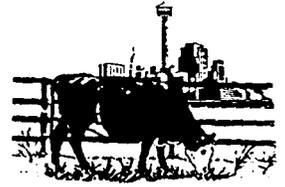




The Bexar County Beef Cattle Newsletter



December - 2003

2004 Bexar County Beef Cattle Shortcourse

Texas Cooperative Extension, The Texas A&M University System and the Bexar County Beef Cattle Committee are conducting the annual Beef Cattle Shortcourse at Palo Alto College in the Performing Arts Room 100B. Registration begins at 6 p.m. Program to begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. each evening. The shortcourse is free and no pre-registration is required.

Date: Thursday, January 15th **1 CEU will be offered**

Topics: Hay Production Issues and Wildlife Habitat and It's Brush and Weed Control

Speakers: Mike Livingston, Texas A&M and Lynn Drawe, Welder Wildlife Foundation-Sinton

Sponsored by: Bexar County Farm Bureau

Date: Thursday, January 22nd

Topics: Current State of Cattle Marketing and Basics of Futures/Hedging and Obtaining Financing for Cow/Calf & Stocker Operations

Speaker: Ken Jordan, Jordan Cattle Co.-San Saba and Gary Parker, American National Bank-Uvalde

Sponsored by: Merial Animal Health

Date: Thursday, January 29th **1 CEU will be offered**

Topics: Bovine Reproduction and Herd Health Management and Minerals

Speakers: Dr. Randy Stanko, Texas A&M University-Kingsville and Dr. Joe Paschal, Texas A&M Experiment Station-Corpus Christi

Sponsored by: West Feeds

Private Applicator Trainings

Bexar County Extension office will be conducting a Private Applicators Training on Thursday, December 4th beginning at 8 a.m. located at 3355 Cherry Ridge Dr. S-208. Class is \$25 which includes the study manual.

CEU Class Offered

Wednesday, December 10th from 9 a.m. till noon at the Bexar County Extension office in S-208. 3 CEU's will be offered for the class (1 IPM, 1 Drift, 1 Laws & Regs). Please RSVP by December 5th.

Beef Cattle Committee

The Beef Cattle Committee and Texas Cooperative Extension are responsible for planning many of the trainings you see offered in your newsletter. We would like to invite you to join the committee with your ideas and suggestions on what the committee should offer for residents of Bexar County. If you are interested in attending their next meeting, give Pam a call to get on the mailing list.

Utilization of Genetically Enhanced Corn Residue on Grazing Steer Performance

From Univ. of Nebraska 2003 Beef Cattle Research Report

Two studies were conducted to evaluate the efficacy of transgenic corn hybrids for residue grazing. In Experiment 1, two irrigated corn fields were used after grain harvest, one Roundup Ready® and its non-transgenic control line to evaluate grazing performance. There was no significant difference in performance in Experiment 1. Experiment 2 was conducted the following year using dry land corn. In Experiment 2 corn rootworm-protected variety (Bt), Roundup Ready®, and their non-transgenic control line. The feeding value of corn residue grazed by beef steers is not different between transgenic hybrids (Bt Corn Rootworm Protected and Roundup Ready®) compared to non-transgenic corn.

Feeding Transgenic (Bt Corn Rootworm Protected and Roundup-Ready®) Corn to Feedlot Cattle. Two finishing trials were conducted to evaluate the effect of feeding corn rootworm protected (Bt) and Roundup Ready® (RR) corn hybrids on animal performance and carcass characteristics in the feedlot. Two commercially available non-genetically engineered reference hybrids, and the non-transgenic control hybrid were compared to the two genetically enhanced hybrids. Feeding two transgenic corn hybrids (Bt corn rootworm protected and Roundup Ready®) had no effect on feedlot performance or carcass characteristics when compared with non-transgenic reference and control hybrids.

Cattle Brucellosis Eradication in Texas: Close, But Not Yet

Animal health officials were disappointed, but not surprised, in September when they detected a cattle herd infected with brucellosis in Henderson County, breaking a 13-month stretch during which no newly-infected herds were detected in Texas. Texas and Missouri are the only states in the nation not free of this bacterial disease, which is detected through testing of blood, milk or tissue from cattle. Although some infected animals exhibit no signs of disease, brucellosis can cause cows to abort, deliver weak calves or produce less milk.

