

PASTURE TO MARKET

Providing beef cattle information for producers in Louisiana.
Summer 2024



Dean Lee Research and Extension
Center

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News and Reminders from the Editor

Ashley K. Edwards, PhD, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist – LSU AgCenter

Current Management Considerations:

Hay season is in full swing. Producers throughout the state are working in between rains to produce hay and baleage for the year. There are several webinar resources on our YouTube channel that discuss forage varieties, weed control, and other basics of hay field management. You can also reach out to your local Extension Agent for assistance with soil and forage analysis, as well as proper herbicide recommendations.

Fly season is upon us. Review your fly control protocol with your local veterinarian and apply pesticides as needed to your herd.

As a reminder, be sure to minimize cattle workings and transportation to the coolest parts of the day. At times it may be beneficial to spread working events out over the course of several mornings to minimize heat stress placed on yourself, your coworkers, and your cattle.

Producers with fall calving seasons should be planning weaning of fall-born calves and checking the pregnancy status of those cows. This is also a good time to plan a marketing strategy for any cull cows from fall calving herds.

Forward Planning:

Unfortunately, it is time to look at refreshing your disaster plan with the upcoming hurricane season. There are various resources on our website for hurricane preparedness and recovery:

<https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/livestock/disaster>.

Summertime Water Concerns

Tripp Morgan, Assistant Extension Agent – Livestock and Forages – LSU AgCenter

You don't need your local extension agent to tell you this, but it has been hot! Not only has it been hot, but it has been fairly dry for the past several weeks. These are the conditions that Northeast Louisiana livestock producers are accustomed to combatting this time of year. The extreme temperatures that accompany mid to late summer and continue into early fall can cause a myriad of challenges for a cattle operation but one that oftentimes gets overlooked is the increased need for cool clean water.

We all know that we need to give our livestock a free choice of water, but how much do they actually need? Water requirements for beef cattle vary wildly depending on animal size, gestation stage, and climate. The general rule of thumb is in cool weather cattle need one gallon per 100 lbs. of body weight. More importantly, in hot weather cattle need two gallons per 100 lbs. of body weight. This generalization is supported by research from the University of Georgia. These amounts can be further increased by a cow's lactation status as water requirements increase due to the extra water required to produce milk for the calf.

Not all a cow's water requirements are met by drinking from a trough or tank. A portion of the herds' water requirement will be found through forage consumption. Cattle meet a much higher percentage of their water requirements through forage consumption in the springtime when forages that are generally higher in moisture content like ryegrass are present and temperatures are moderated than in summer when temperatures are higher and standing forage moisture content is lower.

There are many things that can impact water consumption or possibly make a water source unfit for use. Total dissolved solids (TDS) can have a large impact on water quality. Total dissolved solids are things like salt, lead, cadmium, mercury, iron, sulfates, and manganese. Basic water quality test will measure TDS as parts per million or PPM. It is recommended to provide cattle with water that has a TDS concentration of 3,000 PPM or less. Concentrations of 4,000-5,000 PPM are acceptable but at this level you can expect to see lower average daily gains. Never allow livestock to consume water that contains a TDS concentration of 10,000 PPM or greater. One water contaminate that is often overlooked is nitrates. This is occasionally an issue for producers that utilize ponds to water their livestock. Nitrate levels in ponds can be increased by runoff from fertilization as well as from fecal matter deposited in the pond by the livestock. This is rarely an issue when water levels remain high but during dry summertime conditions as pond levels recede due to consumption and evaporation, nitrate levels become more concentrated in the remaining water. Unfortunately for livestock producers, this is also the time of year where we are keeping an eye on nitrate toxicity issues within several of our forages such as pearl millet, sorghum-sudan, and Johnsongrass. The nitrates consumed through the water source add to the nitrates consumed through forages and could lead to toxicity issues. Increased nitrogen levels in our water sources can contribute to another pond issue.

Blue green algae is common across the southeast from summer into the fall. These algal blooms are caused by excess levels of nitrogen and phosphorus that accumulate from fertilizer runoff or manure. Blue Green Algae poisoning can be fatal. If you suspect blue green algae poisoning contact your veterinarian immediately. Blue green algae is not just a pond issue. Any water source including troughs can contain blue green algae this time of year. There are a few things you can do to fight back against these algal blooms. If a pond is experiencing an algal bloom, you can pump water out of the pond and into a clean water trough. Make sure that the intake that is placed in the pond is at least three feet below the surface of the water to minimize the amount of algae

pumped to the trough. Make sure to keep troughs clean! This can be done in many ways. Troughs can be emptied and scrubbed, goldfish can be added, or a bleach solution can be applied. Consult your local extension agent to develop a trough cleaning regiment that best suits your needs. Lastly there are some chemical options to help control blue green algae blooms in farm ponds. There are commercially available copper sulfate products that do a good job of clearing up blue green algae bloom. Make sure to read and follow label instructions exactly to prevent damage to livestock or fish. If you are unclear about label instructions contact your local extension service for assistance.

