



WHITE COUNTY BEEF NEWSLETTER

Irregularly Published

January 27, 2023

Vol. 27 No. 1

Topics:

AFGC Winter Forage Conference on February 2nd

Little Red River Forage Conference – February 17th

Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Training

Now's the Time to Start Spring Weed Control

Don't Forget Your Cool Season Grasses and Winter Annuals on Valentine's Day

Schedule Breeding Soundness Exams Soon

Sincerely,

Brian W. Haller
County Extension Agent – Staff Chair
501-268-5394
bhaller@uada.edu

White County Cooperative Extension Service
2400 Old Searcy Landing Road
Searcy, AR 72143

To: Beef Producers

AFGC WINTER FORAGE CONFERENCE ON FEBRUARY 2ND

The Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council's Winter Forage Conference will be held **February 2 at the Crossroads Cowboy Church at 3071 Arkansas Highway 5 in El Paso, Arkansas**. The focus of the conference will be "Warding Off the Next Drought".

The conference topics are:

- Using the Forage Calendar
- Annual Forages and Using them to Your Advantage
- Managing Your Fertilizer Dollar
- Fertilizer Outlook for 2023
- Insuring Your Forages Against the Next Drought
- What Can You Do With Drones and Other Emerging Technologies

Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. and the welcome is at 9:00 a.m.

Registration can be paid at the door by \$25 per person and \$10 for students. **For pre-registration call Linda McCargo at 501-671-2171.**

LITTLE RED RIVER BEEF CONFERENCE - FEBRUARY 17TH

This past year was a very stressful and trying year on many livestock producers. Many are still trying to get through winter and early spring with enough hay to get cattle on to green grass. Some were able to establish some winter annuals for spring pasture, but many did not plant due to the drought extending into the Fall.

If these are issues you are facing, the Little Red River Beef Cattle Conference will cover some topics that could assist you in trying to cope with the last of winter and early spring with forage and livestock information pertinent to your operation. We also plan to have topics that will assist you in selecting bulls for your cowherd and on what cattle buyers look for when purchasing calves. We plan to end the conference with a market update from our Livestock Economist, Dr. James Mitchell.

The conference is planned for **Friday, February 17, 2023**, at the Cleburne County Livestock Auction Barn in Heber Springs and is being planned by the Cleburne, Independence, Searcy, Stone, Van Buren, and White County offices of the University of Arkansas Division of Ag, Cooperative Extension Service.

The agenda for the conference is as follows:

9:00 a.m. Registration

9:30 a.m. Welcome

9:40 a.m. Hay Sampling, Forage and Hay Comparison

10:20 a.m. Cowculator Feed Analysis Program, Summer & Winter Annuals

11:00 a.m. Expected Progeny Differences (EPD's)

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Weed Identification and Control

1:30 p.m. Sale/Market Reports, Calf Grading

2:30 p.m. Market Outlook

We hope that this conference will be of use to you as a livestock producer and that you will be able to attend. There is no cost to attend this conference due to our sponsorship by Farm Credit Service Associations of Arkansas. If you would like more information on this conference, please contact the White County Extension office at (501) 268-5394.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service 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 White County Extension office at 501-268-5394 soon as possible. Dial 711 for Arkansas Relay

BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE (BQA) TRAINING

Arkansas BQA programming focuses on educating and training beef producers on the issues in cattle food safety and quality. Instruction is based on information gained by the National Cattlemen's Association and includes common sense management techniques along with accepted scientific knowledge on how to raise cattle under optimum herd health management and handling conditions. Once BQA certified, producers are equipped with knowledge that will help them obtain the goal of producing a safe and wholesome product. Anyone that is interested in the GOGreen preconditioning program must be BQA certified.

We will be conducting a BQA training on **February 28** at 6:00 p.m. at the White County Extension Office.

Pre-registration is required by February 21st to insure we have training manuals. To register you can call the White County Extension office at 501-268-5394.

