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THE GRAZE

A quarterly newsletter with livestock and agronomy updates.



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Mid-Plains **AG EXPO**

THE 2024 CONFERENCE WAS A SUCCESS!

Over 90 producers were in attendance on January 18th at the Hale County Justice Center in Plainview. 7 CEUs were offered along with the annual auxin training, door prizes, vendors, great food, and real time feedback from speakers. Additionally, our office was honored to award Ronald Groves with the “Lifetime Friend of AgriLife” award. Thank you to all who participated! We look forward to seeing you at our next program!

THANK YOU TO OUR MID-PLAINS AG EXPO SPONSORS!

We would like to extend a sincere thank you for your exceptional support and partnership.



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ANIMALS AND LIVESTOCK PUBLICATIONS –



PRODUCING AND MARKETING HIGH VALUE CALVES

With production costs increasing and calf prices remaining fairly stable, cow-calf producers are searching for ways to add value to calves and make their operations more profitable. (5 pages)

In this publication readers will learn about:

- Breeding herd management
- Calving season
- The importance of breed type
- Calf crop management and marketing

[Free - Download Now](#)



BODY CONDITION, NUTRITION AND REPRODUCTION OF BEEF COWS

Producers must be able to evaluate beef cows' body reserves and relate the evaluation to reproductive and nutritional management. Topics discussed include the practical importance of body condition scoring and various BCS suggestions. (10 Pages)

[Free - Download Now](#)

Targeted Grazing with Goats and Sheep

BY [CASEY.MATZKE](#)

Before producers can consider adding additional species to their operations, forage production and carrying capacity must be determined. This is crucial and the foundation of any operation. More information on determining stocking rate and carry capacity can be found in this AgriLife Extension Publication – [Stocking Rate: The Key Grazing Management Decision](#).

WHAT IS TARGETED GRAZING?

Targeted grazing is defined as the application of livestock grazing to achieve specific management goals. While many have heard of traditional grazing management, targeted grazing management is used as a long-term approach to address land management problems.

For targeted grazing to be successful it requires:

- Determining the goals and desired outcomes of each management area
- Identifying the vegetative species of concern within the area
- Tailoring the livestock species composition and stocking intensity to achieve those goals

WHY USE GOATS AND SHEEP IN TARGETED GRAZING OPERATIONS?

Goats are often chosen for targeted grazing operations due to their browsing habits, which make them effective at removing undesirable and unpalatable plants. They consume poison ivy, junipers, greenbrier, and sericea lespedeza, which other species will not consume. In addition, goats can create a secondary income through the breeding and selling of these animals.

While Goats manage the woody and unpalatable plants, adding Sheep helps with the addition of managing forbs and grasses. Sheep prefer to consume the undesirable forbs that are mixed in with the desirable forage. Sheep can improve the soil health and promote beneficial vegetation cover. Both of these species are better adapted at grazing on steeper, rockier areas of land.

WHAT CHALLENGES WILL BE FACED?

As with any addition to an operation the complexity in management increases. This includes managing the herd health and the nutritional aspects for all species. Another component of health and nutrition is water. Will water need to be hauled in? Are all the species able to reach the watering systems being used. Keep in mind that many water troughs that are suited for Cattle will be too tall for Goats and Sheep.

Another aspect that needs to be considered with the addition of multiple species, is fencing and predation. Proper fencing is needed to maintain keeping the livestock in and predators out. Predators can include bobcats, wild pigs, coyotes, stray dogs, and mountain lions.

As with all things being implemented on operations, timing is key. Different factors, such as drought, seasonal changes, and other climatic factors can affect the ideal timeframe for targeted grazing.

Targeted grazing when used correctly can be an effective way to manage vegetation to reach a number of operational goals. Some important advantages include; a cost-effective vegetation management alternative, enhancing habitat restoration, and breaking down plant carbon in the soil. For more information on this topic, read the full AgriLife Extension Publication – [Targeted Grazing with Goats and Sheep](#)

Vilsack gives update on HPAI vaccine status

BY JESSICA DOMEL, MULTIMEDIA REPORTER

The nation is another day closer to a vaccine for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), the virus that has led to the deaths of nearly 60 million chickens and other poultry.

