



Northeast Livestock Link

July 2012

We are in a marketing situation where the weather and world economy are in control. Dry weather in the Corn Belt is causing concerns that the corn crop could be short, whereby feed prices would go up in the feedlots. This in turn has pushed down the price of feeder calves during the summer months.

In addition, beef movement at the retail level is slower as consumers remain concerned about the economy going back into a recession. World demand or exports have also softened as a result of the European debt crisis as well as fewer orders for export goods. This has slowed growth in places like China, Japan and India.

Cattle Fax Latest Comments

Market watchers at Cattle Fax released their latest Trends publication, and they are saying buyers are looking at next April's live cattle futures to determine what to pay for calves this fall. There appears to be a larger than normal April futures premium offered on the board at this time, and it may be worth consideration for cow/calf producers to look at forward pricing their calves to take advantage of the futures market April optimism.

Remember, the calf market seasonal price trend moves lower into fall, and potential buyers may be reluctant to give as much for your calves later in the year if the futures market optimism fades for any number of reasons. Lots of things could happen (as mentioned above) such as: (1) A short corn crop, (2) More world economic problems, (3)

Buyers get nervous and bid lower to protect themselves.

This is an excellent time to give strong consideration to participation in the August Mississippi Home Place Feeder Calf Board sale to be held August 6 through the Southeast Livestock Producers Livestock Barn in Hattiesburg. Nomination forms are now being accepted. However, time is short.

If you want to know more about this sale, contact me at 662-566-2201 or Dr. Brandi Karisch at 662-325-7765. I have enclosed the nomination form, and if you want to participate, please let me know ASAP.

Prepare Now For a Hot Summer

Actually it may be too late to implement a good plan for a dry summer grazing season. Too late or not, it is never too late to do what you can within your means to have a plan B. With the extremely high fertilizer prices, I suspect that few grazing acres have received the lime and fertilizer required to achieve top yields.

On this same note, grasses and legumes that do not have the nutrients available to thrive will actually go into somewhat of a self-preservation mode. These plants will have slow growth and go into a reproductive state earlier. This is what all plants do when environmental factors or mechanical factors cause an interruption in their normal growth habits, et. Just before going into the shutdown mode, the plants will produce a seed crop. During the reproductive stage, the nutritional

values of grasses and legumes are very low, thus the cattle are not being supplied with a highly nutritious diet and growth, milk and overall performance drops off.

It has been said many times before that continuous grazing is the least productive grazing system. It should also be said that pastures need some rest time to establish or re-establish its root system, which is the motor that drives the plant to achieve optimum production. Plants that are not severely pruned by over grazing recover much faster and have the ability to more efficiently explore the soil profile for nutrients and available moisture.

In order to create just one extra area for grazing, all that is needed is one or two strands of electric fence, shade and water. Many times producers feel this is asking for too much management just to conserve a little grass. In reality, when a drought occurs (in Mississippi we are one rain away from a drought), those pastures that have been subdivided offer some additional stockpiled grasses that we can rely on to get to the next rain without having to dip into the winter hay supply.

Granted, some pastures are not good candidates to be subdivided because they would require too much fencing to take in shade and water. There are other pastures that can be utilized in this manner. A producer may have to take another look at each area to determine how to run temporary fences to bring in the necessary shade and/or water.

Fertilizer Prices

There is little more to be said for the high fertilizer prices other than we are going to have to find other ways to grow grass without it. I do think utilizing the subdivided pastures will help to some degree. More rest, stockpiling and utilizing more of the nutrients

left behind after each grazing go a long way in cutting the fertilizer bill.

One item I was made aware of just last week was the formulation of Ammonia Nitrate, 34-0-0. I am told that most of the 34-0-0 we buy now is actually a blend of 50% Ammonia Sulfate and 50% Urea. I did not know this. Many articles have been written about using Urea only when temperatures are 75° or less. Now we find out the Ammonia Nitrate we are fertilizing with after each hay cutting or just applying to grazing pastures is ½ Urea.

In addition, Ammonia Sulfate causes more acidic conditions than Ammonia Nitrate; therefore applying lime would be required more often if used like we have always used Ammonia Nitrate. The reason for the switch appears to be the requirements placed on dealers to store Ammonia Nitrate behind lock and key and provide mountains of documentation on how each pound of the Ammonia was used when sold.

It all boils down to the use of Ammonia Nitrate as an explosive material, and in the world we live in today, people will do plenty of bad things if they get their hands on the right materials.

The take home message here is to be aware of the nitrogen you buy and know if it is Ammonia Nitrate or if it is the blend of Ammonia Sulfate and Urea. The blend will likely not perform as well, unless the application is made no more than 3 days ahead of a good ½ inch rain. In addition, you may want to consider using one of the nitrogen stabilizer products with the blend to prevent volatilization.

Army Worms

With the unusual warm winter and spring, it is anticipated that Armyworms will arrive

earlier than normal. Armyworms, like everything else we have encountered this growing season, are expected to start their rampage about 1 month sooner.

The stage of development for Army worms is outlined below:

Egg	2 – 5 days
Caterpillar	10 – 22 days
Pupa	6 -15 days
Adult (Moths)	22 -46 days

Females lay eggs for about 14 days and lay between 1000 to 2000 eggs. When moths begin flying around in the hay fields, an application can be made about 10 to 12 days after that time to target the very small worms. Be aware that moths may continue to have flights; therefore, it is reasonable to assume there will be multiple flights at different times which will require more than one application for complete control.

The only way to keep the worms under control is to scout the hay or grazing areas every three to five days and apply insecticides as needed. Scouting to catch the worms at a very small stage requires that you get on your hands and knees and examine the grass very closely. Treatment is recommended when 3

worms, ½ inch or longer, are found per square foot.

The better insecticides are all Restricted Use Pesticides and will require a Private Applicators Card to purchase these materials. Now is the time to make sure your card is current or make arrangements to up-date your card if it has expired. It is too late when you find worms in your hay fields and discover your card has expired.

In general, some of the available insecticides have longer residual control, which are the growth disruptor's materials. These are products such as Intrepid or Dimilin. These products work best when very small worms are present and the worms are not eating as much. These products do not work as fast as the pyrethroids such as Mustang Max, Baythroid and Karate. The pyrethroids are a better choice when larger worms, ½ inch and larger are found.

I have included a chart which list the materials available and the rates required for control.

As always, if I can be of assistance, please let me know. I am easy to reach: O) 662-566-2201, C) 662-871-8468 or e-mail – mhowell@ext.msstate.edu

Sincerely,

Mike

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