

RANGELAND & LIVESTOCK NEWSLETTER

events

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

1/3-4 – Cattleman's Boot Camp, Pullman

Developing a business mentality, consumer preferences for beef products, functional genetics, calf health management, by-product feeding, communication skills, as well as live cattle and in-lab carcass comparisons. Event is sponsored by and will be taught by WSU Animal Science Department and the American Angus Association. Registration is \$75, enrollment is limited; sign up with the AAA (Sheila Stannard or Kris Stricken) at 816-383-5100.

2/2 – Central Washington Sheep & Goat

Information Day. Topics to include small ruminant diet planning and parasite control, water quality management, small flock biosecurity, and slick-shearing demonstration. 8-1 at the Ellensburg High School ag classroom. For more information, contact WSU Extension at 509-962-7507.

2/7 – Organization of Kittitas County Timothy Hay Producers & Suppliers annual meeting. 8-1, Kittitas County Fairgrounds. For more information, contact Kendra Allen at kballen@elltel.net.

2/11 – Pesticide pre-license and recertification training. Topics to include integrated pest management for hay and pasture, controlling problem weeds, DOT vegetation management, biological control, update on pesticide laws, and more. Register in advance with the WSU Extension office at 509-962-7507. 8-4 at the Heritage Center, Kittitas County Fairgrounds. Registration includes a fee to cover lunch (yours).

2/19 - Central Washington Beef Information Day, Ellensburg. Topics will include biosecurity practices for cow/calf operations, managing for profitability through the down cycle, BVD testing & emerging animal health concerns, avoiding water quality pollution, and rangeland grazing management for wildlife habitat improvement. Lunch by Rodeo City BBQ is free, thanks to Trinity Farms, Pfizer Animal Health, and the Kittitas County Cattlemen's Association, so registration is limited to 75 persons. 10-4 at the Heritage Center, Kittitas County Fairgrounds. Please call 962-7507 or email amorse@wsu.edu to register.

winter water quality concerns

The onset of winter, and the arrival of rain and snow, and rain ON snow, is a good reminder to review your livestock operation's influence on water quality. Many older confinement facilities where cows are fed through the winter are near streams and may be a concern under the Clean Water Act depending on specific conditions. Operations may be designated as a CAFO by the state if there is a significant discharge to ground or surface water. Facilities confining more

than 300 animals for 45 days on a lot absent any vegetation that carry manure or contaminated runoff into streams or where animals have direct access need to apply for a permit from the Department of Ecology OR take measures to prohibit that discharge. Facilities smaller than 300 head meeting the same conditions (animals present for 45 days, not necessarily consecutive, in any 12-month period and no effective vegetation) need to evaluate whether that lot is losing manure or dirt to surface waters. The key in designation of a small facility (<300 hd) is the significance of the discharge. As the capacity of the lot decreases, the relative quantity of discharge necessary to trigger a designation increases. In order to help livestock producers better evaluate on their own whether their facility could be a problem if an inspector visited WSU Extension and the Washington Association of Conservation Districts have partnered with WSDA and DOE to produce a self-assessment tool that lists the major risk factors in pollution according to current research and common sense and provides potential recommendations for addressing each specific problem area. This document is available at <http://animalag.wsu.edu/water%20quality/>. This webpage contains a number of useful fact sheets, and the assessment tool is found under the Quick Links section.

Obvious risk factors include:

1. Distance to surface water
2. Slope of confinement area
3. Channeling/ditching that concentrates manure as it exits the facility
4. Location of feed bunks
5. Condition of live water access areas
6. Precipitation amount and timing
7. Absence of vegetation between lot and water

Figure 1 illustrates a worst-case scenario.

Potential solutions:

1. Provide hardened water access or crossing
2. Plant riparian vegetation for filter between lot and stream
3. Feed on pasture & away from water
4. Pipe water through feeding area
5. Provide offsite water instead of direct access
6. Extend grazing season or stockpile pasture



Figure 1

NRCS photo

In many cases, the water quality problem can be fixed not by spending thousands on relocation of a facility but by simpler actions that reduce the amount of time animals are in confinement such as winter grazing or feeding hay on pasture instead of in a “dry”-lot. This frequently has significant animal health benefits as well as distributing manure across pastures and greatly reducing what moves overland into a stream. There will always be situations in the spring with rain on snow events that move manure, but pastures that were managed well in the fall and have healthy soil with high organic matter and adequate stubble will have higher water-holding capacity and filtration ability. Producers with intact streambeds, healthy vegetation during the normal growing season, decent manure management, and grass filters between confinement areas and water are well on the way to clean water (and long-term sustainability).

