

December 14, 2011

COWCHIP

DATES TO REMEMBER:

December

- 18 Cattlemen's Stockmanship and Stewardship Workshop, 1:00 p.m., Mouch Multi-Purpose Center, Port Allen (see flyer)
- 22 Vermilion Cattlemen's Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Woodman of the World, Abbeville

January

- 7 Cattlemen's Banquet, 6:30 p.m., V-Arena, Kaplan
- 20-21 Parish Livestock Show, McCrory Building, Abbeville
- 20-22 LCA Convention, Monroe

POSTS:

We ended up with a truck and a half of posts from our last order. Several ranchers were unable to receive their orders, so we will take orders again to try and fill the second truck. Prices and sizes remain the same. We need about 1,300 small posts to finish the load.

If you are interested please fill out and return the order blank along with a check for the full amount. Checks will be held until posts arrive.

WINTER NUTRITION AND CONDITION SCORING:

With the high costs of feed this winter it is critical that we be as efficient as possible. The most efficient choices are not necessarily the cheapest. Cattle performance cannot be forgotten when choosing types and amounts of supplementation and/or amounts and timings of winter pasture fertilization. Pricing feed stuffs based on cost per nutrient is the best way to determine the value.

Here's an example: The hay you have on hand is 6% protein and 50% digestible because dry pregnant cows need 7.5% protein and 51% TDN, your most limiting nutrient is protein. You can purchase a mixed feed with 12% protein for \$200/ton or Distillers Dried Grains (DDG) with 25% protein for \$280/ton. A ton of the mixed feed has 240 pounds of protein ($.12 \times 2000 = 240$) so it costs 83 cents per pound of protein ($\$200 \div 240 \text{ pounds of protein} = .83$). A ton of DDG has 500 pounds of protein ($.25 \times 2000 = 500$) so it costs 56 cents per pound of protein ($\$280 \div 500 \text{ pounds of protein} = .56$). The DDGs would be the better buy. Looking at it from a different angle to balance the ration, it

would take 6 pounds of the mixed feed and 2 pounds of DDG, so to be of equal value the DDG would have to be 3 times the cost. Buying feeds based on cost per nutrient, testing your hay and feeding what is needed makes for efficient and high performing herds.

Wise use of ryegrass can help overall efficiency, too. To be most efficient a pH near 6 is needed. Lime is about \$40/ton and a ton or more to the acre is required on most of our pastures. Soil testing comes first. Find the pastures that need less liming and exactly how much lime is required. The test will also determine phosphorus and potassium requirements. If we can focus our efforts for ryegrass on our most fertile soils use grazing management to utilize it properly and for the classes of cattle that need it most we can make ryegrass pay. Growing heifers and fall calving or early calving cows are the most expensive to feed. Ryegrass, even heavily fertilized, is cheaper than feeding 5 or 6 pounds of most feeds and all the hay they can eat.

The condition score of the cow is an indicator of the cow's status to perform. Adequate fat reserves allow the cow to milk properly and to rebreed. There is a link between stored fat and normal reproductive activity. When fat reserves are lacking the cow is much less likely to come into heat and conceive. In addition, the extra fat allows for normal milk production. The cow uses the stored energy in her body to make up for any deficiencies in her diet. Research has shown that a condition score of 5 is the minimum for acceptable reproduction.

It takes a gain of about 150 pounds to go from condition score of 4 to 5. It takes a considerable amount of feed to gain 150 pounds. Multiplying that over 40 cows, it becomes cost prohibitive. It is cheaper and insures more even performance to never let your cows lose too much condition. Proper stocking rates and supplementation at critical times need to be part of the management strategy. The condition of your cows, especially in late lactation and late in the summer, needs to be monitored. Late summer pastures are often lacking in nutrients even though grass may be plentiful. This is often when cows nursing big calves have their most severe weight loss. A bit of supplement late summer, early fall, may save money and increase efficiency later and will help the cow make better use of poor quality grazing.

Income to ranchers has never been greater. To insure we keep as much of this income in our pockets as possible, we should be looking for ways to increase our efficiency. Monitoring body condition scores, focusing our ryegrass management and purchasing inputs based on value not strictly price will help.

PIGEON FEVER:

More than 30 cases of pigeon fever in horses have been reported to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M., said. The Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine treated 10 cases of pigeon fever in horses and the Louisiana Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (LADDL) reported 20 positive cases from referring veterinarians. VTH estimated there were at least 100 cases in Louisiana in 2011 and suspect that the number of cases may be related to drought and heat.

Pigeon fever is the common term for an infection caused by the bacterial organism *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* which can form abscesses in the pectoral region and ventral abdomen of the horse. The condition is not related to pigeons. The abscesses cause swelling and give the horse a "pigeon-breast" appearance. The illness is also known as dry-land strangles.

