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IS BEEF IN DANGER OF BECOMING A “LUXURY” ITEM?

The cattle industry was aware that shrinking herd sizes and steady demand for beef would raise prices but some in the industry are worried.

Economists are wondering if beef prices will rise to the point that consumers will see it as a luxury good and choose alternatives such as chicken, pork and fish.

It was recently reported by USA Today that beef prices have increased by an average of a dollar per pound since 2007 and are expected to increase by up to an additional 10% before the summer.

Grocers and restaurants will be searching for ways to maintain consumer demand. Restaurants have previously avoided passing



on high food costs to consumers by serving smaller portions but that might change.

Mike Hoffman, meat director at Dahl's Foods in Des Moines, has adopted the strategy of selling higher priced beef cuts in 12 oz packages instead of 16 oz. He has also started selling smaller, cheaper cuts for \$4 to “keep costumers’ taste for beef alive.”

Experts expect con-

sumers to continue to eat beef but may exchange middle meat products for cheaper options like ground beef and other value cuts.

Beef consumption was 57.3 lbs. per person in 2012 and is forecast to fall to below 55.5 lbs. per capita in 2013 and below 53 lbs. per capita in 2014.

[Veterinary Entomology
Newsletter, February 28, 2013,
Volume 6, Issue 1]

WHERE HAVE ALL THE BEEF COWS GONE?

Cattle numbers are down again, lowest level since 1952, according to USDA. Beef cow numbers are at their lowest since 1962 due to the 2012 drought. Other reasons for the decrease are high feed and forage prices, persistent drought in the Southern Plains and the widespread Midwestern

drought of 2012.

The 2012 drought was just the latest event to result in the liquidation of cows that has been accelerating since 2007.

Nationally, beef cow herds have dropped by 3.6 million head (11%). It has been difficult for the beef

industry to compete for high priced feed and limited land that is being converted to corn and soybean production.

What will it take to turn the herd decline around?

The answer is more rain,

continued on Page 2

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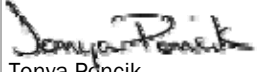
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Portions of this newsletter are cited from the
Texas A&M University Beef Cattle Browsing
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Commissioners Court of Texas Cooperating.

INVOLVE YOUR VET IN PARASITE CONTROL

A good parasite-control program can provide some of the highest economic returns of any management practice available to beef producers, but timing and product selection are critical.

Most producers do not consult their veterinarians in their decisions but there is value of involving a veterinarian in planning parasite-control program.

A study out of Iowa State University shows that parasite control can return as much as \$201 per head due to better health, improved weight gains and reproductive efficiency.

A good deworming program typical-

ly can improve calf weaning weights by 25 lbs – worth close to \$50 in today's market – for a treatment cost of about a penny per pound or \$5 for a 500-pound calf.

Resistance among worm species affecting cattle has not become a widespread problem,

but veterinarians and parasitologists have become concerned as some resistance populations have turned up, particularly *Cooperia* spp.

Timing is an important consideration in spring deworming; most cases (10% of worms on the ranch) are in the animals while 90% are on the pas-



tures. Worms that overwinter on pastures move up from the ground onto forage plants during March and April in the south.

[Veterinary Entomology Newsletter, February 28, 2013, Volume 6, Issue 1]

THISTLES

If left uncontrolled, thick thistle stands can reduce grazing and result in less forage production. A single thistle plant can produce at least 4,000 seeds, which increases the chance for higher thistle populations in the pasture the following year.

Consequently, management practices need to be conducted prior to flower formation for effective thistle control. Even if thistles have not infested your pasture in the past, it is ideal that your pastures are scouted in late fall through mid-spring (November to March) to ensure that thistles do not get out of control. New infestations are easier to manage than large-scale populations.

Although there are at several different species of thistle in Texas, most are closely related and control recommendations will not differ. Best time to control with a herbicide is when thistles are in the rosette stage. The rosette stage is when the thistle forms a low-growing ring of leaves. As they mature they are harder to control and may require higher

rates of herbicide to have effective control.

Select Herbicide Options:

- Weedmaster
- 2, 4-D
- GrazonNext
- Remedy
- PastureGard
- Cimarron Max (for bermudagrass pastures, will control bahiagrass)

REMEMBER: The Label Is The Law! Always read the pesticide label before using.

[Forage Fax, February 6, 2013, Vanessa A. Corriher]

EDITOR'S NOTE: A new website has been launched that offers timely forage and pasture information. You can subscribe to **Forage Fax** and receive posts such as reminders to obtain a soil test, recommendations regarding drought management, new products to be aware of, and information regarding critical pasture issues.

