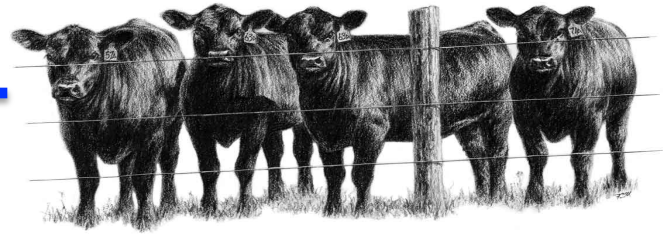


Extension

June, 2015

Cattle Call



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Round Bale Storage

Teresa Herman, Livestock Extension Agent, Iredell County

Storing hay for winter-feeding is something that every cattleman must consider. High quality stored forage will keep cows healthy, productive and profitable during the winter months. Maintaining that quality over time can be challenging and expensive. The average cost for hay is \$85/ton and up. Protecting that investment should be high priority to any producer.



Research has shown the storage losses from unprotected hay are substantially greater than producers realize. Hay stored outside on the ground with no cover can lose well over 50 percent of the overall dry matter. If your initial hay cost was \$100/ton and you lose 50%, your hay cost has now risen to \$150/ton. For example, if the average 25-cow herd consumes 31 ton of hay during 100 days of winter-feeding, the initial hay cost would be roughly \$3,100.00. However, the loss of quality from poor storage increases the consumption needs by 50%, your new winter feed cost for hay alone has increased to nearly \$5,000.00.

Market Outlook as of May 29th:

Andrew P. Griffith, University of Tennessee

Auction markets across the state continue to experience fairly strong auction receipts as summer quickly approaches. Part of the driver behind sustaining strong cattle receipts week to week is the strong prices that continue to be offered for calves. This is not the case for all feeder cattle however. Many stocker and backgrounding operations are experiencing the benefits of keeping those animals on grass to add a little more weight before marketing. The Southern Plains is a great example of an area where producers continue to add weight using available forage. Decent to good forage conditions have been nonexistent in the Southern Plains region for several years which required producers there to reevaluate management decisions. Now that forage conditions are greatly improved due to significant rainfall and in some cases rainfall that resulted in flooding, producers are taking advantage of forage resources and continuing to add weight. As producers defer the sale of these cattle into the later summer months, it is becoming increasingly difficult for feedlot managers to source feeder cattle to fill pen

space. Backgrounding operations may be on to something here as the August feeder cattle future price continues to be volatile. The August contract traded just shy of \$225 per hundredweight on Thursday which is nearly a \$6 upside swing since last Friday. The August contract daily settlement price since the first of the year has traded from \$226 per hundredweight the first week of January to just under \$197 in mid to late February which is a \$29 range which equates to about \$218 per head for a 750 pound steer. In mid to late April, the August contract closed as low as \$206.45 and has improved by about \$18 per hundredweight since that time. The current run in the market provides backgrounders the opportunity to use price risk management strategies to secure a relatively strong price and protect against any severe debacle in the feeder cattle market the next two months. This same analysis holds true for contracts through the end of the year. Contract months ranging into 2016 are less advantageous from a seller's standpoint but could be beneficial from a buyer's view.

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Heat Stress in Cattle

Steve Lemons, Livestock Agent, Stanly County

Understanding and avoiding heat stress in cattle can be a valuable tool for summertime management decisions. With Beef Quality Assurance workings in place and the need for fly control management this means that most cow calf operations will be working cattle on days when heat stress to cattle is possible. "Cattle have an upper critical temperature approximately 20 degrees cooler than humans. When humans are uncomfortable at 80 degrees and feel hot at 90 degrees, cattle may well be in the danger zone for extreme heat stress. Humidity is an additional stressor that intensifies the heat by making body heat dissipation more difficult." Fescue toxicity is an additional source of heat stress as it elevates the body temperature of cattle grazing our predominantly fescue infected pastures.

Over heating is sporadically encountered in cattle, but is really a rare problem. High humidity contributes to the likelihood of heat stroke or heat stress because water evaporation from the oral and nasal cavities is decreased, in spite of rapid panting. At an environmental temperature of about 88 degrees, heat dissipation mechanisms such as sweating and evaporation must take place to prevent a rise in body temperature. Sweat gland activity in cattle increases as the temperatures rise. Panting is an important heat regulatory device in cattle.

The signs of overheating may develop suddenly and depend upon the environmental conditions and the health of the cattle exposed to the heat. Panting often occurs at rectal temperatures at or above 104 degrees F, but may begin even at lower body temperatures. Some animals exhibit restlessness, excitement, and spasms of certain muscles. However, other animals may be dull and depressed. Very excitable cattle will be even more prone to heat stress if handled at high environmental temperatures. A protruding tongue may be covered with saliva, and frothy mucus discharged at the nostrils. Rectal temperatures of overheated cattle can range as high as 107 to 115 degrees F. Overheated and stressed cattle may also not respond to vaccinations and therefore render our efforts at health programs useless. Overheating in cattle can be prevented under most

management conditions. Allowing animal access to cool water and mineral supplements is a must in very hot summer weather. Shade and free air circulation should be provided if at all possible. Avoid working cattle during very hot parts of the day. If animals are going to have limited access to water under stressful conditions such as shipping by truck or trailer, they should be allowed water prior to further stressful situations.

If weaning calls for cattle to be gathered and put through a working chute for immunizations, implanting, or other operations, then a few common sense rules should be followed.

1 - During hot weather, cattle should be worked before 8:00 am and completed by 11:00 at all if possible. While it may seem to make sense to work cattle after sun down, they will need most of the night cooling before enough heat is dissipated to cool down from an extremely hot day. Recent research with rumen temperature boluses has shown that the core body temperature of beef cows peaks at 2 to 5 hours after the highest daytime temperature. On a hot summer day the highest daytime temperature is often late afternoon. Therefore the peak body temperature of cattle would occur at 6 PM to 11 PM.

2 - Cattle that must be handled during hot weather should spend less than 30 minutes in the working facility. Drylot pens and corrals loaded with cattle will have very little if any air movement. Cattle will gain heat constantly while they are in these areas. Therefore a time limit of one-half hour in the confined cattle working area should limit the heat gain and therefore the heat stress.

3 - Make every effort to see that cool, fresh water is available to cattle in close confined areas for any length of time. During hot weather conditions cattle will drink more than 1% of their body weight per hour. Producers need to be certain that the water supply lines are capable of keeping up with demand, if working cattle during hot weather.



Working Cattle in Summertime Heat

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension

Extension Cattle Call Giveaway

For our next drawing we will be giving away 5 bags of Southern States Beef Breeder Minerals donated by Southern States. It only takes a minute to enter the drawing. All you need to do is call the Wilkes Extension office at 651-7348 or 651-7331 and say the key phrase "Free Minerals 2015". Someone will take your name and number and enter you into the drawing to be held on July 31st.



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