



OSU EXTENSION SERVICE



Regional Livestock & Forages Newsletter



For the Counties of
Benton, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, and Linn

Douglas Co./OSU Extension Service, PO Box 1165, Roseburg, OR 97470
(541) 672-4461

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas/L&F/livestock.php>

email to: shelby.filley@oregonstate.edu



Check out the
Website



VOL. 3 NO. 3

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OSU ANNOUNCEMENTS

Extension Veterinarians on Board

OSU has hired 2 new Extension Veterinarians, Dr. Aurora Villarroel and Dr. Charles Estill. These 2 faculty are splitting a 0.70 FTE (full time employment) position, and will help OSU faculty and producers around the state with issues pertaining to animal health. In addition to their Extension roles, Dr. Villarroel and Dr. Estill are clinicians in the Clinical Medicine teaching program at College of Veterinary Medicine. This means they will be rotating with others in the teaching program to handle on-call ambulatory responsibilities for the large animal hospital at OSU. They will be busy folks, but will be available to provide some great programs. We all look forward to the good things they are planning to bring us.



Go Beavs!



Douglas County/OSU Extension Service
1134 SE Douglas Ave., Douglas Co. Church Annex
P. O. Box 1165, Roseburg, Oregon 97470-1165
T 541-672-4461 | F 541-672-4453 | T in Douglas: 1-800-883-7568
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas/index.php>

Extension Service

Agriculture, 4-H Youth, Family & Community Development, Forestry, and Extension Sea Grant Programs. Oregon State University, United States Department of Agriculture, and Douglas county cooperating. The Extension Service offers its programs and materials equally to all people.

Happy Holidays Everyone!



I don't know about you, but this is my favorite time of the year. The best part for me is the food, cooking it, eating it, and yes, even cleaning up the mess! I want to personally thank each one of you farmers and ranchers for helping to provide food for the table. I really enjoy being able to share this

season of joy with family and friends. I love to decorate the house and yard just a bit.

It is best to not over do all this, but keep it simple and take time to smell the scents of fall and winter.

Thank-you, again!

Take care,
Shelby
Shelby Filley,
Regional Livestock &
Forage Specialist



Electronic Agent . . .

Electronic Tag Readers are available for you to use. OSU Extension Service, with the help of ODA funding, has purchased 15 reader sticks/wands to help producers to read and record electronic ear tags that are on their animals. Faculty across Oregon have these readers available for you to check out. You will need to call and make an appointment to come by and get the readers and also complete a short training session on reader use. We hope that this will facilitate the use of electronic ear tags, and stimulate the use of advanced record keeping systems. Data from the readers can be downloaded onto a computer and then uploaded to national data bases and/or third party record keeping companies that specialize in data collection and management for improved herd/flock goal attainment. Look for the "EID Reader and Records Transferring" training session at the upcoming Spring Livestock Conference on March 14, 2007, Roseburg.



Electronic Agent . . . (continued from page 1)

Soil and Forage Probes - Not so electronic, but fitting in to the tool lending theme is the fact that OSU Extension Service also has core samplers available to producers for soil testing and forage analysis. The cost of testing is quickly recuperated by practicing informed decisions for fertilizing fields and feeding livestock by use of test results. Call to discuss how these management practices may benefit you. SAVE \$\$\$\$!

Website and E-mail are very useful tools. They really help me to communicate with producers that either are at some distance from my office or are not available during my office hours. I can provide technical information that otherwise would be difficult. Another useful thing about these electronic resources is that I can post on-line editions or send publications or links through E-mail, saving time and postage expense. So, if you like, contact me by e-mail or visit my website...anytime (see front page for addresses).

Regional Resources . . .