"We are closing in on the last infected herds in Texas, and after months of not finding infection, we were hopeful we might have finally eradicated the disease," commented Dr. Max Coats, deputy director for Animal Health Programs at the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state's livestock health regulatory agency. "With more than 153,000 cattle herds in Texas, finding the last infected herd is like looking for the proverbial 'needle in the haystack.' We still may find a few more infected herds in Texas before we join the ranks of the other brucellosis-free states in this national disease eradication program."

"Twice now, we've gone longer than a year without finding a brucellosis-infected herd in Texas," said Dr. Coats. "The first

time was from July 2000 through December 2001, but soon after, we detected and depopulated four infected herds in Montgomery, Rusk, Henderson and Colorado Counties. Then, after a lull of more than a year, we detected the latest infected herd, in Henderson County, through our routine testing of adult breeding cattle being sold at livestock markets. We're in the process of testing neighboring herds and tracing cattle movement into and out of the Henderson County herd to determine if infection has spread."

Dr. Coats explained that, because cooked meat is safe for human consumption, the cows and bulls from the infected herd will be sent to slaughter. The owner will receive payment from the slaughter facility, and an indemnity from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and TAHC to help offset the loss of not only the adult cattle, but also nursing calves. Weaned steers and spayed heifers may be kept, because these animals cannot spread brucellosis, which is transmitted primarily by infected cows during abortion or calving.

"Years ago, Texas had thousands of infected herds, which often were quarantined for up to a year or longer, while we periodically tested the cattle, to ensure all infected animals were removed and slaughtered," said Dr. Coats. "During the quarantine period, animals could be sold only to slaughter, creating a hardship for the rancher. There also was the chance that infection could be spread to nearby herds during the quarantine. Now, by depopulating infected herds as soon as possible, we can stop disease spread, and the producer can be in business with new, test-negative animals within weeks." Dr. Coats said Texas continues to apply the "tried-and-true" formula for eradicating brucellosis, which involves vaccinating heifers, testing breeding cattle prior to change of ownership and collecting blood samples from cattle at slaughter. Vaccination is now voluntary in most instances, and ranchers may have their accredited veterinarian administer RB-51 vaccine to heifers four to 12 months of age. (Bull calves do not receive the vaccine, because it can make them sterile.) RB-51 provides heifers protection against brucellosis, but unlike earlier vaccines, it does not create confusion about test results.

"To ensure infected animals are not moved from herd to herd, breeding cattle 18 months or older, or younger cows that are bred or have calved, must have a negative blood test for brucellosis before changing hands at a livestock auction or through private treaty. This 'first-point' testing of cattle has been the most effective and efficient method of finding infection," he said.

At slaughter plants, blood samples and animal identification information, such as ear tag numbers or backtags, are collected from cows and bulls, he explained. When samples test positive for brucellosis, the TAHC or USDA field staff use the animal identification information to trace the herd of origin, so the remaining cattle in the pasture can be tested. If infection is confirmed, neighboring herds and other potentially exposed cattle are tested to determine the source of the infection and to find out if the disease has spread to other herds.

Dr. Coats strongly urged ranchers to maintain young, purchased heifers separately from other cattle in their herd, until the purchased animals are tested after delivering their first calves. "There's always the possibility that these very young heifers may have been exposed to brucellosis and are incubating infection when they're bought. We strongly recommend that these young heifers be kept in a separate pasture, then tested as adults, just to ensure that disease isn't introduced into the main breeding herd," he said. "It's always better to be safe than sorry."

"Cattle brucellosis one day will be regarded as foreign animal disease in the U.S.," said Dr. Coats. "In Texas, we've come so far since the days when 1,500 or 2,000 infected herds were quarantined, and we were testing entire counties to 'clean up' infection. We can eradicate this disease in Texas, and even though Missouri may beat us to the eradication finish line, we won't be too far behind."

Tifton-85 Vs. Coastal For 1/2 - And 1/4-Brahman Stockers

Researchers at Texas Ag. Experiment Station -Overton compared Hereford X Brahman (1/2) and Hereford X Angus-Brahman (1/4) weaned calves. Calves were weaned on June 9, kept in drylot for a week and grazed until August 31 on either Tifton-85 (unsupplemented) or Coastal supplemented with 2 lb/head/day of a 28% CP mix. For the first 41 days after weaning, Adjusted Daily Gain was similar on both treatments at about 1.65 lb/day. Calves on TIF-85 gained slightly more during the final 42 days (late July through August). But stocking rate was over twice as high on TIF-85, resulting in 551 lb gain/acre, compared to 225 for Coastal. Over the entire 83 days, 1/4 calves gained about 1.4 lb/day on both pastures, but 1/2 calves gained 2.2 on TIF-85 and 1.83 on supplemented Coastal. TIF-85 produced faster gains and more gain per acre, and 1/2-Brahman was superior to 1/4.

