

Grazing Management Seminar Set

ALLENTOWN (Lehigh Co.) — Farmers who feed beef cattle, dairy cattle and sheep are becoming more interested in grazing management. When profits are low, optimal use of all resources becomes especially important. By managing pastures carefully, producers can improve feed quality while reducing feed costs. They can extend the grazing season and thereby reduce the need for stored forages. Finally, by increasing the number of animal units grazed per acre, they increase income per acre. All of these factors help to improve net farm income.

A grazing management seminar is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Saturday, July 13th, starting at the Ludwig's Comer Fire Hall, on Route 100 between Routes 23 and 401 in Chester County. The afternoon portion of the program will be at Pleasant Hill Farm, Glenmoore. Presentations by Penn State and USDA pasture specialists will focus on the following topics:

- Designing a grazing system.
- Stockpiling tall fescue.
- Soil fertility management.
- Grazing warm season grasses and brassicas.
- Pasture water sources.
- Fencing requirements.
- Forage management economics.

The registration fee is \$10 per person, due by Friday, June 28. Phone your county extension office to request program and registration information.

Injectable Iron Shortage

Swine producers have recently encountered difficulty obtaining

injectable iron dextrans used to prevent baby pig anemia.

Robert Mikesell, graduate research assistant at Penn State, said the cause of the shortage seems to be a supply problem, not an increase in demand.

According to sources at American Livestock Supply, there are only two manufacturers of the injectable iron dextrans sold in the United States. At least one of these manufacturers is currently expanding its facilities and, during the expansion, has been forced to temporarily shut down production.

In the meantime, iron dextrans stockpiles have dwindled and supplies have been tight. The good news is that injectable iron should be available soon after the plant reopens in May.

Until then, swine producers have two options for preventing baby pig anemia. First, there doesn't seem to be a shortage of oral iron in pump bottles. Second, a few handfuls of clean soil or sod (not from a hog lot) offered in a clean pan twice a week will provide enough iron to keep pigs from becoming anemic.

Producers who have a limited supply of injectable iron can inject 50 mg (1/2 cc of the 100 mg product). This dose is less ideal than 100 mg, but is preferred over the use of sod.

Steer Feeding Systems

John Comerford, Penn State beef cattle specialist, relays recent research in Colorado which investigated the economics of self-feeding steers in a feedlot compared to once-per-day feeding in a fenceline bunk.

Yearling steers on a high concentrate diet (90 percent corn) were used to compare feed intake, average daily gain, intake-to-gain ratio, and feed cost per unit of gain.

The results indicated there was no difference in feed-to-gain ratio or feed cost per unit of gain between the two systems. The self-fed steers also showed greater average daily gains and higher feed intake than those fed once a day.

The conclusion from the study was that self-fed, high-corn diets were more economical because there was less labor and fuel costs associated with feeding and there was no reduction in performance or increase in the cost of weight gain.

Lead In Drinking Water?

Lead received a great deal of publicity as a drinking water contaminant when elevated levels were discovered in some drinking water sources in the United States.

Lead is not known to have any beneficial effect on people. In fact, excessive levels of lead in the blood contribute to a variety of health problems, including mental retardation, interference with kidney and neurological functions, and hearing loss in children.

Children are more sensitive to lead toxicity because their central nervous systems are not fully developed. The level of lead allowed in water is based on human health studies.

Although lead occurs naturally in some water supplies, its presence can also be attributed to plumbing. Lead used to be a common plumbing material. Soft, acid-

ic water passing through lead pipe or contacting a lead-soldered joint for a period of hours can dissolve enough lead to cause concern. Homeowners should use lead-free solder when making repairs.

The amount of lead dissolved in water from lead pipes or lead-based solder is highest when the water has been held in the pipe for several hours. Therefore, it is best not to drink the first water from the tap each morning. Run the tap for three to five minutes before drinking it or using it for cooking. Also, since hot water running through pipes dissolves the lead into the water, do not use it for cooking or

preparing infant formula.

The recommended treatment methods for removing high or persistent lead levels in water are distillation or reverse osmosis. Although filtration devices that claim to remove lead are available, none is registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Remember — boiling water will concentrate lead, not remove it.

Your county cooperative extension office, health department, or water treatment salesperson can provide you with more information about treatment methods.

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