Commercial Livestock & Forages

⇒ **Shelby Filley** – OSU Regional Livestock & Forage Specialist for Benton, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, and Linn counties, (541) 672-4461 or
Email: shelby.filley@oregonstate.edu
Livestock and Forages Website
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas/L&F/livestock.php>

Small Farms Program: <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/>

⇒ **Melissa Mathewson** - OSU Small Farms Agent for Douglas, Jackson, and Josephine counties, (541) 776-7371 or
Email: melissa.mathewson@oregonstate.edu
⇒ **Melissa Fery** – OSU Small Farms Agent for Benton, Lane, and Linn counties, (541) 766-6750 or
Email: melissa.fery@oregonstate.edu

Publications (electronic or hard copy; publications may vary by site)

- Call or visit your local OSU Extension Office for low-cost individual publications or a free catalog.
- Livestock & Forages Website - (click on livestock and forages, click on item A, Information on L & F)
⇒ <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas>
- Small Farms Website - (click on individual topics)
⇒ <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/>
- Animal Sciences Extension Website
⇒ <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/animal-sciences/ext.htm>
- Main OSU publicationWebsite:
⇒ <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/>

Educational Programs . . .

For more information and pre-registration, call Shelby Filley at 541-672-4461 or check educational program listings on the L&F Website

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas>

Monthly Livestock & Forage Producers' Breakfast Meetings (See individual county listings on page 3).

Small Farms Programs

See <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu>

- Raising Goats for Meat Production and Weed Control. Grants Pass/Classroom, Thurs, Jan 11th, 3 to 8 PM; Grants Pass/Field trip, Sat, Jan 13th
- Horses and Mud. Sat., Jan 27, 2007. Canby
- Marketing Conference. Sat., Feb 17. Corvallis

Using Ultrasound to Evaluate Beef Cattle

Jan/Feb/Mar, 2007. Roseburg.

This educational program and data collection is for evaluating carcass characteristics in both purebred cattle for EPD reporting and for feeder/fed cattle for harvest. Adult and youth audiences are welcome. Call to reserve your spot and enroll your cattle (Shelby Filley 541-672-4461).

Douglas County Weed Day

Wednesday, February 7, 2007
DC Fairgrounds, Roseburg.
Pesticide Credits may be available.



Reproduction in Beef Cattle

March 13, 2007 – Eugene
March 21, 2007 – Albany

Spring Livestock Conference

March 14, 2007 – Roseburg at the
Douglas Co Fairgrounds 10am-6pm

Sheep Basics

A new home study course is being put together for both the experienced and novice sheep producer. The text will be the newly published Sheep Production Guide written by Jim Thompson, OSU Sheep Specialist (see page 5). The course will include discussion sections, supplemental lectures, and field days.

Beef Basics

Beef Basics is a home study course with discussion sessions held monthly. The course is divided into four sections:

- * Nutrition, Economics & Forage Use
- * Reproduction, Genetics, Selection
- * Nutrition, Health, & Management of Growing Calves
- * Beef as a Business

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS...

◆ County Livestock Monthly Meetings...

. . . business, educational & social meetings . . .

Benton County

Benton County Livestock Association
Rick Wells, 541-929-4361
Also see Linn Co. Livestock Association

Douglas County

Douglas County Farm Bureau
1st Monday, 6:00 PM, location varies
Rick Epp, 541-679-4565

Douglas County Livestock Association
➔ Board Meetings - 1st Tues. 7:00 PM
Extension Office, Roseburg
Bill Hoyt, 541-942-3035

➔ Stockman's Breakfast
3rd Tues, Oct-Jun, 7 – 8 AM
Karen's Coffee Cup
2445 NE Diamond Lk. Blvd, Roseburg
Woody Lane, 541-440-1926

Umpqua Valley Livestock Producers
Joe Alvernaz 541-496-3950.

Jackson County

Jackson County Farm Bureau
3rd Tues, 6:00 PM
Ron Bjork 541-821-4249

Jackson County Stockman's Association (JCSA)
Josephine County producers welcome!
Board Meeting, 2nd Wed., 6:00 PM
Bob Fisher 541-826-4580

Southern Oregon Sheep Producers (SOSP)
2nd Tues. each month, location varies.
John Cox, 541-830-8053

FARRM – Farming & Ranching Resource Management,
Randy White 541-734-3143.
Meets 3rd Thurs.
Even # months, 8AM breakfasts at Chaps.
Odd # months, 6PM potluck/educational programs at the
Soil & Water Conservation District Office.

