

## Southwind Extension District



Newsletter brought to you  
by:

### Christopher Petty Extension Agent

Livestock Production  
and Forage  
Management

Southwind Extension  
District

(620) 223- 3720  
cgp@ksu.edu

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Welcome to the fifth 2020 Edition of the Southwind Extension District - Livestock and Forage Crops Newsletter.

This will be my last e-newsletter, as I am taking a position with the United States Department of Agriculture. I will continue with the Southwind Extension District until May 21. After May 21 if you have livestock and forage crop questions, please contact Southwind Extension District Agent Dale Lanham at by phone at 620-625-8620. You may also contact Southwind Extension District Director Carla Nemecek at 620-365-2242

It has been an honor and a blessing to serve the farmers and ranchers of Allen, Bourbon, Neosho, and Woodson Counties.

[Click here for a direct link to KSRE Covid-19 Resources,](#)

\*K-State Research and Extension is committed to making its services, activities, and programs accessible to all participants. If you have a special requirement due to a physical, vision or hearing disability, please contact Christopher Petty at 620-223-3720.

[Trouble Shooting  
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### Quick Links

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[Kansas Pork Association](#)

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## Upcoming Events

Please check this and upcoming editions of the newsletter for more information about coming events. Tentatively scheduled meetings and activities include:

***Due to Covid-19 No face to face programming will be scheduled prior to July 04, 2020***

## Pasture Burning Video

**[Click Here to watch a short video, featuring a recent prescribed burn in Woodson County.](#)**



## Tips for Beef Cattle Herds

The Following Information comes from our friends at University of Arkansas Extension:

- Fall born calves are often weaned during this time of year. A good practice is to give initial vaccinations 2 to 4 weeks before



weaning and booster vaccinations should occur at weaning time. Fenceline weaning is an option that can result in less weaning feed cost. Studies have demonstrated improved weight gain and health with fenceline weaning; however, growth performance over traditional weaning methods were not observed in some studies suggesting weaning environment may be critical to weaning performance.

- Implant feeder cattle that will be retained for at least 45 days and also provide a medicated feed additive such as Bovatec, Gainpro, or Rumensin to improve weight gains.
- Fly populations often increase this time of year. Options for fly control include tags, sprays, and feed supplements fortified with insect growth regulators. Pour-on dewormers often help with fly control early. The insect growth regulators in feed work best with isolated herds. The economic threshold to treat cattle for fly is 150 to 200 flies per animal.
- For spring calving cows monitor body condition. The condition of cows during the breeding season affects their reproductive performance in terms of services per conception, calving interval and the percentage of open cows. General speaking as spring forage arrives, forage quality and

quantity improve and so will the cow's body condition. Throughout the spring breeding season provide free-choice mineral.

- Throughout the breeding season monitor the bulls. Make sure the bulls are maintaining their body condition, are free of injury (feet and legs, eyes, etc.), or other conditions that would prevent them from seeking and breeding cows.
- Process spring born calves. Practices such as castration, dehorning, vaccination (blackleg, etc.), implanting are cost effective.

## Targeting optimum cow size



Genetics, feed resources and calf marketing windows are just some of the influencing factors that determine the optimum size for cows to grow, according to the Kansas State University Beef Cattle Institute's team of experts.

Defining the optimum cow size was a discussion topic on the recent [BCI Cattle Chat](#) podcast.

"That is a really difficult question to answer because for each operation the optimum cow size will be slightly different," said Bob Weaber, beef specialist with K-State Research and

## Extension.

To help answer that question, Weaber and veterinarian Bob Larson worked with former graduate student Dustin Ahearn to define what the ideal cow size should be.

"Our results showed that in **eastern Kansas a 1,300 to 1,400 pound cow was optimum** in that she was able to produce a moderate to high level of milk in an environment where all her nutritional requirements were met," Weaber said. "The next phase of the study will be to see what happens if the cow's nutritional support is limited."

"One good way for a cow-calf producer to gauge economic success is to determine how much beef can they produce per acre," said KC Olson, a K-State range beef cattle nutrition expert who joined the recent podcast. He added that the average return for an extra 100 pounds of cow weight was just five to seven pounds of additional weight of the calf at weaning.

"The cost of the additional maintenance for 100 pounds of a cow's weight far exceeds the value the heavier calf brings," Olson said.

K-State veterinarian Brad White said producers need to consider the stocking density of the pastures and the timing of calving, which influences the calf marketing windows.

As an example, Olson prefers to calve in May and June because when his cows are at peak lactation, they have a plentiful source of forage for grazing.

"The most expensive time to feed a cow is from calving to peak lactation, which happens 4-6 weeks following calving," Olson said. "So that nutritional debt can be serviced by a renewable resource - forage."

**The timing of calving also dictates the marketing opportunities for the calves.**

**"I don't care what the calf size is at weaning because I retain ownership in them through at least yearling age and sometimes through the finishing phase," Olson said.**

**The podcast team offered seven tips for determining the optimum cow size:**

- **Consider calf marketing options.**
- **Assess the availability of economically efficient supplemental feed.**
- **Know the resource requirements of your cows.**
- **Evaluate when you plan to wean the calves.**
- **Understand the calving time relative to available grass in the region.**
- **Determine the number of days available for grazing without supplementation.**
- **Optimize per acre productivity.**

**The bottom line is that each producer needs to look at their system and make a determination on what is the most economical for them, said White.**

**"There is no one size fits all when deciding the optimum cow size," White said. "Rather, producers need to consider many factors when making that determination for their operations."**

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## Forage and Hay Considerations

The Following Information comes from our friends at University of Arkansas Extension:

### Fertilizing alfalfa:

- Fertilizer should be applied after the first and third harvest.
- Apply fertilizer immediately before regrowth sets in to avoid damaging the alfalfa crowns.
- Don't apply at times when soil is too soft and physical damage to plants may be likely
- Split the application if large amounts of fertilizer are required. This split can be avoided by keeping track of soil fertility status over time.