Another issue that is often overlooked is water temperature. When water temperatures exceed 77 degrees Fahrenheit consumption begins to decrease. Feed intake and average daily gain follow water consumption. As water consumption decreases feed intake and average daily are also reduced. There are a couple things that we can do to help moderate water temperatures. Larger water troughs are more temperature stable than smaller ones. Ground water is already cool when it is pumped to the trough and the large troughs are not affected as quickly by environmental factors. Deeper ponds are also much more temperature stable than shallow ponds and sloughs. If your primary source of water is a shallow pond, it may be worth the investment to hire a contractor to come in and dig it out to provide you with more volume and a cooler water temperature.

It is critical to not overlook the importance of cool clean water for livestock operations. There is a direct relationship between animal performance and water consumption. If we want to maximize the capabilities of our herd, we need to treat water quality and availability just as seriously as we treat nutrition or herd health.

Resources

Waltz, Troy. "Water Requirements for Beef Cattle." UNL Beef, beef.unl.edu/water-requirements-for-beef-cattle. Accessed 17 July 2024.

Rasby, Rick. "How Much Water Do Cows Drink." UNL Beef, beef.unl.edu/amountwatercowsdrink. Accessed 17 July 2024.

Parish, Jane, and Brandi Karisch. "Beef Cattle Water Requirements and Source Management." Mississippi State University Extension Service, extension.msstate.edu/publications/publications/beef-cattle-water-requirements-and-source-management. Accessed 17 July 2024.

Stewart, Lawton, and William Graves. "Water Requirements and Quality Issues for Cattle." University of Georgia Extension, 1 Jan. 2007, extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=SB56&title=water-requirements-and-quality-issues-for-cattle.

Timmerman, Amy. "Blue-Green Algae Impacts on Cattle." UNL Beef, 7 July 2021, beef.unl.edu/beefwatch/2021/blue-green-algae-impacts-cattle.

Cool-season Grass and Legume Forage Variety Considerations

Ed Twidwell, PhD, Extension Forage Specialist – LSU AgCenter

Livestock producers should plan ahead for a winter pasture program that can provide the needed nutrition for their livestock while summer pastures are dormant. If grazing is short, consideration should be given to early planting at least one or more pastures into a prepared seedbed. Early planting of a small grain, or a small grain-ryegrass mixture in a lightly cultivated field, can provide a lot of valuable fall and winter grazing if fall weather is suitable for quick stand establishment and good growth. Even if hay harvesting is good in late

summer, winter pastures should be a part of most livestock programs. Following are some comments concerning cool-season pasture crops and varieties that should be considered for planting in the fall of 2024.

To be included on the list of varieties that are considered to have performed satisfactorily from a crop for which several varieties are available, a commercial variety must be tested for three consecutive years and have an average yield not less than 90% of the three-year mean of the top three yielding varieties. A variety will be listed as “Promising” if, following two consecutive years of testing, it has shown acceptable agronomic performance and has yielded at least 90% of the average of the top three varieties. A variety will be dropped from the list if it fails to perform satisfactorily or if it is no longer available to the producers or if not submitted for evaluation.

Annual Ryegrass: Ryegrass is adapted on most soils throughout the state and is the most widely planted cool-season forage crop in Louisiana. It is highly productive in late winter and spring if given good management and weather is suitable. Forage quality is excellent when it is grown either alone or in mixtures with small grains and clovers. Varieties considered to have performed satisfactorily over the past 3 growing seasons and suggested for consideration in 2024 are Andes, Augusta, Bashaw Tetraploid, Centurion, Credence, Diamond T, Double Diamond, Gulf, Herdsman, Jackson, Lagniappe Tetraploid, Lonestar, Wax Marshall, Nelson Tetraploid, Prine, Ranahan, TAMTBO, Tetrastar Tetraploid, Triangle T and Winterhawk.

Oats: Oats are excellent producers of fall growth and have good forage quality. They are the least winter-hardy of the small grains and stand losses are sometimes observed in rough winters. The only variety suggested for planting is RAM LA 99016. .