Josephine County

Josephine County Farm Bureau
Lynne Vanderlinden 541-592-3444 or
van@cavenet.com

Josephine County Livestock Association
None currently. Producers are welcome to join the
Jackson County groups.

Lane County

Lane County Livestock Association
Website: www.lcla.org
Board Meetings 2nd or 3rd Tues. Mark Meyers 520-4591
Educational Breakfast Meetings:
3rd Wed, 6:30 AM, Village Inn Restaurant in
Springfield. Larry Schrenk, 746-1007.
Nov 15, 2006 – Farm service Agency Programs & Ser-
vice Opportunities
Dec 20, 2006 – Dick Langdon, Fisher Implement Co.
Jan 17, 2007 – Aaron Stalker, OSU Extension Beef Spe-
cialist. Nutrition Program (Part II).
Feb 21, 2007 – TBA

Linn County

Linn County Livestock Association
Breakfast/Board Meeting/Edu. Program, 2nd Tues.
6:30 AM, Pioneer Villa Restaurant,
Brownsville exit I-5, Joel Pynch 466-5344.
Benton County producers invited.
Nov 14, 2006 – Dr. Amy Simonis, Brownsville Animal
Clinic
Dec 12, 2006 – Over-seeding Pastures, Forster & David-
son, Saddle Butte Ag
January 9, 2007 – Fall/Out-of-Season Lambing, Jim
Thompson, OSU Sheep Specialist
February 2007 – No breakfast meeting. See you at the
Annual Banquet!!

Federal and State Government ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

National Animal ID Plan Update – Feds changed program status to completely voluntary with no plans to make it mandatory. **ODA still encourages premises registration.** National animal identification is a process that will help contain and control animal diseases in the United States. As part of that plan, the Oregon Department of Agriculture is requesting that all producers of livestock and poultry, whether commercial or hobby, small or large, register their premises now. Register at <http://egov.oregon.gov/ODA/AHID/index.shtml> or at 503-986-4680 . Information requested for registration includes the contact person's name, phone number, the physical address of the premises, and a list of species being raised on the site.



BEEF CORNER...

Reproduction for Next Year Starts Now

by Shelby Filley

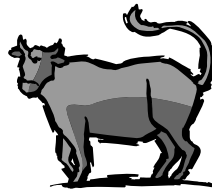
You are probably wondering how this applies to you if your cows are still pregnant and calves aren't expected just yet. Let's take a few minutes and review events prior to and after calving that have an impact on subsequent reproductive processes (and calves). Each one of these needs to be studied and carefully considered on an individual basis. Please contact me for more in-depth information and discussion. Or, attend the upcoming educational program - *Reproduction in Beef Cattle* (March 13 in Eugene and March 21 in Albany).

Here is a list of some factors that can impact calf health and weaning weight, calf crop uniformity, and re-breeding efficiency. These ultimately affect economic efficiency and profitability.

- plane of nutrition (protein and energy, pre- and post-calving)
- cow body condition score at calving (set up well before calving)
- dystocia (calving difficulty; set up at breeding, during pregnancy, and at delivery)
- replacement heifer selection (well developed and feminine looking)
- bull selection (calving ease, scrotal circumference)
- calving interval (one calving date to the next)
- breeding/calving season length (well-defined breeding seasons)

Here is a closer look at each of the above factors. I am starting with the nutrition. I know, I know, I always focus on NUTRITION. That is because it is one of the most important factors affecting your cattle and your pocketbook, and I don't think it is given enough attention on many ranches. Proper cow nutrition promotes optimal body condition score at calving, the production of high quality colostrum, strength and endurance for calving, cow recovery after calving, and adequate colostrum and milk production for a healthy calf without unduly impacting re-breeding success. Protein and energy requirements of the cow are at the highest level during the first 3 to 4 months after calving; lowest level during the period of non-lactation, middle third of pregnancy; then pick up again and are at medium level during the last third of pregnancy; and increase rapidly over the last month of pregnancy. Make sure you're not just feeding cows, but feeding cows optimally (nutritionally and economically). Feed costs are the single largest expense for livestock producers, representing as much as 50% of variable production costs.