Cross-species transmission usually occurs only between horses and cattle because they can carry the same strain of bacterium. The bacterium rarely infects humans.

There are three recognized forms of the disease in horses: external abscesses, internal abscesses and ulcerative lymphangitis.

2011 CATTLE MARKET OBSERVATIONS:

Louisiana Cattle Market Update

Friday, December 9th

2011 Ross Pruitt, *Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness*

Louisiana State University AgCenter

Cattle carcass weights did show a slight increase in year-to-date 2011 over 2010, but are still below 2009 levels. Part of the decline from average carcass weights in 2009 can be attributed to ranchers in the Southern Plains sending cows to slaughter due to drought. Carcass weights for finished steers and heifers have shown an increase of about 6 to 7 pounds above 2010. Despite the fact year-to-date 2011 cattle carcass weights are 12 pounds lighter than 2009, beef production for the first 48 weeks of the year is even with 2009 and 2010 beef production levels. Estimated feedlot placement weights have been about 9 to 10 pounds lower in 2011 compared to 2009 and 2010. Beef production will almost certainly be down next year as increased carcass weights won't be able to cover the decline in the number of animals going to slaughter as in past years.

Value based marketing is growing and continues to be an area where cattlemen can improve their bottom line. Tightening supplies of cattle will make it more difficult to find enough volume in the short term to fill the demand arising from numerous different marketing channels (including age, source, and non-hormone treated verified programs). If your operation is not currently involved in one of these programs, it may be worthwhile to consider adapting production to fit these schemes. Entering into one of these channels may result in restructuring your marketing plan to one of direct sales as opposed to selling in an auction barn which does not come without some additional risk. News that Japan is willing to remove the less than 21 months rule on U.S. beef imports will result in a decrease of age and source premiums, but other value based marketing programs will continue to hold their value.

MARKET CONDITIONS:

Corn futures finished the week mixed with front months down a penny and deferred contracts seeing small increases. Traders sought to position themselves ahead of today's *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates* which showed few changes in forecasted supply and demand for U.S. corn aside from lowering the price range to \$5.90 to \$6.90 for the current marketing year. Ending stocks were raised slightly for corn, but some analysts called the estimates for corn the least bearish contained in today's *WASDE* report.

Live cattle futures were lower on the week with (near) limit down losses occurring on Monday. The pace of beef exports has slowed in recent weeks contributing to existing concerns about domestic demand as packers finish filling holiday orders. Today's *WASDE* report increased forecasted prices for fed cattle to \$124/cwt in 2012, up \$2.50/cwt from the November estimate. Feeder cattle futures were lower on pressure from the live cattle pit.

The majority of cash fed cattle trade occurred on Friday with sporadic sales in Nebraska on Wednesday and Thursday. Light to moderate trade on light to moderate demand was reported in most areas. Sales on a live basis were \$4 to \$6 lower at \$119 to \$121. Dressed sales in Nebraska ranged from \$195 to \$199, with the higher prices seen on Wednesday and Thursday.

**PLEASE RETURN BY FRIDAY, JANUARY 6TH TO ANDREW GRANGER, 1105 W. PORT ST.,
ABBEVILLE, LA 70510**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____

I would like to order

_____ 3" x 6½' line posts x \$2.60 = _____ _____ 2½" x 6½' line post x \$2.00 = _____

_____ 6" x 8' corner posts x \$10.75 = _____ _____ 5½" x 8' corner post x \$8.25 = _____

TOTAL \$ _____

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO VPCA

Sincerely,

Andrew Granger
County Agent
Vermilion Parish

It is the policy of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability.



Cattlemen's Workshop

Stockmanship and Stewardship

Sunday, December 18th, 2011

1-5 pm

Louis A. Mouch Jr. Multi-Purpose Center
Port Allen, LA

- Effective Stockmanship Demonstration-Techniques for handling of cattle both on foot and on horseback
- Presented by Ron Gill-Texas A&M Livestock Specialist, lifelong cattleman, nationally respected expert on cattle handling
- Also: Chuteside BQA Tips, Body Condition Scoring and more.....
- Advanced Registration: \$20 by December 9th (\$25 at the door)
- Dinner following the event included in registration fee

Low Stress Cattle Handling Why it's Important?

Performance

- ↑ Gain without more inputs
- ↑ Efficiency
- ↓ Money on medicine/treatments
- ↓ Money for facilities

Quality of Life

- ↑ Profitability
- Sustaining family operations
- Enjoyment of ranching life

Welfare

- ↓ Injury to livestock and handlers
- ↓ Carcass damage and trim loss
- ↑ Public perception of cattle industry

REGISTRATION: \$20 by December 9th

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Make payment to: Louisiana Cattlemen's Association LSU-Projects

Mail to: Dr. Christine Navarre
131 Dalrymple Building
Department of Veterinary Science
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803