

RANGELAND & LIVESTOCK NEWSLETTER

educational events

WSU Extension / Kittitas County Conservation District Land Care seminar series:

- 9/17—problem weed identification & management
- 10/1—hay production & economics, open space requirements
- 10/15—rangeland management & rehabilitation
- 10/29—irrigated pasture management & renovation
- 11/5—how to fertilize (or not) & irrigate
- 11/19—horse nutrition, fencing, winter grazing
- 12/3—water quality regulations & landowner responsibilities

7pm each date at the Heritage Center, K.C. Event Center (fairgrounds) underneath the grandstands on the south side of the rodeo arena—access via 6th St. Contact WSU Extension at 509-962-7507 for more information. Registration is \$25 per family – includes a resource notebook. Please let us know if you plan to attend!

fall/early winter cow-calf checklist

- Obtain cow and calf weights and input into record keeping programs. Cull cows based on performance and pregnancy status and make initial heifer selections, keeping more than you intend to retain for the next breeding season.
 - Evaluate body condition (BCS) of cows after weaning their calves. Sort thin cows (BCS<5) away from the main cow herd so they can receive extra feed, if needed.
 - Dry cows can utilize crop residues and poor-quality hay but don't let them lose too much weight. Save higher-quality feeds until calving time.
 - Replacement heifers should gain at an adequate rate to reach their breeding season. Choose a breed and use EPDs and visual "target" breeding weight (65% of mature weight) by March 1.
 - Increase feed to cows 45–60 days prior to calving.
 - Purchase hay if you haven't already.
 - Test hay for nutrient content; evaluate need for supplement
 - Use electric fencing to more efficiently graze stockpiled forage or crop aftermath
- from the *WSU Beef Management Calendar (MISC 0396, available at pubs.wsu.edu)*

avoid h1n1 influenza in people & pigs

President Obama declared a national emergency on October 24th in response to rapid spread in the U.S. The declaration is an administrative move that gives medical care providers expanded options in fighting further spread of the virus. The CDC is a good source of current information on human cases: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/update.htm>

Swine flu is so named because it has genetic similarity to influenza viruses that occur in pigs in

Europe and Asia, but is quite different from the viruses that normally circulate in North American pigs.

While you cannot get H1N1 eating pork products, pigs can get the virus from infected humans. If you own swine, consider the following practices to help prevent diseases from being transmitted to your animals:

- Individuals should shower and change into farm-specific clothes and shoes before entering facilities and handling swine. These farm-specific clothes and shoes should be specific to only your farm, not other farms you may visit. These clothing items should only be worn on your farm.
- Individuals exhibiting influenza-like symptoms should not have contact with the pigs for at least seven days. Individuals with symptoms should be seen by a medical provider.
- Restrict access to your facilities and to your pigs to essential individuals responsible for care of pigs.
- Prevent international visitors from entering facilities or handling pigs.
- Contact your veterinarian or the Washington State Department of Agriculture Veterinarian if swine exhibit flu-like or respiratory illness, especially if the onset or presentation of the illness is unusual.
- Wash hands frequently, especially before and after handling swine.

Follow the CDC's recommendations for preventing/minimizing person-to-person spread:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve (not your bare hand!)
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and hot water or use an alcohol-based disinfecting gel
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
 - Avoid close contact with sick people
 - If you have flu-like symptoms, stay home for 24 hours after your fever is gone
 - Follow public health advice about closures and treatment (Kittitas County Public Health updates are at <http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health>)
- Tip Hudson

acceptable alfalfa stand?

With new fall alfalfa stands planted and up and the last cutting for older stands done for the year, it is advisable to assess the stand of both newly established and older stands of alfalfa.

According to "Irrigated Alfalfa Management" (Summers and Putnam) stand viability is often evaluated by measuring the number of plants or stems per unit area. Under most conditions, when alfalfa stands fall below four to six plants per square foot, yields begin to decline. However, numbers of plants are not the only factor. The health, size, and regrowth potential of individual plants are also important to determine the viability and regrowth potential of alfalfa stands.