### Fertilizing bermudagrass:

- Fertilize specific pastures when night time temperatures reach 60°F for a week.
- Fertilize after each hay or grazing harvest as needed depending on seasonal production goals.
  - Fertilize according to soil test recommendation

### Hay management:

- Get equipment ready
  - Check on gear boxes and replace oil if

necessary

- Grease where necessary based on owner's manual
- Replace knives and check on rollers in mower/conditioner equipment
- Replace broken fingers on rakes and tedders
- Check on belts in balers

#### Begin grazing perennial warm season grasses:

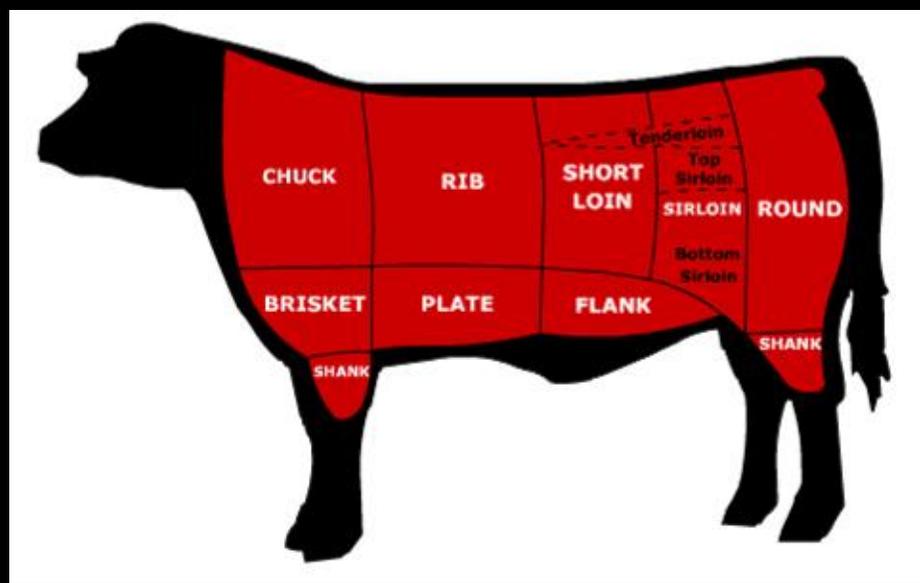
- Start rotationally grazing pastures at green-up.
  - Rotational grazing improves forage utilization over continuous grazing
  - Begin grazing at 6" - 8", terminate grazing at 3" - 4"

#### Establish Bermudagrass for forage:

- Plant between May 1 and June 15.
- Seeding rates are 4 to 8 pounds of pure live seed per acre.
  - Seed can be drilled or broadcast on a conventional tilled firm seedbed or planted with a no-till drill on killed grass sod.
  - Planting depth of 1/4 inch or less is recommended
  - Variety blends provide faster sod cover and higher seeding year yield.
    - All varieties should be winter-hardy
    - Winter hardy varieties in AR include; Wrangler, Cheyenne, KF 194, & CD-90160.

## Locally Produced Meats

[Click here for a link to a listing of retailers providing locally raised meats](#)



## **Troubleshooting Uncertain Times in the Beef Industry'**

Registration is now open for a May 14 webinar that will assist Kansas beef cattle producers as they navigate the impacts of COVID-19.

"This webinar is being conducted to help beef producers assess their current nutrition and management strategies in light of the challenges to the beef market created by COVID-19," said Dale Blasi, a beef cattle specialist with K-State Research and Extension.

"As a consequence of COVID-19, distiller's grains are in short supply and, as a result, many of the attributes that this co-product provides in protein supply, moisture attributes to the ration and more. The shortage has created challenges for producers as they identify alternative feed ingredients to use in its place."

The program will feature brief updates on the current market situation from K-State agricultural economist Glynn Tonsor and a discussion on alternative protein sources led by Extension specialists Jaymelynn Farney and Justin Waggoner.

Blasi will address nutrition and management considerations that may be implemented by

producers growing cattle in these challenging times.

The webinar is hosted by the K-State Department of Animal Sciences and Industry and K-State Research and Extension. The agenda begins at noon on May 14.

Register prior to the event at

<https://tinyurl.com/KSUBeef-UncertainTimes> or at [www.KSUBeef.org](http://www.KSUBeef.org).

For questions about the event or to register, please contact Lois Schreiner, [lschrein@ksu.edu](mailto:lschrein@ksu.edu), or 785-532-1267.



**K-State Research and Extension - Southwind Extension District**

[www.southwind.ksu.edu](http://www.southwind.ksu.edu)

1 N. Washington  
Iola, KS 66749  
620-365-2242

111 S. Butler  
Erie, KS 66733  
620-244-3826

210 S. National  
Fort Scott, KS 66701  
620-223-3720

211 W. Butler  
Yates Center, KS  
620-625-8620

