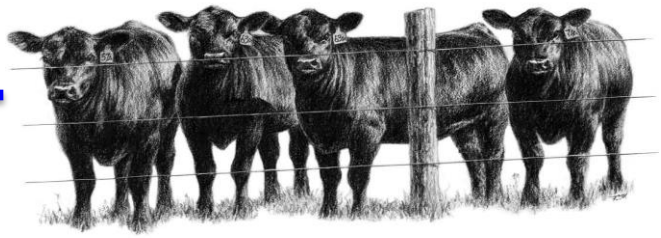
Extension

March, 2015

Cattle Call



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Pasture Fertilization

Carl Pless, Livestock Agent, Cabarrus County

Much colder than average February weather left livestock farmers with pastures that had not started to grow at the beginning of March. Forage can be the most economical source of energy and nutrients for grazing animals. Producing forage with a high percentage energy or Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) and high yield per acre can lead to more beef production. Fertilizers and manures can provide the energy for forage production. Requirements for producing a ton of fescue grass hay are 40-50 pounds of nitrogen, 8-12 pounds of phosphorus and 40-60 pounds of potassium. A grazing 1100-pound cow and her calf will remove about 10-15 pounds of phosphorus and 2 pounds of potassium per year. Rotational grazing and feeding hay in a manner that distributes manure across the pasture, recycles nutrients and reduces the amount of purchased fertilizer needed.

Nitrogen is the plant nutrient that produces the largest and most noticeable yield response. Legumes growing in a pasture can produce most of the nitrogen needed for the growth of the clover and grass. Two tons of poultry litter can provide 40 to 60 pounds of nitrogen per acre. Chemical nitrogen sources include: Uran 30 which contains equal parts of urea and ammonia nitrate, ammonia sulfate which has 21% nitrogen and 24% sulfur, Urea which contains 46% nitrogen and diammoniun phosphate which contains 18% nitrogen and 46% phosphoric acid.

Best forage growth is achieved by splitting nitrogen applications on most grasses. Nitrogen usage by plants is complex, and nitrogen fertilizer is more effective when applied in small, frequent applications than when applied once in large quantities It is not recommended to apply more than 60 to 90 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre at any one application; applying nitrogen in amounts greater than 90 pounds/acre may lead to livestock nitrate toxicity.

Grass fertilized with high amounts of nitrogen and potassium, whether chemical or manure, can lead to animals with low blood magnesium and grass tetany
han one farmer has commented "you
be standing behind them when they

lications of nitrogen should be avoided as
and can lead to leaching or runoff into
sused, there are those who would seek
tion of the farmer's freedom to manage
ilizers and manure.

The Extension Cattle Call Team would like to invite each of you to participate in a drawing for 2.5 liter of Dectomax Pour-on sponsored by Zoetis and Dr. Bradley Mills.

It only takes a minute to enter the drawing. Call our office at 336.651.7331 and give us the key phrase Deworm 2015. We will take your name and number and enter you into the drawing to be held on April 24th.

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Ag Weed ID

Thomas Cobb
Extension Agent,
Rowan County

Ever wandered through a pasture and come across a weed that you weren't quite sure of? Well now there is an APP for your smartphone that can help solve that problem. Ag. Weed ID is an app that can be downloaded to your smartphone to help identify weeds that might be growing in your pasture. This app will let you browse already pre-downloaded pictures, or allow you to take a picture of the weed for comparison. Weed ID is crucial for making smart economic decisions on possible herbicides to use. Simply go to your app store, search Ag Weed ID, and download. If you have trouble finding the app contact your local extension agent for assistance.

Pasture Bloat

Jessica Morgan
Livestock Agent, Anson County

Bloat is a digestive disorder where an accumulation of gas occurs in the first two compartments of a ruminant's stomach (rumen and reticulum). Production of gas is a normal function of rumen fermentation. Typically, these gases are released through belching but if an animal is unable to release the gases, pressure builds in the rumen and reticulum. Also known as "frothy" bloat, due to the large amount of froth or foam buildup, this pressure can lead to death by suffocation in as little as an hour or less. Here are some notes to remember about the possibility of bloat:

- Occurs when animals graze lush pastures that are low in fiber and highly digestible.
- Typically occurs in pastures that are more than 50% legumes- with white clovers and alfalfa posing the highest risk. Maintaining grass/legume mixed pastures will reduce incidences. Inter-seeding pure legume pastures with grass will dilute the legume's bloat risk.
- Hungry animals are at high risk. Hungry cattle turned into lush pastures will consume a lot of forage in a short amount of time. Always consider feeding dry hay or supplemental feed before turning cattle out.
- Wet conditions may increase incidences of bloat. Delay turnout until the forage is dry following a morning dew or rain.
- Bloat can occur in as little as 15 minutes to one hour after turning out. Most common to see bloat on second or third day. Check animals frequently after letting them in to high legume pastures.
- Rumen distention (on left side), urinating and defecating more frequently, bellows and staggering are all symptoms. Death due to restricted breathing and heart failure can occur quickly.
- Get potentially bloated animals up quickly. Sometimes forcing animals to walk can increase belching. When handling a bloated animal, move calmly and quietly because the pressure on the rumen impairs breathing.
- Options for treatment include stomach tubing, vegetable or mineral oil drench, and as a last resort trocar (surgical instrument). If you believe you have a bloated animal quick treatment is essential. Contact your local large animal veterinarian.