Grazing Hybrid Forage Sorghums

Workers at the TAMU-Amarillo Center grazed brown midrib (B) and normal (N) Sorghum X Sudan hybrids in two successive years. Grazing was from July 20 to August 30 the first year and July 5 to September 13 the second year. Stocking rates were similar both years, averaging 115 head-days/acre for B and 114 for N. Average Daily Gain (ADG) and gain/acre averaged 2.94 lb/day and 337 lb/acre for B and 2.62 and 300 for N. Authors noted that ADG was higher than often seen, due to shorter than usual grazing periods. They stressed the need to balance stocking rate and length of grazing to optimize forage quality, animal performance, and total production. In the third year, B was planted May 23 for continuous grazing and May 23, June 4, and June 14 for rotation grazing. Grazing on both treatments was from July 9 to September 27. ADG was very similar (2.44 vs 2.45) but rotation grazing yielded 10 more head-days/acre and 25 lb/acre more gain. The authors stated that, not only was total gain higher by rotating, the system also works better for a combination of grazing and haying.

First Canadian Beef Enters U.S. Public To Comment On Live Cattle

Truckloads of boxed beef from Canada began crossing the border Sept. 10, the first shipments since a ban was imposed last May. Thirty countries banned imports of beef from Canada following the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in an Alberta cow last May.

Secretary of Agriculture Ann. M. Veneman said Sept. 17 that only "low risk" Canadian beef products are currently being accepted and that a rule for lifting the ban on Canadian cattle younger than 30 months of age is several weeks away. The first step will be publishing a notice in the Federal Register for public comment.

Lifting the ban will cause problems for U.S. exporters. Two major buyers of U.S. beef, Japan and Korea, are now requiring exporters to certify that shipments contain no Canadian meat.

That means meat plants will incur additional costs in segregating Canadian and domestic product throughout the production and shipping process. Veneman said USDA would take the additional costs into account when developing the proposal. She said that once the proposal is published, it could still take several months before a final rule is adopted.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association is urging USDA to ensure that current Canadian practices of using animal health issues as trade barriers be addressed before making a move to resume trade of live cattle with Canada.

"As negotiations on reopening the border with Canada occur, we believe USDA-APHIS must seize the opportunity to create a harmonization of animal health standards to allow an equitable flow of cattle in both directions," said NCBA. "Continued testing requirements by Canada for anaplasmosis and blue tongue should not be tolerated. There is no science today that supports the requirements Canada has imposed on the U.S. cattle industry."

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the international agency that sets animal health standards, met Sept. 22-26 to update the content and improve understanding of current OIE international standards on BSE.

OIE's 164 member countries asked the organization to provide additional clarification on the interpretation of the BSE standards. They also asked for OIE's help in carrying out an appropriate risk assessment in accordance with international standards so that safe imports of animals and animal products can be done even from countries identified with BSE risk.

The present OIE Code has never suggested a total embargo of animals and animal products coming from BSE infected countries, not even from countries considered as having "high BSE risk."

OIE acknowledged that the code has not yet served to avoid major trade disruptions, primarily because many countries failed to implement international standards. OIE said, "In some cases, embargoes are carried out without a science-based risk analysis. This situation penalizes countries with a good and transparent BSE surveillance, declaring cases while perfectly controlling the disease."

On Oct. 2, Mexico followed the U.S. lead, lifting its ban on frozen and processed beef less than 30 months of age. Canada is Mexico's second largest provider of beef, providing between 15 percent and 20 percent of Mexico's total beef imports and about 30 percent of its breeding cattle.

The Canadian beef industry has lost more than \$1 billion since the bans were imposed. Beef cattle numbers reached a record 15.7 million as of July 1, prompting warnings that a mass slaughter is needed. "We still have a portion of the industry that is dreadfully short of feed," said Trevior Yarchuk, Alberta Agriculture beef specialist. "So its going to come to a reality where if we don't have a profitable market, or at least a market, and we don't have the feed, we need to look for other alternatives."

Present & Future Certified Texas Bred Breeders

Swing breeders should note the following important dates for the 2003-2004 CTB Program:

***December 16, 2003 to January 15, 2004** -- CTB Numbers are **\$10.00** each plus a late fee of **\$25.00** per order.

***December 31, 2003** – Postmark deadline for requesting refund on unused CTB Numbers.

***January 15, 2004** – After this date CTB Numbers are **\$35.00** each.

***January 15, 2004** – Postmark deadline for returning a copy of the completed Breeder Log to TPPA. Breeders returning the completed Breeder Log after this date will be charged a late fee of **\$25.00**.

