Potter County Ag Talk

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Thank you for picking up the FIRST EDITION of Potter County Ag Talk! My name is Austin Voyles, and I have just assumed the role of Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources in Potter County!

WHAT IS THE JOB OF THE COUNTY AGENT?

This is a question that I get asked very regularly from common stake holders, home owners, producers, and 4-H Families. I hope that this quick outline will help everyone understand!

- As the Ag/NR agent, one of my responsibilities is to help convey information to agriculture producers throughout the county. We as an organization pride ourselves on conveying timely, relevant, research-based information to help our producers in our counties become more profitable and better land stewards.
- I also have a heavy responsibility to provide the same type of information to small acreage land owners and urban home owners throughout the county as the need arises.
- I have asked and been granted 4-H Livestock responsibilities in Potter county. This will take place in the form of teaching young livestock exhibitors all about their 4-H livestock project from facility preparation and feeding, to evaluation and showmanship.

I list these 3 main areas and I hope that everyone quickly understands that this is just a glimpse into the day to day activities that I take part in. We have a great team here in Potter County, and we all work together to ensure that we have a successful program full of enriching experiences.

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Excerpts from Beef Cattle Browsing - Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Beef Cattle

CORN – HOW MUCH GOES TO BEEF ?

We often see statements about how much corn cattle eat to produce beef and how much better the world would be if that corn went directly to humans. Just how much of U. S. corn production actually goes to beef cattle? Of the total domestic use of corn, 11.3% is used by beef cattle. Some corn is exported so, of total U. S. corn production, 9.4% is used by beef cattle. Even when combined, beef, dairy, pork, and poultry account for 44.9% of total domestic use of corn and 36.4% of total U. S. corn production.

(USDA Feed Grain Database and Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, 12/19/14)

EFFECT OF STOCKING RATE AND IONOPHORE ON GRAZING PERFORMANCE

A group of 30 Angus X Brahman heifers initially averaging 755 lb was grazed 86 days from late June to mid-September. Over the grazing period, the pasture averaged 7.7% CP and 47.6% digestible organic matter. Heifers were stocked at either 0.7 or 1.0 hd/ac and received 0.9 lb/hd/day of a 14% CP supplement, with free-choice salt-based mineral. One-half of the heifers on each stocking rate received 200mg/day monensin in their supplement.

ADG averaged 1.10 lb /day for the low stocking rate and 0.73 lb/day for high stocked. There was no significant effect of monensin supplementation on ADG at either stocking rate or during any period of grazing. The authors concluded that monensin “may not improve performance of animals receiving low-quality warm-season forages with limited supplementation”. NOTE: Other research has generally shown significant positive effects on performance and economic return from ionophore supplementation, including monensin, especially on higher-quality forage.

(J. Animal Sci. 93:3682; Univ. of Florida, Oregon St. Univ., North Carolina St. Univ, Elanco Animal Health)

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Crop Producer Update

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SUGARCANE APHID DAMAGE TO SORGHUM RATING FOR THE TEXAS HIGH PLAINS

Blayne Reed, EA-IPM Hale, Swisher, & Floyd. Dr. Ed Bynum, Entomologist District 1, Dr. Pat Porter, Entomologist District 2

Sugarcane aphid (SCA) damage ratings should be based upon percent damaged leaves and severity of damage to leaves of infested sorghum plants. Shortly after moving into sorghum fields, SCA generally establish aphid colonies on the lower leaves and advance higher up the plant to fresh leaves as their population grows. Unchecked SCA populations can grow high enough to cover all plant surfaces including the head / panicle area but tend to stay on the underside of leaves if possible. SCA are not known to inject toxins into sorghum leaves as greenbugs and yellow sugarcane aphids do. Thus, there is no immediate reddening or yellowing resulting from aphid feeding to infested leaves. This absence of stark, aphid caused damage to the leaves can make estimating a percent damaged or infested leaves difficult.

Established, reproducing, and healthy colonies of SCA do secrete copious amounts of honeydew to the leaves and soil underneath infested leaves. These excreted deposits of honeydew are quite shinny and can aid in detecting the presence of established colonies. In cases of extremely high populations of SCA feeding for extended periods, sorghum leaves can take on a 'mottled yellow' appearance.

If left unchecked, these extremely high populations of SCA will cause leaf death. High amounts of deposited honeydew left on leaf surfaces over time will also develop sooty mold which will add a darkened appearance to heavily infested plant leaves and plants. If left unchecked, SCA can cause total plant death.

Example of an unchecked leaf with a heavy SCA population

Example of a heavily damaged field—rating of 9.5 according to the above article