NOW'S THE TIME TO START SPRING WEED CONTROL

Winter annual weeds such as buttercup, thistle, and henbit have germinated and are up. Start scouting pastures for weeds. Late fall and winter spraying is very effective. Waiting till late March or April poses several issues. Late March and April winds tend to be a big problem including other weather conditions. The more time the weeds are allowed to grow the more spring forage green up is delayed. In addition, the larger the weed the harder it is to control. Of course, field conditions this time of year make it tougher but be prepared and ready when conditions get right. Get your sprayers out and make sure everything is operational. Make sure your sprayer is calibrated for efficient weed control. If you need help calibrating your sprayer, with weed control recommendations and weed identification call the White County Extension Office.

DON'T FORGET YOUR COOL SEASON GRASSES AND WINTER ANNUALS ON VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day is right around the corner and soon you will buy something for your significant other but don't forget your cool season grasses or winter annuals. They need a Valentine's Day shot of nitrogen to get them off and growing for late winter/early spring. Cool season grasses have two distinct periods of growth: one starts in late February and peaks in May, and the other in the autumn, peaking in November, when daytime temperatures are cool.

Valentine's Day is a good target date to start applying nitrogen to cool season grasses and winter annuals. Apply 60 lbs. of nitrogen (125-130 lbs of urea or 175 lbs of ammonium nitrate) mid to late February. For winter annuals an additional 50 lbs. of nitrogen can be added if needed mid-March.

SCHEDULE BREEDING SOUNDNESS EXAMS SOON

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist

Although the spring calving season may still be ongoing, the next breeding season is only a few weeks away. Now is the time to schedule the old and new bulls for their pre-breeding soundness examination. For the breeding soundness evaluation to be successful, bulls should be evaluated 30 to 60 days before the start of breeding. It is important to allow sufficient time to replace questionable bulls. Bulls could also be evaluated at the end of breeding to determine if their fertility decreased. A breeding soundness exam is administered by a veterinarian and includes a physical examination (feet, legs, eyes, teeth, flesh cover, scrotal size and shape), an internal and external examination of the reproductive tract, and semen evaluation for sperm cell motility and normality.

The physical examination studies overall appearance. Flesh cover is one factor to evaluate. Body condition can be affected by length of the breeding season, grazing and supplemental feeding conditions, number of cows the bull is expected to service, and distance required to travel during breeding. Ideally, bulls should have enough fat cover at the start of breeding so their ribs appear smooth across their sides. A body condition score 6 (where 1 = emaciated and 9 = very obese) is the target body condition prior to the breeding season.

Sound feet and legs are very important because if they are unsound, this can result in the inability to travel and mount for mating. The general health of the bull is critical since sick, aged and injured bulls are less likely to mate and usually have lower semen quality. The external examination of the reproductive tract includes evaluation of the testes, spermatic cords and epididymis. Scrotal circumference is an important measure since it is directly related to the total mass of sperm producing tissue, sperm cell normality and the onset of puberty in the bull. Bulls with large circumference will produce more sperm with higher normality and also reach sexual maturity sooner.

Examination of the external underline before and during semen collection will detect any inflammation, foreskin adhesions, warts, abscesses and penile deviations. The internal examination is conducted to detect any abnormalities in the internal reproductive organs. Also, be certain to ask your veterinarian about the need to test the bulls for the reproductive disease, trichomoniasis.

The semen evaluation is done by examining a sample of the semen under a microscope. The veterinarian will estimate the percentage of sperm cells that are moving in a forward direction. This estimate is called "motility". In addition, the sperm cells will be individually examined for proper shape or "morphology". Less than 30 percent of the cells should be found to have an abnormal shape.

Any bull meeting all minimum standards for the physical exam, scrotal size and semen quality will be classed as a "satisfactory" potential breeder. Many bulls that fail any minimum standard will be given a rating of "classification deferred." This rating indicates that the bull will need another test to confirm status. Mature bulls (that were listed as classification deferred) should be retested after four to six weeks. Mature bulls will be classified as unsatisfactory potential breeders if they fail subsequent tests. Young bulls that are just reaching puberty may be rated as "classification deferred", and then later meet all of the minimum standards. Therefore, caution should be exercised when making culling decisions based on just one breeding soundness exam.

Many producers work hard to manage their cows for high fertility. They may assume that the bulls will do their expected duties. However, it's important to pay close attention to bulls to establish successful breeding.