*Order forms are available on the TPPA web site at: **texaspork.org**

Know Your Grasses

By Nathan Riggs-EA-IPM

Texas Cooperative Extension has released a new publication titled "Know Your Grasses." This 97-page guide contains information on 81 common native grasses found in Texas pastures, grasslands and roadsides. It describes their characteristics, soil and moisture preferences and their benefit to livestock and wildlife. This guide also contains a map of Texas showing where each of these grasses will grow and includes artful diagrams of the grasses, as well as a glossary of terms. This publication is numbered B-182 and can be purchased for \$14.95 through the Texas Cooperative Extension Bookstore online at <http://www.tcebookstore.org>. If you wish to order this guide, but do not have internet access at home, call the Bexar County Extension office at (210) 467-6575 or your local county Extension office for access to this opportunity.

Academy for Ranch Management Workshops

The Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management is proud to announce The Academy for Ranch Management Workshops for 2004. The cost for each 3-day workshop (listed below) is \$395/person and includes meals and lodging. All workshops will be held at the Sonora Research Station.

Rangeland Restoration and Management

Jan. 8-10 or August 12-14

Rangeland Burning – Basic Class

February 19-21

Rangeland Plant Identification

May 13-15

Restore and Manage Deer Habitat

July 8-10

Sign up now to reserve your space by calling Ray Hinnant at 979/845-5580. For more information, visit their website at: <http://rangeweb.tamu.edu/arm>.

Mailing List

To help defray costs, we are updating our mailing list. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please contact Pam by phone (210/467-6575) or email at (paxtell@txce.tamu.edu). Be sure to indicate that you wish to be removed from the Beef Cattle Newsletter list.

The Bexar County Beef Cattle Newsletter

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OPPORTUNITIES

<u>Opportunity</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Private Applicator Training	Bexar County Extension office	Dec. 4	Pam 210/467-6575
CEU Workshop (RSVP)	Bexar County Extension office	Dec. 10	Pam 210/467-6575
Beef Cattle Short Course-Session #1	Palo Alto College	Jan. 15	No R.S.V.P. required
Beef Cattle Short Course-Session #3	Palo Alto College	Jan. 29	No. R.S.V.P. required

Texas Cattle Tuberculosis

Texas' cattle tuberculosis (TB) status was downgraded from TB accredited-free to modified accredited advanced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2002, after TB infection was detected in 2001 in two of the state's 153,000 cattle herds. One of the herds was a purebred beef herd in Fayette County. Infection also was detected in a beef herd in Irion County and a dairy in Pecos County, but these two operations were counted as one herd, because they had a single owner. The infected herds were depopulated.

In August 2003, a third infected herd--a purebred beef herd--was detected and depopulated in Zavala County.

The Problem: Texas cattle producers who export cattle out of state are penalized by the state's downgraded status. (All states except Texas, California, New Mexico and Michigan have accredited TB-free status in the national TB eradication program.)

Under current USDA regulations, Texas breeding cattle not originating from a TB-accredited free herd may not be moved out of state until they've tested negative for cattle TB. Additionally, some states require additional testing or identification procedures for dairy calves or feeder cattle moving from Texas. TB tests or tagging requirements can be costly for Texas producers who, each year, export more than 150,000 breeding cattle and more than a million head of feeder cattle.

The Solution: Texas must regain its cattle TB-free accreditation, so animals can be moved across state lines without restrictions!

In 2002, an industry and TAHC task force developed a cattle TB plan for Texas, components of which included disease surveillance testing

of at-risk herds, at no cost to the herd owner.

Texas' TB Testing Program Begins November 2003

In September and October, the TAHC is conducting required two-hour TB certification courses for accredited, private veterinary practitioners interested in contracting with the TAHC to do the surveillance TB testing for dairy owners and beef seedstock producers. Veterinarians will be reimbursed for the work with USDA funds.

Also during this time, TAHC staff are informing dairy groups and purebred cattle associations about the need to test the state's nearly 850 dairies and about 2,000 to 2,500 purebred cattle herds.

Q&As about Testing

Q: What will testing cost?

A: The dairy operator or beef seedstock producer will need to bear the cost of gathering the herd, presenting the animals for testing and holding the cattle in a pen or pasture during the 72-hour testing period.