Common stand densities for alfalfa:

Seedling stand	>25	(range 25-80)
End of year 1	15-25	
End of year 2	10-15	
End of year 3	6-12	

Old or weakened depleted stands <4-6

The number of stems per unit area is usually more important than plant density because the number of stems determines crop yield and also affects competition with weeds through canopy cover. Stem densities above 55 stems per square foot have been found to adequately maintain yields whereas some yield reduction is expected from 40- 55 stems per square foot. Growers should consider some type of renovation when stem densities fall below approximately 39 stems per square foot. --P. Petersen

ultrasound used for better breeding in sheep

Ultrasound technology routinely used to accurately predict characteristics that indicate carcass yield and value in cattle and swine can also be used in live sheep, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists and cooperators have found.

At the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, Idaho, research leader Greg Lewis and his colleagues have shown that ultrasound could significantly improve the speed and accuracy of selective breeding methods. Producers currently rely on visual appraisals to predict carcass traits before choosing which sheep to breed. Ultrasound provides a faster, more accurate alternative.

To test the reliability of the technology, the team took ultrasound images of 172 lambs before slaughter. Henry Zerby, an assistant professor at Ohio State University, coordinated the collection of carcass trait data for the lambs. Lewis and Dave Notter, a geneticist at Virginia Tech, collaborated to analyze the data.

The scientists found that a trained technician can capture an ultrasound image in about 30 seconds with reasonable accuracy. The images can then be used to estimate traits that influence the carcass value of market lambs. Such traits include loin muscle area, loin muscle depth and back-fat thickness.

Although initially more expensive than visual appraisals, the superior accuracy of ultrasound may translate into better economic returns through improved evaluation and selection of breeding stock. According to Lewis, ultrasound is an excellent way for breeding-stock producers to get the data they need to make selection decisions.

Reliable predictions save breeders valuable time, allowing for educated decision making about an animal's offspring without waiting for the offspring to mature.

Sheep are an important part of the global agricultural economy, providing a wide array of raw materials used in products for domestic and international trade. In the United States, sheep are typically bred for meat and wool and have been part of the American landscape since colonial times. --By Stephanie Yao

communicating with non-farmers

Holly George, an Extension farm advisor in California, produced a video explaining the importance of maintaining American agriculture. An excellent story as are others on this site, you might start with Keeping People on the Land: http://www.youtube.com/user/PassionForTheLand#p/u/8/C_8VbZI6FLQ

There are a total of 12 stories on this YouTube Channel. You can also view the stories at the Art of Regional Change website and learn more <http://artofregionalchange.ucdavis.edu>

women farmer roundtables

The WSDA Small Farms and Direct Marketing Program is pleased to announce a series of women farmer roundtables this fall. Roundtables will be held in Yakima, King, Pierce-Kitsap, Okanogan, Spokane and Jefferson Counties in collaboration with a great group of local partners!

Roundtables are designed as a free-flowing discussion around the issues, questions and resources most important to women farmers. The format is peer-driven and participants will be able to network with local women farmers at all stages in their careers. State and regional agencies and organizations will be on hand to provide resources and share information.

The first roundtable features topics such as:

- Direct marketing
- Value-added production
- Navigating rules and regulations

The second roundtable features topics including:

- USDA RMA insurance & AGR-Lite
- Business planning tools
- Energy alternatives
- Farm succession planning

Closest sessions:

Renton on Oct 14 & Oct 28

Spokane on Nov 6 & Nov 20

Roundtables are free and generously funded by the USDA Risk Management Agency. Space is limited so that everyone has a chance to participate. To RSVP or for more information please contact:

Colleen Donovan at (509) 306-0059 or comodono@gmail.com or

Patrice Barrentine at (360) 902-2057 or pbarrentine@agr.wa.gov



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
Extension Faculty

"Helping You Put Knowledge to Work"

507 Nanum Street, Room 2 • Ellensburg, WA 98926 • (509) 962-7507 • Fax (509) 962-7574 • hudsont@wsu.edu

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.