

Livestock Ledger

By
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Happy holidays and a prosperous New Year to all of our good livestock producers and caretakers! I hope you take time to relax and enjoy the holiday season, but be thinking ahead to include measures that can improve your livestock enterprise. Following are meeting dates of interest and selected ideas for your consideration.

Upcoming Events

Lancaster/Chester Swine Assoc. Annual Banquet, January 24, 1991; Cattle Feeder's Day, Lancaster, February 5, 1991; Lancaster Sheep Assoc. Annual Meeting, February 11, 1991; Holstein Beef Conference, Harrisburg, February 13-15, 1991; Keystone Pork Congress, Harrisburg, February 20, 1991; Lancaster Coop. Extension Annual Meeting, Lanc., February 21, 1991.

For Swine Producers

Consider all-in, all out. One of the most important concepts in a continuous farrowing

operation is the "all-in, all-out" idea. This is especially important in the farrowing house and nursery. The capacity of the farrowing house should be limited to the number of pigs resulting from 10 farrowing days and the nursery should be of comparable size. Being able to put "breaks" in the program keeps the scour-causing organism from building up virulence. This idea also provides for a continuous and scheduled cleanup and disinfection program between groups of sows and pigs.

Keep track of feed usage.

Feed usage in your swine operation needs to be monitored monthly or quarterly instead of yearly. It's tough to do, but with feed representing 65 percent of total costs, perhaps it means more to total herd productivity than any other record. The best approach is to record feed inventory at the end of each month. Coupled with feed purchases, that will tell you feed consumed during the period.

Over several months, you'll have a record of feed used, and pounds of pork sold, and from that you can calculate feed efficiency.

Whole herd feed efficiency averages more than four pounds of feed per pound of gain for farrow-to-finish farms. Your goal should be 3.5 (3.1 for market hogs alone). Start at the end of this month by taking a feed inventory and plan for profitability.

For Cattlemen

Watch semen tanks for corrosion. Whether your liquid nitrogen refrigerator is stainless steel, aluminum, or other material, be sure to observe it for possible corrosion. Any metal can corrode under unfavorable conditions. The most likely location for corrosion to start is on the bottom of the refrigerator, especially if it rests on concrete. High moisture areas increase the probability of corrosion.

You can minimize semen losses by routinely observing your refrigerator for nitrogen usage rates, corrosion, or other conditions detrimental to the tank. Liquid nitrogen tanks are simple and dependable, but they do need some observation and management.

Replacing a refrigerator is good risk management and good semen insurance. If your tank is seven years or older, or if it is rusted, dented or corroded, it is a prime candidate for replacement.

Plan for winter feeding of beef cows.

Winter feeding beef cattle can be as simple or as difficult as one desires. Balancing feed rations for various age groups, sex, and production can be relatively painless if certain guidelines are followed.

First, you should have all of your feedstuffs analyzed for quality. This becomes very important when purchased feeds are expensive as they presently are. Feeds that should be analyzed are hays, grains, silages, or any other feed or byproduct.

Second, you should consider the quantity you have of each feed. Third, you need to balance your feed rations for the requirements of each group of animals being fed.

You should of course consider feeding the following groups separately because they each have distinctively different requirements: dry cows, wet cows, herd sires, weaned calves, pregnant first calf heifers, and replacement heifers.

Granted, most of us have to combine groups due to labor and facilities, but realize in most cases where we combine groups, we will be overfeeding one group or underfeeding a group. For best results keep two things in mind: 1) feed balanced rations and 2) utilize inexpensive feeds!

For Shepherds

Enroll in a sheep performance

program.

A National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) has been developed to provide sheep producers of all breeds and crosses a means of genetically evaluating animals in their flocks for maternal, lamb growth, and wool traits.

NSIP is designed to give producers maximum flexibility in performance recordkeeping. The program consists of six measurement factors: 1) number of lambs born per ewe lambing; 2) pounds of lamb weaned per ewe exposed; 3) weight of lamb(s) at 30, 60, 90, 120, and 240 days of age; 4) clean or grease fleece weight; 5) staple length; and 6) fiber diameter.

Those interested in enrolling should contact Greg Palas, NSIP Processing Center, 3 Kildee Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011. (515) 294-4859.

Consider probiotics for lamb feeding.


Recently, a great deal of interest has been given to the use of a fermented bacterial culture of Lactobacillus acidophilus as a means of restoring animals to feed after stressful conditions or following antibiotic treatment.

Lambs seem to respond quickly to treatment of probiotics. Antibiotics are used to treat infections, but probiotics will restore the normal bacterial population required for adequate function of the intestinal tract.

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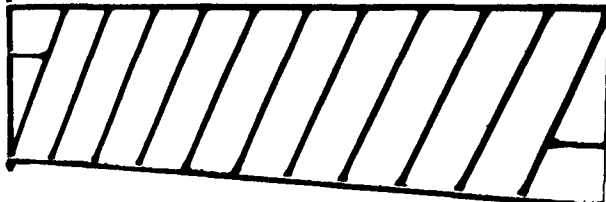
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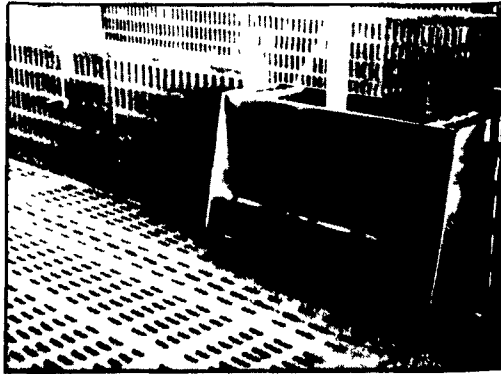


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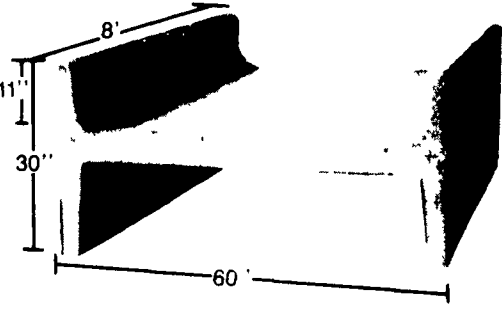


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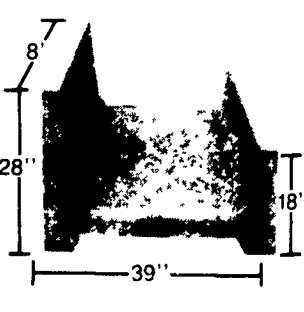
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