Great Lakes Grazing Newsletter

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

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Dear Great Lakes Grazier,

Where has 2020 gone, as I write this we are at the end of September, and I am struggling to figure out what happened to 2020. As I wrote in the last newsletter, business as usual at MSU Extension is not business as usual, but we are still working harder than ever and serving you all in many ways.

In this edition, I want to highlight two upcoming virtual grazing events: The Beginning Grazing School, and a Virtual Grazing field day. We have been working hard and getting out of our box to bring you events that you will gain from. It is my hope that these two online events will satisfy those of you missing the face to face programming that would have normally taken place. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about either event.

"The MSU Extension Farm Business Management team strives to help farmers, agriculturally-related businesses, industries, families and individuals to improve their lives and achieve their goals through an educational process that applies business management, production and economic knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities. Educator Florencia Colella has developed a 3-question survey to ask which business management-related topics you are most interested in. The survey is ridiculously short and shouldn't take more than two minutes to complete. Could you please help us filling it in? https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b3NS8kZq1Hkb5xr"

Kable M. Thurlow

Kable Thurlow
MSUE Beef & Grazing Educator

In this Issue

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BEGINNING GRAZING SCHOOL

Going Virtual

DATE & TIME:
7 - 8:30 p.m.
Each Tuesday and Thursday in October

ONLINE

COST:
$10 per session
$65 for all sessions

HOW TO REGISTER:
https://events.anr.msu.edu/grazing2020/

Registration deadline: Oct. 5, 2020

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12 CEU's being offered (1.5 per topic)

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

Farmers and landowners who graze dairy, livestock and small ruminant animals, and want the latest animal and forage research on grazing management.

PROGRAM AGENDA:

- October 6: Introduction to school and overview of grazing terms
- October 8: Graziers are Grass Farmers!
- October 13: Soil Health and Fertility
- October 15: Nutrition, Health and Welfare of Grazing Animals
- October 20: Pasture Establishment and Renovations,
- October 22: Fencing & Water
- October 27: Pasture Allocation, Stock Density, Costs
- October 29: Designing a Grazing Plan

EXPERTS:

- Kim Cassida, Forage Specialist
- Richard Erhardt, Small Ruminant Specialist
- Kevin Gould, Beef and Grazing Educator
- Jim Isleib, Field Crops Educator
- Phil Kaatz, Field Crops Educator
- Kable Thurlow, Beef and Grazing Educator
- Frank Wardynski, Ruminant Educator

Washtenaw County Conservation District

GRAZING

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY & WASHTENAW COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT VIRTUAL FIELD DAY

October 14, 2020 | 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Online Via Zoom

Beef producers in Michigan are encouraged to attend this online event to learn more about the ins and outs of practicing a grazing rotation.

Topics and presenters include:

- **Overview of the Washtenaw County Conservation District and MAEAP program**
  - Nick Machinski, Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) technician
- **Introduction to Baseline Farm**
  - John Cox, Owner of Baseline Farms
- **Grazing management, watering and fencing**
  - Kable Thurlow, beef and grazing educator, MSU Extension
- **Soil health**
  - Paul Gross, field crops educator, MSU Extension
- **Regenerative agriculture and Carbon Sequestration**
  - Jason Rowntree, associate professor, MSU Department of Animal Science
- **Equipment and other financial assistance opportunities**
  - Boyd Byelich, NRCS District Conservationist
- **Creating and implementing a grazing management plan**
  - Adam Shedd, NRCS District Conservationist

REGISTER: https://events.anr.msu.edu/grazingvfd/

COW/CALF CORNER

The Newsletter

From the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

September 28, 2020

Poor temperament adversely affects profit
Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist

Poor temperament adversely affects profit

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist

October is a traditional weaning and culling time for spring-calving herds. Weaning for value-added calf sales is already underway. This is a time when producers decide which cows no longer are helpful to the operation and which heifer calves will be kept for future replacements. Selecting against ill-tempered cattle has always made good sense. Wild cattle are hard on equipment, people, other cattle, and now we know that they are hard on the bottom line.

University of Florida animal scientists recorded disposition scores over two years on 160 Braford and 235 Brahman x British crossbred cows. They wanted to evaluate the effects of cow temperament and energy status on the probability to become pregnant during a 90-day natural breeding season. Cows were scored as 1= calm, no movement to 5= violent and continuous struggling while in the working chute. Also, a pen score assessment was assigned as 1= unalarmed and unexcited to 5 = very excited and aggressive toward technician. An exit velocity speed score was measured as the cows exited the working chute as 1= slowest and 5 = fastest. An overall temperament index score was calculated by averaging the chute score, pen score and exit velocity score. Blood samples were analyzed for cortisol concentrations. Cortisol is a hormone released when mammals are stressed or excited. Increased cow temperament score and elevated plasma cortisol concentrations both were associated with decreased probability of pregnancy. These results suggest that excitable temperament and the subsequent elevated cortisol concentrations are detrimental to reproductive function of cows. These authors concluded that management strategies that improve cow disposition, enhance their immune status, and maintain the cow herd at adequate levels of nutrition are required for optimal reproductive performance. Source: Cooke and co-workers. 2009 Florida Beef Research Report.

Mississippi State University researchers (Vann and co-workers. 2006. Southern Section of American Society of Animal Science) used a total of 210 feeder cattle consigned by 19 producers in a “Farm to Feedlot” program to evaluate the effect of temperament on performance,

carcass characteristics, and net profit. Temperament was scored on a 1 to 5 scale (1=nonaggressive, docile; 5=very aggressive, excitable). The temperament scoring system was similar to that described in the Florida cow study. Exit velocity and pen scores were highly correlated. As pen scores increased, so did exit velocity. As pen score and exit velocity increased, health treatments costs and number of days treated increased, while average daily gain and final body weight decreased. This outcome makes perfect sense. Other studies have shown that excitable temperament can diminish immune responsiveness, with more temperamental calves having a reduced response to vaccination when compared with calm calves.

In the Mississippi study, as pen temperament score increased, net profit per head tended to decline. Pen temperament scores and net profits per head were as follows: 1=$121.89; 2=$100.98; 3=$107.18; 4=$83.75; 5=$80.81. Although feed and cattle price relationships have changed since this data was collected, one would expect similar impacts from the temperaments of cattle under today's economic situation.

"Heritability" is the portion of the differences in a trait that can be attributed to genetics. The heritability of temperament in beef cattle has been estimated to range from 0.36 to 0.45. This moderate level of heritability indicates that real progress can be made by selecting against wild cattle. Whether we are marketing our calf crop at weaning or retaining ownership throughout the feedlot phase, wild, excitable cattle are expensive to own and raise.