This site will feature hot links to appropriate resource materials. Stay tuned for "Weed of the Month" posts in the near future!

Visit **Forage Fax** at the following address:

<http://foragefax.tamu.edu>

WHERE HAVE ALL THE BEEF COWS GONE? Continued from Pg 1.

more crop production, and more pasture and forage production. Larger crop and forage production would increase availability and lower prices of these critical feedstuffs.

Finished cattle prices should strengthen into the spring as beef supplies drop.

If crop and forage production returns to near normal, the cattle industry is poised for multiple years of favorable returns and expansion.

[Veterinary Entomology Newsletter, February 28, 2013, Volume 6, Issue 1]

A FEW FACTS ABOUT WATER RIGHTS IN TEXAS

Surface water in Texas is owned by the state and held in trust for the citizens of the state. The state grants the right to use this water to different people, such as farmers or ranchers, as well as to cities, industries, businesses, and other public and private interests. Anyone who wants to use surface water in Texas must first get permission from the state unless they are using the water for one of several "exempt uses" in the Texas Water Code.

The most common exemption is Domestic and Livestock (D&L) use. D&L users are given the highest priority, and their use takes precedence over other water rights in the basin. Landowners along Texas rivers and streams can divert surface water for D&L use, without a permit. D&L use includes water used for livestock, to meet household needs, or to irrigate a yard or home garden. Diverters can also impound water, as long as the average volume is 200 acre-feet or less in 12 consecutive months.

Surface water diversions that are not exempt require a water right. For example, if you use surface water to irrigate crops, you must have an irrigation water right in order to divert.

The Texas Commission on Envi-

ronmental Quality is the agency responsible for managing water rights in Texas. There are limits to the amount of water which can be permitted. Water rights are granted on a "first come, first served" basis. Irrigation rights have these features in common:

- They have an assigned priority date. This date determines your seniority.
- They specify the volume of water you may use each year.
- They can allow you to impound this water, to divert it, or both, depending on the permit.
- They do not guarantee that this water will always be available to you.
- Regardless of the priority date, D&L users have seniority over other permitted uses.

Irrigation rights are regarded as property interests and may or may not be sold with the land. When property changes ownership, it is important to know if the water right was included with the sale. All changes in ownership of a water right must be reported to the TCEQ.

Forms to report change in ownership can be found here: www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/water_rights/wr_amiregulated.html

Some areas of the state (Concho River watershed, Rio Grande basin, and south Texas) have watermasters that manage available water and water rights. Outside of watermaster

areas, water right holders must submit a water-use report no later than March 1 every year.

Water right holders who fail to

- *Surface water diversions that are not exempt require a water right.*
- *Water right holders must submit a water use report no later than March 1 every year.*
- *All changes in ownership of a water right must be reported to the TCEQ.*
- *Water right holders who fail to submit water-use reports may be subject to fines.*

submit water-use reports may be subject to fines and/or enforcement actions. The state could revoke a water right if use is not reported. You can find forms to report your water use here: www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/water-use-report

If you have more questions about surface water rights contact the TCEQ's Water Rights Permitting and Availability Section at 512-239-4691, or Small Business and Local Government Assistance Program at 1-800-447-2827.

www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/w-rights



Bobwhite Quail, Turkey And Grassland Bird Workshop



June 8, 2013 ♦ 8 am – 11:30 am
Allen Wolf's Property -1497 CR 225, Giddings

Learn the life history and population cycles of quail, turkey & other key grassland.

GRASS MANAGEMENT

- How to use cattle as a tool to improve and maintain habitat
- Grass types and appropriate coverage for quail.

*Native bunch grasses
Forbs & weedy plants
Invasive & exotic species*

BRUSH MANAGEMENT

- Techniques, equipment and the Pros and Cons

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- The components of good quail & other grassland bird habitat

MEASURING YOUR SUCCESS

- ♦ Simple techniques to evaluate habitat on your property

Grass & Plant Identifications

By TPW Botanist, Jason Singhurst

Sponsored by: Lee County Wildlife Association
Texas Parks & Wildlife
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service



KEETON EHRIG
Extension Agent-Lee Co.
Agriculture/NR

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
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Meet & Greet

PLEASE HELP US WELCOME

Adam Broll,
Game Warden-Lee County
Texas Parks & Wildlife

MONDAY, JUNE 3
5:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

LEE CO. EXTENSION OFFICE
310 S. GRIMES - GIDDINGS



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