Cereal Rye: Rye is an excellent producer of early fall and winter growth. Its most rapid growth period is in early spring, earlier than ryegrass and other small grains. Varieties suggested for consideration include Oklon, Wintergrazer 70, Maton, Maton II and Elbon.

Wheat: Wheat is a good producer of quality forage in both fall and winter. No commercial wheat varieties have been tested for forage by the LSU AgCenter in recent years. No variety considerations can therefore be made. Producers should consider selecting varieties that are adapted to their local geographical area.

Triticale: Triticale is a genetic cross between wheat and rye. It can be grown for grain or forage. It is more winterhardy than oats, but similar to wheat and rye. The variety FL 08128 is the only variety suggested for planting.

Arrowleaf Clover: Arrowleaf clover is an annual that produces most of its growth in late spring and lasts longer under grazing than small grains and ryegrass. It is best adapted on upland soils and can reseed if allowed to mature a seed crop. Varieties suggested for consideration are Amclo, Meechi, Yuchi and Apache.

Crimson Clover: Crimson clover is highly productive in early spring but goes out early. Like arrowleaf clover, it is best adapted to upland soils. Varieties suggested for consideration are Dixie, Chief, Tibbee and AU Robin.

Red Clover: Red clover is a high yielder in good stands and persists into the summer if conditions are favorable. In some years it survives through the summer on better soils. It can be used for grazing or hay.

Varieties suggested for consideration are Kenland, Kenstar, Cherokee, Southern Belle, AU Red Ace and Barduro.

Subterranean Clover: Subterranean clover is a low-growing annual clover that has prostrate creeping stems with erect leaves. Seeds are produced in a bur that develops at or below the soil surface. It has excellent reseeding ability under close grazing, but some reseeding failures have been reported after the initial stand had thrived for several years. No commercial varieties have been tested in recent years.

White Clover: White clover is adapted to a wide range of soil conditions and has some tolerance to wet soils once it is established. If growing conditions are favorable, it can persist well into the summer. Varieties suggested for consideration are LA S-1, Osceola, Regalgraze, Pinnacle, Durana, Neches, Renovation, Cresendo and Stamina.

Berseem Clover: Berseem clover is an annual, upright-growing clover. The varieties suggested for consideration in Louisiana are Bigbee and Frosty. Both varieties are noted for excellent fall and winter growth and a long period of good growth in the spring.

Alfalfa: Alfalfa is an important hay and haylage crop in many states, but the amount produced in Louisiana is very limited. It requires excellent drainage, highly fertile soils, a near neutral pH and a high level of management. Many varieties are marketed, but only a few are adapted in Louisiana. No commercial varieties have been tested in recent years.

Ball clover: Ball clover is a low-growing winter annual clover. It resembles intermediate white clover. It has excellent reseeding ability. The varieties Grazer's Select and Don are suggested for planting.

Balansa clover: Balansa clover is a clover species that has a growth pattern very similar to that of crimson clover. It is slightly more winterhardy than crimson clover, and also produces slightly more forage. It is considered to be a very good re-seeding clover species. The only variety suggested for planting is FIXatioN.

If you have any questions concerning your winter forage program, contact your local Extension agent.

Interns Gain Experience in Extension

Ashley K. Edwards, PhD, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist – LSU AgCenter

Two different programs offered college students from across the state and nation an opportunity to experience careers in Extension. These included the ASPIRE Internship and Extension Internship programs. The following students worked in different offices or research stations across the state to complete their 10-week program.

Karen Lewis

Hey, my name is Karen Lewis, and I am the Livestock Intern under Dr. Ashley Edwards at the Dean Lee Research and Extension Center. I am an undergraduate student at Louisiana Tech University, where I am pursuing a degree in Animal Science with a concentration in Livestock Production. Through this internship, I have gained understanding of several different aspects of the LSU AgCenter. From teaching students about

animal products, to putting up electric fences on the farm, I have been able to experience a wide variety of opportunities. By attending LSU Ag Agent meetings, I have also been able to network with many agents throughout Louisiana. I have been given the opportunity to work on several projects in my area of interest, which is small ruminants. Currently, I am creating several fact sheets as well as a demonstrational video for both youth and producers with sheep and goats. 4-H has had a major impact on my life, and I am thankful to be able to work with the Rapides 4-H program as well. My schedule has been full of a lovely mixture of 4-H events and extension and research-based experiences. I look forward to continuing to learn about and contribute more to the LSU AgCenter.