The TAHC is using USDA TB cooperative funds to reimburse private veterinary practitioners for the testing. Under the "fee-basis" arrangement, the veterinarians must have completed a TAHC TB certification seminar and have a signed contract on file with the TAHC.

Q: What ages of cattle must be tested?

A: All cattle 24 months of age or older will be tested. Owners also should consider testing younger, purchased replacements. The program will pay for testing these animals.

Q: What about bulls?

A: If they are 24 months of age or older, they'll need a test.

Q: What animal identification (ID) devices are acceptable?

A: For this program testing, your veterinarian may use the herd ID device, if each animal in your inventory has a unique tag number. Duplicate numbers within the herd are not acceptable. For interstate movement or to gain or maintain accredited-free herd status, animals must have an official USDA ear tag or other official identification.

Q: What are other official ID devices?

A: Registration tattoo or registration brands also are official IDs.

Q: What is the testing procedure?

A: After scheduling a herd test with your veterinarian, TAHC or USDA veterinarian, gather the cattle, so they can be presented for testing.

The veterinarian will inject the cattle with tuberculin in the animal's caudal fold area, a fold of skin located under the tail head. After 72 hours, the veterinarian will return to "read" the test by manually examining the injection site for a reaction, such as a thickening of the skin. Cattle that exhibit a response will have a USDA ear tag applied. State and federal regulations restrict the movement of cattle from the farm or ranch until all testing is completed and the disease status of the herd is resolved. (There are provisions to allow test-negative cull cows to be moved to a slaughter plant during this time.)

The veterinarian will report the test result to a TAHC or USDA regulatory veterinarian who will conduct a second test, called a "comparative cervical", on the animal within seven days. Two antigens will be injected into the skin on the animal's neck. Seventy-two hours later, the two injection sites will be examined, and, depending on the test response, the animal may be reclassified as negative, suspect, or reactor.

Q: How likely is it that cattle will respond to the TB tests?

A: Experience with TB tests indicates that about 3 to 5% of dairy cattle and 1-2% of beef cattle will develop a "response" to the caudal fold test, even though they're not infected with TB. Only about 1% of the animals subjected to the comparative cervical test will be classified as a suspect or reactor, when they're truly NOT infected with TB.

Q: What if cattle react to the second test, the comparative cervical test?

A: Cattle classified as "suspects" may be subjected to a TB retest in 60 days, or the animal may undergo a postmortem exam as soon as possible, depending on the decision reached between you, your practitioner, and a regulatory veterinarian. Owners are compensated at "fair market value" by the USDA for animals slaughtered for postmortem exams. If the animal has no evidence of TB, then the herd restrictions are released.

If the herd has cattle that have been classified as "reactors" on the comparative cervical test, these animals must have a postmortem exam. Again, the USDA will reimburse owners at "fair market value." The postmortem exam may be done on a farm or at a veterinary diagnostic lab.

If no TB infection is found, movement restrictions may be released, provided there is no known TB exposure.

If, however, TB is confirmed through laboratory tests on tissues collected from an animal, the herd will remain quarantined. The owner will be offered "fair market value" for the herd, so the animals may be properly disposed of to prevent the spread of disease and allow the owner to return to business quickly.

Q: How long will it take to complete testing and postmortem exams?

A: The caudal fold test takes 72 hours, and for animals that exhibit a reaction, the comparative cervical test is scheduled within seven days. This test also requires 72 hours. If there are "suspects" or "reactors," it usually takes another 10 to 14 days to resolve the status of these animals.

Q: If they are not infected with TB, why do animals test positive?

A: Cattle TB is caused by a bacteria known as *Mycobacterium bovis*.

Other strains of *Mycobacteria* can infect cattle, and will cause similar responses to the caudal fold test. One of the strains is *Mycobacterium avium*, which is the bird strain of TB. Cattle that consume feed or water contaminated with bird feces may develop a sensitivity to this bird disease, but do not develop progressive disease.

The second strain is *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*, the bacteria that causes Johne's disease in cattle. When cattle are given the comparative cervical test, usually it will become evident which cattle have been exposed to one of the other *Mycobacteria*.

Unfortunately, about one percent of the cattle will not be 'cleared' by the comparative cervical test, even though they are not infected with *Mycobacterium bovis*, or cattle TB. These animals must be examined postmortem to determine their disease status. The animals may be responding to the test because they have been sensitized either by the bird strain of TB, Johne's disease, or any of the other 60 plus known strains of soil-borne *Mycobacteria*.

For more information, call the TAHC at 1-800-550-8242.