



Amy Simpson

Spring 2019

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Pasture Calendar

March

- Fertilize cool-season grasses if not done in February
- Delay grazing all fall plantings
- Overseed clovers and other grasses into closely-grazed pastures
- Control winter weeds

April

- Fertilize cool-season grasses and clover through mid-April
- Spray for weeds
- Plant Bermudagrass beginning at mid-April

May

- Fertilize warm-season grasses once night temps average 60°F
- Spray for summer annual and perennial broadleaf weeds
- Apply brush control herbicides
- Make 1st cut of Bermudagrass at 16"-18"
- Plant Bermudagrass and other warm-season grasses

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Controlling Broomsedge in Pastures

By Sarah Cato

U of A System Division of Agriculture

Fast facts:

- Broomsedge is an invasive weed that targets ill-managed pastures
- Prevention is key: Control is difficult once broomsedge is established



Those pesky brown broomsedge stems — the things that crop up in abandoned and ill-managed pastures — can cause years of strife for any farmer. But there are many preventative measures that growers can take.

“Broomsedge is a native warm-season perennial grass that occupies the niches left by diminished forage species,” said Dirk Philipp, assistant professor of forages for the University Of Arkansas System Division Of Agriculture and the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences.

“Most often broomsedge appears in mountainous areas and formerly forested fields, but pastures that have undergone the stress of drought or overgrazing also make for an ideal environment,” he said.

Allelopathic chemicals in broomsedge prevent other plants from germinating around them, making this an extremely competitive plant.

Prevention

Because broomsedge can be difficult to control once established, prevention is key. Preventative options include:

- Keep pH and Phosphorus levels in check. This means farmers should monitor soil fertility every year or two. The pH levels take some time to correct, so plan accordingly.
- Maintain appropriate pasture management. Keeping pastures clear of common weeds goes a long way to avoid major weed intrusion.

- Proper grazing methods should enable the farmer to increase or decrease grazing pressure in certain areas, and to help avoid overgrazing.
- Long-term management plans should be in place as well. Pasture species composition is dynamic, and forages likely have to be over-seeded after a few years in certain areas. Landscape position is a driver for available water, and thus plant composition.

Control

Once broomsedge appears in pastures, it will be there for a while. Control options include:

- Correcting any nutrient deficiencies in respective pastures. This will increase the vigor of the base forage.
- Grazing pastures properly. Cattle will eat broomsedge for a short period of time in spring.
- Patience. It may take several years before broomsedge will disappear.

There are no good herbicide options, other than glyphosate, which will also kill or damage the surrounding forage.

For more information on weed control in agriculture, visit www.uaex.edu.

Annie's Project Enrollment

Monday, March 25 – registration deadline
 Thursdays, April 4th – May 9th – workshop schedule
 Hot Spring County 4-H Center, Malvern
 \$60 Registration fee, Supper provided each night.



ANNIE'S PROJECT
 EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Contact the Extension Office at 246-2281 for a registration form, or register online at <http://bit.ly/2SN3NjN>

Clark and Hot Spring Counties are excited to offer Annie's Project for a 2nd year to the women involved in agriculture in our area. Annie's Project is a six week, discussion-based course that brings women together to learn from experts in production, financial management, human resources, marketing, and the legal field.

It is a relaxed, fun and dynamic way to learn, grow, and meet other farm women.

Here is a testimonial from a 2018 participant: "Annie's Project was a complete head to toe coverage of anything related to farming. It was especially enjoyable because I got to have fun learning with other women in agriculture. Not only did I learn new things, Annie's Project was also a great refresher course of some of the things I've forgotten. I highly recommend this course. It was very educational and a lot of fun!" - Jenny

Weekly agenda:

April 4th (HSC 4-H Center):

- Trailer Backing
- Tractor Driving & Hydraulics
- Estrus Synchronization
- Artificial Insemination

April 11th (HSC 4-H Center):

- Farm Budgeting
- Marketing
- Time Management
- Effective Communication

April 18th (Meet at Family Farm in Glen Rose):

- Agritourism Farm Tour
- Managing Farm Stress
- Agritourism Legal Risks
- Landowner Liability

May 2nd (Meet at Ausley Family Farm):

- Feed Mill Tour
- Livestock Nutrition
- Direct Marketing
- Retirement Planning

April 25th (HSC 4-H Center):

- Vegetable Gardening
- Canning Safety & Costs
- Financial Account Titles
- Managing Calving Dystocia

May 9th (HSC 4-H Center):

- Ladies' Choice Topics
- What have we learned?
- Where do we go from here?

Preparing for Changes to Antimicrobial Stewardship in the Beef Industry

Dr. Heidi Ward, PhD, DVM, Assistant Professor and Veterinarian

Antimicrobial stewardship and food safety go hand in hand. Since the Food and Drug Administration published the final rule for the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) in 2015, Extension and agriculture programs throughout the nation have worked diligently to educate producers and veterinarians on the importance of antimicrobial stewardship as it relates to animal welfare, meat residues and the potential development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Outreach efforts were eye-opening to both producers and educators as there is a perceived

delicate balance between what is good for the individual animal and what is good for the business. Since 2015, Extension and other agriculture forums have allowed educators, producers, regulators and industry representatives to communicate with each other. As a result, the beef industry has become stronger with a better understanding of areas for improvement concerning antimicrobial use in beef production.

Topics currently being addressed in regard to antibiotic use include product availability, labeling and veterinary oversight. The FDA maintains that the overall goal for their antimicrobial stewardship policies is to decrease the incidence of drug-resistant bacterial infections in humans and animals. The FDA also asserts that food animal welfare is very important and that antibiotics should continue to be used appropriately to treat or prevent illness.

