

D's Notes
11/30/20

FREE RFID ear tags for Breeding Beef

Karaline Mayer, Animal Disease Traceability Coordinator, for the Kansas Department of Agriculture – Division of Animal Health sent this information to the Agriculture Extension Agents in the State of Kansas.

Earlier this year, KDA and USDA collaborated to begin providing RFID ear tags at no cost to accredited veterinarians. Each state is allocated an amount of tags based upon numbers of replacement heifers. To this point, our efforts to market the program have focused mainly on veterinarians. However, we would like to expand the reach of this program and therefore, are reaching out again to applicable trade associations, organizations, etc. for further broadcasting. Please note that orders must still be placed by an accredited veterinarian.

Thus far in 2020, Kansas producers obtained twice as many RFID tags for cattle by purchasing through manufacturers and retailers rather than requesting free tags. The FY2021 Kansas allocation through USDA's no-cost program is 287,000 RFID tags. At this time, there is some uncertainty how far into the future this program will exist.

Two colors of low frequency tags are available to order: white and orange. White tags may be used in dairy cows, bulls, and replacement animals. Animals intended for feeding purposes only are not eligible for these tags. Orange tags are only for use when brucellosis vaccinating. On a call earlier this week, USDA-APHIS leadership commented they are investigating the inclusion of ultra-high frequency tags in the program; however, there are no UHF tags available through the program today and no timeline was provided.

Tags are ordered in bags of 100 and are currently shipping weekly. Orders should provide tags for the upcoming year and not be stockpiled. It is our intent that these tags reach as many operations as possible.

Certainly, we are aware that a percentage of the livestock industry is not using RFID technology nor has the interest. However, the sectors I hope we reach through your efforts are (1) those who are interested in RFID and not willing/able to pay for the technology and (2) those who are currently paying for RFID tags that could be obtained at no cost.

To receive these free tags, reach out to one's private veterinarian for placing the order. All accredited veterinarians in Kansas have received the ordering information. For additional details, contact Karaline Mayer, ADT Coordinator, karaline.mayer@ks.gov, 785-313-0266.

Cattle Chat: Using crop residue as a beef cattle feed source

Most cattle producers will agree that hauling feed and delivering hay to the cattle in the winter can be labor intensive and expensive. Experts at the Kansas State

University Beef Cattle Institute point to grazing crop residues as one option to reduce feed expenses and minimize daily labor with proper planning and regular monitoring.

“Many producers have made grazing crop residues part of their management strategy because of the low winter feed costs associated with it,” said veterinarian Bob Larson. In Kansas, these residues are typically corn and sorghum.

To be successful, Larson said producers must plan for a water source, which may take extra labor to deliver it to the field where cattle are grazing.

“A lot of times there isn’t a pond on the crop field, so you have to haul out a tank in a way that doesn’t tear up the field,” Larson said, adding that producers need to plan for the cattle congregating around the water source and potentially damaging the ground.

Another step in preparing the field for grazing is making sure there is adequate fence to keep the cattle contained, said Bob Weaber, beef cattle specialist and head of the Northeast Kansas Research and Extension Center.

“Many of these fields are leased ground and they don’t always have good perimeter fencing on them,” Weaber said. “It isn’t uncommon to see cattle out grazing on stalks with a single-wire strand of electric fence surrounding them.”

Weaber said it is especially important to check electric fence often so cows don’t get out, and he stressed the importance of having a reliable fence charger.

Nutritionally speaking, Larson and Weaber agreed that cattle often select plant leaves and fallen corn ears when they first arrive on the field.

“The leaves and fallen ears hold a higher quality energy content as compared to the stalks,” Larson said.

To manage the crop residue resource, Weaber advised producers follow strip grazing protocols.

“Strip grazing allows producers to monitor how much of the field has been grazed and forces the cows to clean up a section before moving them off,” Weaber said, noting that it also allows producers to assess the body condition of the animals in the herd to make sure their nutritional needs are being met.