Trailbe Goff

My name is Trailbe Goff, I was born and raised in the heart of East Texas. I am currently a Senior at Stephen F. Austin State University where I am working towards my Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a concentration in Agricultural Development Production. I also own and operate a small, registered Brahman herd. This summer I have had the privilege to serve as an intern at the DeSoto Parish Extension Office. Throughout the course of this internship, I have learned many new things that I will be able to carry into my future career! The opportunities within this position are endless. I have learned how to obtain hay and soil samples, identify different weeds, identify harmful algae blooms in ponds and attended different meetings and trainings, along with several other things. My favorite part is all the connections this position has allowed me to make, in and out of the livestock industry, through the help of my mentors. Networking is a very powerful thing! I am beyond thankful for this opportunity to learn!



Shelby Brown

Hey everybody! My name is Shelby Brown, I am a rising senior studying Pre-Veterinary Medicine at Louisiana Tech University, hoping to attend LSU School of Veterinary Medicine after graduation. I'm from Keithville, Louisiana in Caddo Parish. I've had the honor of being selected to be an intern for LSU AgCenter this summer. I am enjoying my time so far. I've been busy! I have been able to get hands on experience like working cows, an opportunity to beef up my interpersonal skills by attending state meetings and doing work on a YouTube series on heat stress in beef cattle. I really am looking forward to seeing what the rest of the summer holds with LSU AgCenter!



Vivian Daigle

Hi, I am Vivian Daigle, originally from Eunice, LA, and a current student at McNeese State University. After receiving my Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Business and Mass Communication in December 2023, my plans are to return to McNeese to pursue a Master's in Business Administration. I received the opportunity to join the LSU AgCenter for the summer of 2024 in St. Landry Parish under Mrs. Brittany Zaunbrecher. During this internship, I gained valuable insights into the role of an ANR Livestock and Forage Agent and explored various aspects of the LSU AgCenter. My favorite part of the internship was the numerous opportunities to learn about new facets of agriculture and network within the community.



Statewide Management Reminders

Below are some general management considerations for your herd this spring and summer.

- ✓ Provide shade for cattle.
- ✓ Ensure adequate water supplies are available.
- ✓ Check minerals and add if necessary.
- ✓ Monitor fly load and apply pesticides as needed.
- ✓ Prepare to wean fall calves and check pregnancy status of fall calving cows.
- ✓ Manage hay fields with fertilizer and herbicide applications as needed.
- ✓ Collect and analyze hay samples as it is produced.

Upcoming Events

Agricultural Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Class

Tuesday, August 27th from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM

Lafayette Parish Extension Office (1010 Lafayette St. Suite 325, Lafayette, LA)

Contact: Lafayette Assistant ANR Agent Lanie Richard at 337-291-7090

-or- St. Landry ANR Agent Brittany Zaunbrecher at 337-948-0561

Dean Lee Beef and Forage Field Day

Thursday, September 12th at 2:00 PM

State Evacuation Shelter (8125 Hwy 71 S, Alexandria, LA)

RSVP at: <https://forms.office.com/r/4Md1nJK07c>

Contact: Ashley Edwards at akedwards@agcenter.lsu.edu

Northeast Beef and Forage Field Day

Thursday, September 19th at 8:15 AM

Goldmine Plantation (188 Cummins Rd, Mangham, LA)

RSVP at 318-368-9935

Contact: Tripp Morgan at tmorgan@agcenter.lsu.edu or 318-368-9935

Small Footprint Animal Agriculture Workshop

Saturday, September 21st from 9 AM to 3 PM

Ouachita Parish Extension Office (704 Cypress St., West Monroe, LA)

RSVP at 318-368-9935

Contact: Tripp Morgan at tmorgan@agcenter.lsu.edu or 318-368-9935

LUNCH NOT PROVIDED – Time will be allowed for a lunch break.

Acadiana Fall Beef and Forage Field Day

Tuesday, October 8th

More information to come.

Louisiana Producer Artificial Insemination School

October 9th through 10th

Dean Lee Research and Extension Center

Contact: Ashley Edwards at akedwards@agcenter.lsu.edu or 512-818-5476

Cattle Pregnancy Determination Clinic

October 15th -or- October 16th

Hill Farm Research Station

Contact: Lee Faulk at afaulk@agcenter.lsu.edu -or- Ashley Edwards at akedwards@agcenter.lsu.edu

Bull Breeding Soundness Exams

Thursday, October 24 22, 2024

8:00 AM until Completed

Dominique's Stockyard- Opelousas

Contact: Lafayette Assistant ANR Agent Lanie Richard at 337-291-7090

-or- St. Landry ANR Agent Brittany Zaunbrecher at 337-948-0561

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Louisiana State University Agricultural Center

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Matthew R. Lee, Vice President of Agriculture

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and provides equal opportunities in programs and
employment.