“I’d say we are probably 18 months or so away from being able to identify a vaccine that would be effective for this particular HPAI that we’re dealing with,” U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack recently told the House Committee on Agriculture. “Now the problem, of course, is it mutates. So, you have to basically create ultimately a vaccine that is available for all strains.”

The second issue, Vilsack said, is how the vaccine will be delivered.

“Do you deliver it in a way that is efficient and effective and less expensive, or is an injection required? When you’re talking about hundreds of thousands of birds, that’s difficult. We’re trying to develop that process for distributing the vaccine,” Vilsack said.

HPAI has been found in wild birds, backyard flocks and domestic poultry across the United States.

The virus has been found in every state except Hawaii.

It is often fatal to chickens.

“I think it is a terrible situation. Just devastating the industry and devastating to these growers that have to, as of right now, the only real solution when we have an outbreak is total depop (depopulation),” Congressman Dusty Johnson of South Dakota told the House Ag Committee.

While the industry awaits a vaccine for HPAI, one concern is the potential impact it may have on trade.

“We still have work to be done on how to actually administer it, and we are nowhere near being able to do it from a standpoint of the impact of trade,” Vilsack said. “We would have a circumstance where if we vaccinated today, I think we would have a number of our trading partners say, ‘We’re not interested in your chickens.’”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will have those conversations with trading partners, Vilsack said.

“There’s a commitment to begin the conversation on the trade side to begin asking our trading partners, ‘How do you feel about this?’ ‘What are your concerns about it?’ So that we eventually, sometime down the road, get to a point where I think you want us to be, but it’s very complex and it’s going to take some time,” Vilsack said.

According to the Texas Animal Health Commission, HPAI is transmitted bird-to-bird through airborne transmission or indirectly through contaminated equipment.

The movement of humans, birds and equipment that may have come into contact with an HPAI-infected bird, along with exposure to migratory waterfowl, can also spread HPAI.

Symptoms of avian influenza may include: sudden death, lack of energy and appetite, decreased egg production, soft-shelled or misshapen eggs, swelling, purple discoloration of wattles, combs and legs, nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, incoordination and/or diarrhea.

To prevent the spread of HPAI, poultry farmers, including those who have backyard flocks, are encouraged to practice good biosecurity.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends:

- keeping visitors to a minimum,
- washing your hands before and after coming into contact with live poultry,
- providing disposable boot covers and/or disinfectant foot baths for anyone having contact with your flock,
- changing clothes before entering poultry areas and before exiting the property,
- cleaning and disinfecting tools or equipment before moving them to a new facility,
- looking for signs of illness
- and reporting sick birds.

In Texas, sick birds may be reported to any TAHC region office or to TAHC headquarters at 1-800-550-8242.

Additional information on defending your flock from HPAI is available [here](#).

According to HPAI, the avian influenza virus does not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with HPAI have occurred. [They say infection of humans typically results from unprotected, direct contact with infected birds.](#)

Tune In For The

The
GRAZE



ALL THINGS LIVESTOCK AND RANCHING
Educational Series




900 AM


**1st Friday Of
The Month
11 AM**

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 [HaleAgriLife](#)

 <http://hale.agrilife.org>

 [All Ag, All Day](#)
900 AM KFLP

 **Subscribe!**

Upcoming Programs/Events:

Please call (806) 291-5267 to sign-up or if you have any questions.

AM Radio - Caprock Beef Cattle Educational Series

First Friday of Every Month @ 11:00 AM
Aired on Radio: All Ag, All Day – 900AM

The Graze – All things livestock and ranching (formerly known as Caprock Beef Cattle Conference)

September 2024
Ollie Liner Center
Plainview, Texas

Hale County Ag Committee:

Shane Berry

Greg Cronholm

Chance Crossland

Donald Ebeling

Steven Ebeling

Jessica Finck

Shelly Fuston

Phillip Kidd

Mark Mahagan

Joe Mustian

Leo Ruijne

Mark True

Robert Unterkircher

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