in the spring, and no P or K needed. At worst, it's 200 lbs. /acre potash, 217 lbs. /acre DAP, and 60 lbs./acre ammonium nitrate. At current prices, that comes to an estimated price of \$97.70/acre. If we average the soil tests from each of the 45 plots to give us a better idea of the overall field average, the soil P and K comes to Low and Medium, respectively. That equates to a fertilizer need of 100 lbs. /acre potash, 175 lbs. /acre DAP, and only 26 lbs. /acre ammonium nitrate that comes at a cost of approximately \$63.80 / acre... a difference of \$34 per acre just due to incorrect soil sampling procedures. The forty-five plots are all contained within approximately 1/8<sup>th</sup> of an acre. Imagine how variable the soil fertility is across, say, a 20 acre field.

So, doing a poor job of soil sampling can result in a huge over-application of fertilizer that is an unnecessary cost or a huge under-application which is going to result in poorer quality pastures and is a waste of your time. Take the time to do it right, and it'll help both your pastures and your bank account.

Here are some quick tips on proper sampling:

- Individual samples should not represent over 20 acres. This is a general rule of thumb. If you have a field that is 25 acres that is uniform and that you treat the same in regards to management, then go ahead and just do one sample for all of it. What you want to avoid is sending in single samples that are for, say, a 60 acre hayfield.
- Each sample should be comprised of at least 10-15 smaller "sub" samples that should be mixed together to make up the sample that you bring to the Extension Office.
- Sample at the same time of year. Nutrient and pH levels fluctuate throughout the year due to

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environmental conditions. You want to make sure you're comparing apples to apples.

**Soil pH Changes: Ag Lime vs. Pelletized Lime**

As in the past, the plots that received the recommended rate of ag lime of 2 tons/acre are holding very near that 5.8 pH, which is optimum for grass growth. The pelletized lime plots, even at 1000 lbs. / acre and a cost of \$100+ /acre, are below that. Pelletized lime can be handy, though, for small areas such as food plots, gardens, orchards, etc., but it is not practical or economical to use in pastures. And if used, the recommended rate cannot be cut significantly and expect the same change in soil pH as you would see with the recommended rate. The research doesn't support its use versus ag lime in pastures and hayfields, even in the short run. Also, the myth that a little pelletized lime will get you by for that season is false. With the exception of the high quality, pelletized lime at 1000 lbs./acre, at no time during the sampling did the pelletized lime plots raise the pH to an optimum level for grasses. None of this is exactly groundbreaking knowledge in the world of plant and soil science, but it never hurts to test it and see real world, local results.

For more information on soil testing and liming, give us a call at 870-895-3301.



Brad Runsick

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CEA-Agriculture/4H

870-895-3301

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**Fulton County  
Cooperative Extension Service**



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
2301 SOUTH UNIVERSITY AVENUE  
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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118 Locust Street – Ste 107  
Salem, AR 72576