If strip grazing isn’t an option, Larson said cattle producers may need to consider additional supplementation as the winter months pass by.

“The longer you leave cattle on crop residues, the quality of what they are consuming decreases while at the same time the nutritional demands for gestating, spring-calving cows goes up,” Larson said. “In that case, you may need to increase the protein supplementation as the season progresses.”

To hear more about grazing crop residues, listen to the BCI Cattle Chat podcast online at <https://ksubci.org/2020/11/20/kfma-data-grazing-crop-residue-listener-question-more-resources/>.

WHAT PRODUCERS SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT IN DECEMBER.....

by Dale Blasi, Extension Beef Specialist

Cow herd management for spring-calving cows

In late fall and early winter, start feeding supplement to mature cows using these guidelines:

- Dry grass — 1-2 pounds (lb.) per day of a 40% crude protein (CP) supplement

- Dry grass — 3-4 lb. per day of a 20% CP supplement

- Dry grass — 10 lb. good nonlegume hay, no supplement needed

Compare supplements based on cost per pound of nutrient.

Utilize crop residues.

Strip-graze or rotate cattle to improve grazing efficiency.

Cows in average body condition can be grazed at 1-2 acres per cow for 30 days, assuming normal weather. Available forage is directly related to grain production levels.

Limiting nutrients are usually rumen degradable protein, trace minerals and vitamin A.

Control lice.

General management

Document your cost of production by participating in Standardized Performance Analysis (SPA) programs.

Review management decisions; lower your costs per unit of production.

Check your financial management plan and make appropriate adjustments before the end of the year.

Using Old Garden Seed

Garden catalogs seem to come earlier each year. Since new seed can be expensive, you may want to consider using seed bought in previous years.

We normally consider seed will remain viable for about 3 years under cool, dark, dry, conditions though there are exceptions. For example, members of the carrot family (carrots, parsnips and parsley) are short-lived and are usually good for only 1 to 2 years.

If you are unsure of viability and have plenty of seed, there is an easy method of determining how good your seed is. Place 10 seeds on a paper towel moistened with warm water and cover with a second moistened towel. Roll up the towels and place inside a plastic bag with enough holes for air exchange but not so many that the towels dry quickly. Place the bag in a warm place such as the top of a refrigerator. Remoisten towels with warm water as needed. After the first week, check for germination. Remove sprouted seed and check again after another week. Add these numbers together to determine the percent germination. (Ward Upham)

Mouse Damage to Fruit Trees/Plants

Be on the lookout for mouse tunnels around your fruit plants. Trunks and roots of apple trees are among the favorite meals for mice. There is probably no damage yet. But if we receive enough snow to cover winter food supplies, mice will begin to feed on

the lower area of tree trunks and roots. This feeding may be severe enough to girdle tree trunks and kill the trees.

Mice like to hide in dead grass and weeds around the trees, especially close to the trunks. They will often tunnel near the soil surface and feed on the tree bark. You can check for mice by placing baited mouse traps in PVC or other pipe near your trees. Insert the traps far enough so that pets are unable to reach the trap. Check the stations about once a week and reset traps if necessary.

Mouse damage can be severe enough to kill trees that are old enough to bear fruit. Clear dead grass and weeds away from your trees and monitor for mice if you are using mulch around your fruit plants. (Ward Upham)

Controlling Volunteer Trees

Though trees are a vital part of our landscapes, there are situations where volunteer trees need to be controlled. This is often a case of the wrong plant in the wrong place. If the tree is still small and a desirable species, you may want to consider transplanting in the spring. If it is not, active control measures would be in order.

Most, but not all, trees resprout after cutting. Cutting those that don't resprout is an effective control method. For example, eastern redcedar is a very common species that will not resprout after cutting. Those that do resprout include Siberian elm, hackberry, Osage orange (hedgeball), oak, ash, aspen, cottonwood, maple, sycamore, willow and many more. These trees will either need to be dug out or the cut stump treated with herbicide after cutting.