Because over-the-counter product labels are meant to be followed explicitly, livestock producers have traditionally been able to purchase and use antibiotics freely without any veterinary oversight. Rapidly increased incidence of resistant food-borne bacteria over the past 20 years initiated changes in FDA policies.



Photo credit: Beef Magazine

The VFD brought antibiotics in feed under the supervision of veterinarians with injectable over-the-counter antibiotics remaining freely accessible. The FDA recently announced the goal of having all antibiotics used in animal agriculture to be under the supervision of veterinarians by 2023. The change from over-the-counter to prescription is meant to ensure the labeled use of the drugs is followed. There is still much to be determined about the change in policy, such as veterinarian-prescribed extra-label use, which is why the FDA intends to offer an extended open comment period before publishing the final rule.

Recently, widespread misinformation platforms have spawned a movement against using antibiotics in animal agriculture. Advocates for “no antibiotics ever” campaigns claim that antibiotics are used in animal agriculture primarily as a growth promoter and not for treatment of disease. Ironically, many of the production practices that these campaigns villainize have already been addressed voluntarily by the industry. In response to the VFD final rule going into effect in 2017, producers have adjusted by establishing veterinary client-patient relationships and developing better preventative health protocols for their cattle to help decrease the need for antibiotic use. Producers also stopped using antibiotics in feed as a growth promoter altogether. It is clear that the beef industry needs to get better at educating the public, but who should take up the challenge?

The Beef Quality Assurance Program, which is a nationally organized program funded by Beef Checkoff dollars, has been advocating for responsible antibiotic use in beef production for decades. Because state BQA programs have been allowed complete autonomy of how they are organized and implemented, the effectiveness of state BQA programs have relied solely on the dedication and passion of their state leadership. As a result, many state BQA programs have been ineffective at getting their message out to the producers and consumers.



This problem was addressed recently by national BQA leadership with the development of the national BQA learning center that allows producers nationwide access to free educational materials and online classrooms developed by experts from different sectors of the beef industry. National BQA also started offering state project grants that allow states to expand BQA initiatives through unique training opportunities.

Events from this past year have placed a magnifying glass on BQA programs as several processors and retailers now require their suppliers to be BQA certified. One reason for the sudden change was the publishing of the 2016 National Beef Quality Audit, which identified food safety as the quality challenge with the highest priority. Currently, BQA certification is the best way to show consumers that producers are dedicated to providing the safest and most wholesome product possible. As the movement for transparency in agriculture continues, other programs may arise as marketing tools to convey antibiotic stewardship. Until then, beef producers are encouraged to voluntarily participate in stewardship programs to carry their part in improving the industry

Precondition Your 2019 Calf Crop for Greater Calf Value at Market

Shane Gadberry, Professor - Ruminant Nutrition

During fall 2018, value added calves fetched nearly \$10/cwt over non-value added calves with a gross added value of \$56/calf. What makes these calves different? Health history and weaning management. Here are a few steps to consider if you want to be a value added player.

The first step in marketing value added requires a visit with your sale barn to determine the programs the barn offers for preconditioned calves. Many barns around the state offer special sales to attract additional buyers looking specifically to purchase preconditioned calves. Marketing preconditioned doesn't have to be restricted to special sales either. Some markets may choose to market value added calves as a regular part of their weekly sale.



The second step in marketing value added is to become BQA certified. County Extension agents provide BQA classes. Certification is required to participate in some value added programs.

The third step in marketing value added is determining a health and management plan up to and following weaning. There are several commercial plans available through vaccine companies. Arkansas Extension also launched the Natural State Preconditioned Calf Program, also known as GoGREEN. Calves meeting health and management requirements and weaned at least 45 days before market qualify for the GoGREEN tag.

Begin visiting with a veterinarian, Extension agent or pharmaceutical company representative about health protocols now. Establishing a health protocol now is important because some vaccine choices can influence the vaccine needs of the entire cow herd. One example is modified live vaccines. Modified live vaccines for use with pre-weaned calves have strict label requirements about cow herd vaccination and timing.

The fourth step in marketing value added is determining a weaning management plan. Buyers looking for preconditioned calves generally want calves to be weaned at least 45 days. Calves can be weaned to a drylot or fenceline weaned to pasture. Both have their strengths and limitations. Buyers also like calves that know how to eat and drink from troughs. In general, aggressive feeding after weaning won't be profitable. Calves weaned to pasture will benefit from a little supplementation, whereas calves weaned to drylot may require greater amounts of supplement depending on hay or silage quality. The local county agent is also a good source of information on post-weaned calf management.

On April 16, the livestock and forestry research station near Batesville, Arkansas, will be hosting a field day specific to the idea of preconditioning. Mark your calendar and plan to attend.

For more information about marketing your calves through the GoGREEN program, contact your county Extension agent and visit our website www.uaex.edu/gogreen.

Inaugural Southwest Arkansas Cattlemen's College Graduates

The first year of the Southwest Arkansas Cattlemen's College has come to a close with Clark County having three graduates of the program. The program was held monthly from December-March at the Southwest Research and Extension Center in Hope. Many topics were covered to help beef and forage producers improve their operations. Some of the comments from participants included: "Overall great program for beginning farmers." "I'm thankful for the opportunity to attend. Good work for the first one. I'd recommend it to any producer."

There were 18 participants from Clark, Hempstead, Howard, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Pike, and Sevier Counties. The three Clark County graduates were Billy Adams, Scott Clark, and Derek Helms.

