

Beef & Forage News & Views

Agriculture and Natural Resources

September 2016

Fall Weed Control

Most of us grew up spraying weeds such as thistle and buttercup in March or April. While there is nothing necessarily wrong with that approach, spraying these and other cool season weeds in the fall may be advantageous to some producers for the following 3 reasons:

1. **More time available.** We all know that there is always something to do on the farm and farmers aren't known for running out of a job. However, things are exceptionally busy in the spring with fertilizer applications, spring vaccinations, calves hitting the ground, and crop planting. November and December come with their own chores, but seem to be less hectic than the spring. Weather conditions may also be more favorable in the fall.
2. **Fewer concerns about drift.** With products like 2,4-D, Brash, and GrazonNext, drift and the resulting damage to off target species is a major concern in the spring. It doesn't take much of any of those products to destroy a greenhouse full of tobacco plants for example. In the fall, most of the sensitive crops have been harvested so while we should still try to avoid drift, it's not as much of an issue.
3. **It kills the weeds while they are young.** A lot of us don't think about killing buttercup until our pasture is covered in yellow flowers. However, they actually germinate in the fall as do many other cool season weeds. Walk around your pasture and hayfields in November and you will find them. Killing them in November or early December will make sure they never get away from you.

When spraying in the fall, look for 3 consecutive days of daytime highs of at least 55° F. Be sure and follow the label recommendations.



Fleabane that has germinated in the fall.
Photo taken 11-13-15

TAEP Application Period

The Tennessee Agriculture Enhancement Program has had a tremendous impact on the quality of cattle in Tennessee, as well as the facilities in which cattle are raised and hay is stored. This year's program will have a 30 day application period which runs from October 1-November 1. The program again includes cost share assistance for Livestock Equipment, Genetics, Hay Storage, and more.

Along with some of the traditional cost share items such as pasture sprayers, creep feeders, and hay rings, some new items have been added. These include GPS for pasture sprayers, Ultrasounds, No-Till Pasture Drills, and Mobile Calf Catchers. Applications are available at the UT Extension office, or you can fill it out online at www.tn.gov/taep.



Beef Cattle Health Meeting

On October 17, Dr. Lew Strickland, UT Extension Veterinarian, will be at the Smith County Ag Center to discuss health issues related to beef cattle. His talk will include a discussion on what vaccination and deworming protocols are recommended for the different classes of beef animals (calves vs cows vs bulls). This will include the advantages and disadvantages of killed and modified live vaccines.

One topic that will affect the beef industry in the coming years is the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD). This is a federal regulatory change that will affect how we use some antibiotics to medicate feed and water. Antibiotics transitioning to VFD status will no longer be available over the counter. Dr. Strickland will discuss this topic as well and try to clear up any confusion that producers have regarding its implementation.



BQA Class in October

At no time in history have consumers been more aware of food safety issues or more concerned with how their food was produced. Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) is a national program that provides guidelines for beef cattle production. The program raises consumer confidence by promoting proper management techniques and a commitment to quality within every segment of the beef industry.

A BQA training will be held on **October 25 at 6:00 pm** at the Smith County Ag Center. This meeting is for those whose certification has expired, or those who may wish to become certified. The cost for certification is \$20 for Tennessee Cattlemen's Association members and \$40 for non-members. BQA certification is required for producers applying for TAEP cost-share assistance.



UT Ryegrass Variety Trial



UT recently published their variety trial data for annual ryegrass. The results can be found online at the UT Beef and Forage Center website utbfc.utk.edu or by stopping by the Extension office. This particular trial was planted September 9, 2015 in Springfield, TN and was harvested three times.

Like any trial, some varieties did better than others, but most of them yielded at least 4 tons of dry matter per acre. That's equivalent to 8-10 rolls of hay. For producers trying to maximize the number of grazing days on the farm and feed less hay, annual ryegrass is a great option.

Grazing can begin in the fall when plants are 8 to 10 inches tall, and they can be grazed to a height of 2 to 3 inches. Because annual ryegrass grows so rapidly in the spring, grazing should begin early (at 4 to 6 inches) in order to utilize as much of the crop as possible before seed heads emerge and quality declines. Like any crop, fertility is key so fertilize according to soil test results for optimum production.

Besides adding quantity to the forage program, annual ryegrass is also a high quality forage. According to forage tests taken alongside the variety trial, Crude Protein was over 25% in December and over 17% in the spring. Energy values were also excellent. Take some time to consider where adding a winter annual such as ryegrass might fit into

Jamie Evitts Scholarship Benefit

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, October 22** and join us at the Ag. Center for the 14th Annual Jamie Evitts Scholarship Benefit. This event has become a wonderful time of friends and neighbors coming together to raise money that is given back in scholarships to graduating seniors in Smith County. The event also helps the 4-H and Family & Consumer Science programs in the county. There will be delicious food served, music from local groups followed by a huge auction! You don't want to miss this!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Hicks'.

Chris Hicks
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Smith County

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