Note that when we say volunteer trees, we mean those that come from seed rather than suckers that originate from the roots of an existing tree. The recommendations given in the remainder of this article are designed to kill these volunteer trees. Using herbicides on suckers will damage and very possibly kill the original tree. Trees that commonly produce suckers include tree of heaven, honeylocust, black locust, hackberry, western soapberry, cottonwood, aspen, poplar, willow and boxelder.

It is also possible for larger trees of the same species to be root-grafted. Even though root-grafted trees are not suckers, they do share materials between the individual root systems and therefore herbicides used to treat one tree can be passed to its neighbor. Let's say we have a tree we want to control that is a volunteer and there are no other trees of the same species close enough to be root-grafted that we do not wish to harm. What do we do? If the tree is any size, you probably do not want to dig it out. That leaves using a herbicide on the cut stump. Basal treatments are also possible but that is beyond the scope of this article. First decide what herbicide to use.

Triclopyr and glyphosate are the herbicides most commonly available to homeowners. Triclopyr is found in many brush killers and glyphosate is found in Roundup as well as numerous other products. Read the label before purchasing to make sure that a cut stump treatment is listed. Most often the undiluted product is applied to the stump immediately after cutting. A paint brush is often used for the application though some people will dip their pruning shears in the products immediately before

cutting. Regardless, it is important that the stump is treated immediately or at least within 5 minutes. Note that a paint brush with foam rather than bristles is less likely to drip.

Trees do not need to be actively growing to be controlled. Actually this time of year is a very good time to treat as long as applications are made when the temperature is above freezing. (Ward Upham)

Monitor Indoor Plant Temperatures

Now would be a good time to check the location of foliage houseplants to be sure the plants don't get too cold this fall or winter. Plants next to windows or in entryways near outside doors are at the greatest risk. Plants sensitive to cold temperatures include Chinese evergreen (*Algaonema*), flamingo flower (*Anthurium*), croton (*Codiaeum*), false aralia (*Dizygotheca*), and ming and balfour aralia (*Polyscias*). Monitor and maintain temperatures above 65 degrees F for the false aralia and above 60 degrees for the rest of the list. Many other indoor plants prefer temperatures above 50 degrees. If needed, move plants away from the windows or door entrances to reduce cold temperature exposure. It may be necessary to move some plants from windowsills before shades or drapes are pulled, especially in the evening. (Ward Upham)

A related item is the Video of the Week: Basic Care for Houseplants
<https://kansashealthyyards.org/component/allvideoshare/video/basic-care-of-houseplants>

Conservation Trees from the Kansas Forest Service

The Kansas Forest Service offers low-cost tree and shrub seedlings for use in conservation plantings. Plants are one to two years old and sizes vary from 8 to 18 inches, depending on species. Two types of seedlings are offered; bareroot and containerized. Containerized provide a higher survival rate and quicker establishment. Orders are accepted from now through May 1st, but order early to ensure receiving the items you want.

Orders are shipped beginning in mid-March. Approved uses for these plants include windbreaks, wood lots, wildlife habitat, timber plantations and educational and riparian (streambank) plantings. They may not be used for landscape (ornamental) plantings or grown for resale.

All items are sold in units. Each single species unit consists of 25 plants. For example, a unit of Eastern red cedar has 25 trees per unit. Though a single species unit is most commonly purchased, four special bundles are also available including a quail bundle, pheasant bundle, eastern pollinator bundle and western pollinator bundle.

Tree planting accessories are also available including marking flags, root protective slurry, rabbit protective tubes, weed barrier fabric and tree tubes. If there have been problems with deer browsing on young trees, the tree tubes are a must.

For details and an order form, go to: <http://kfs.mybigcommerce.com/> Order forms are also available from the Hodgeman County Extension offices. (Ward Upham)