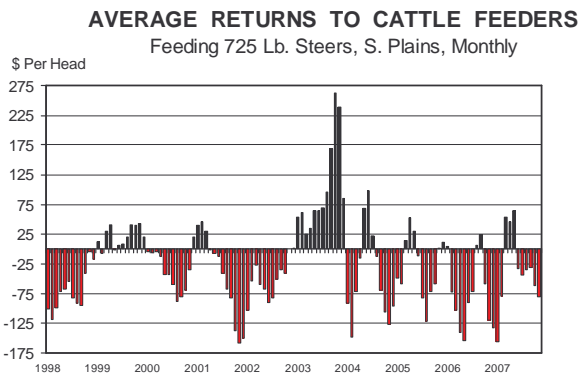
For more information, contact the Kittitas County Conservation District at 925-8585 or the WSU Extension office at 962-7507 or HUDSONT@WSU.EDU.
--Tip Hudson, WSU Extension

hay twine recycling

D&C Distributors is collecting hay twine – collection point is at 9711 Vantage Hwy. They will have stands available at all times for drop off. 509-899-4476.

cattle markets update (LMIC) CATTLE FEEDERS FLOWING RED INK

Estimated feedlot closeouts were flowing in red ink during November, continuing the trend of recent months. In fact, for feeding-out a 750-pound steer in the Southern Plains that was sold in November, the estimated loss was over \$80.00 per head, the largest negative number since January of this year. Closeouts will mostly post red ink at least through February of next year. As spring approaches, some positive returns may return.



Overall, 2007 was a year of losses for most cattle in feedlots but the year was much better than 2006. Still, only three months posted profits for steer sales in 2007 -- March, April, and May. Cattle feeders faced rather high feeder cattle prices and very high feedstuff costs in 2007. In the Southern Plains, annual average feed costs per steer were the highest reported since 1996.

Feedlot breakeven sale prices have declined some recently due to moderating feeder cattle (700-to 800-pound) prices, even with the recent upswing in corn prices. Still, on a total cost basis, estimated

breakeven sale prices for steers are about \$100.00 per cwt. for March and April closeouts.

IMPORTS OF CANADIAN CATTLE

On Monday, November 19th, the final rule normalizing U.S. cattle trade with minimal risk countries came into effect. Now live Canadian cattle for any use, including breeding, born on or after, March 1, 1999 are allowed entry into the U.S. Prior to this date, only Canadian cattle under 30 months and destined for immediate slaughter or restricted feedlots were eligible for export to the U.S.

Canadian slaughter cows began to flow into the U.S. in late November with initial numbers well below pre-BSE years. According to USDA-AMS weekly import data, as of weekending December 8th (latest data available), a total of 9,243 head of slaughter cows had been imported into the U.S. since the rule took effect. In 2002, for the corresponding three-week period, the U.S. imported 17,833 head while in 2001 this number was smaller at 15,500 head. Given the age restrictions and the steady decline in the Canadian cowherd, the number of slaughter cows exported to the U.S. is forecast to remain near recent levels in early 2008.

U.S. imports of Canadian feeder and slaughter cattle exceed 2006 levels in late 2007 as higher feed costs combined with stronger demand from U.S. feeders and processors pulled cattle south. However, U.S. beef exports to Canada this year have been well above last year, with weekly muscle cut exports up 27 percent from a year earlier through November. As of the end of November, year-to-date weekly feeder cattle imports were just under 190 thousand head larger than the same period last year, while slaughter cattle imports were up nearly 15 percent. Compared to the 2002, feeder and slaughter cattle imports were up 6 and 7 percent, respectively.

The financial difficulties of Canadian cattle producers and beef processors will likely continue. So, further reductions in the Canadian cattle-breeding herd are likely, therefore, U.S. imports of feeder cattle and cull cows are likely to be above a year ago well into 2008. But, slaughter cow imports may remain generally below pre-BSE years.

email newsletter delivery

For those who want less paper mail and are interested in receiving this newsletter via email, please call 509-962-7507 or email brandie.woody@co.kittitas.wa.us. Tip Hudson, rangeland & livestock management educator, can be reached at HUDSONT@WSU.EDU or the phone number listed above.



Washington State University Extension helps people develop leadership skills and use research-based knowledge to improve their economic status and quality of life.

Tipton D. Hudson
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