Pregnancy rate for re-breeding cows and weaning weight of



subsequent calves is strongly linked to body condition score (BCS) of cows at calving with previous calf. BCS is an estimate of cow energy reserves. Thin cows take longer to rebreed than cows in good condition. Delayed rebreeding results in lower weaning (sale) weights than timely rebreeding, especially if calves are all sold on one date. The BCS scale goes from 1 to 9; 1 is extremely emaciated, 9 is obese. In order to have good reproductive success, BCS at calving should be 5 for mature cows, but needs to be 6 for heifers because they are still growing and need more reserves to make it through calving. It takes about a 70 lb increase in body weight for a cow to increase one BCS.

It is easier to put weight on cattle during the fall compared to winter, during mid-gestation compared to late. It pays to plan ahead and have your cows and heifers in good body condition prior to the winter feeding period. However, if your cows and heifers are looking especially thin now, it should still pay dividends for you to step up your feeding program now.

Dystocia (difficult calving) also influences rebreeding. Provide assistance without delay to those that are having trouble (see OSU Calving School Handbook). Heifer development is important and is often a point of inefficiency on cow-calf operations. Heifers that are at least 65% of their mature weight at breeding are more likely to have a good productive (reproductive) life than those that are under-developed. Failure to re-breed young cows to become pregnant with their second calf in a "timely manner" is the number one reason cows end up on the cull list. Under-developed heifers have a higher incidence of dystocia and usually take longer to return to estrous after calving. Again, we are talking economic efficiency; Money.

For next breeding season, pick easy calving bulls, especially for heifers. Choose bulls with high fertility by selecting bulls with appropriate scrotal circumferences. Also, make sure bulls are properly grown and developed for use in your breeding program. Breeding soundness exams need to be conducted on any and all bulls in your battery. Cull sub-fertile bulls. Also, select feminine-looking cows because this is related to fertility. The reproductive hormone, estrogen, is responsible for reproductive function and also affects appearance of cows.

The economics of a beef enterprise hinge on the production of one calf per cow per year. The calving interval (CI), time of birth from one calf to the next, should not exceed 365 days. Long CI decrease lifetime productivity and profitability of cows. Monitor CI for your cows. If you are having problems with long CI, check your nutrition, health, and breeding programs to make sure you are doing your part to promote CI that equate to success. Adjust your management as necessary and cull low fertility/infertile cows. One less calf over the lifetime of a cow and she may slip into the "not profitable/looser" category!

Reproduction for Next Year Starts Now.

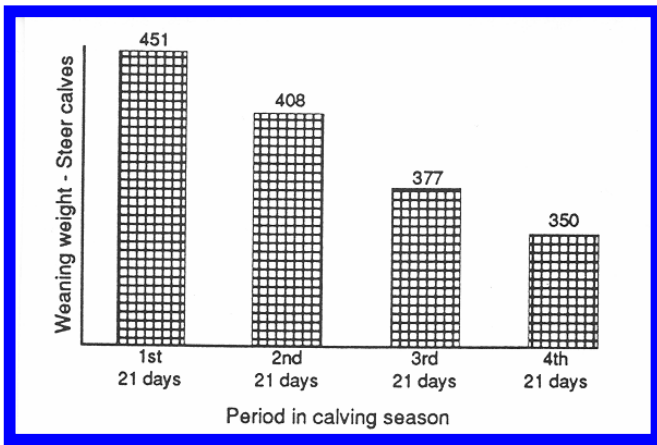
... Continued from page 4

The highly profitable beef operations in the United States have well-defined breeding seasons of 45 days (Profile of a Profitable Producer, by Harlan Hughes). This weeds out sub-fertile cattle and works with only the top tier animals. Others choose a 60 day breeding season. Longer is less profitable. The average gestation length in cattle is 284 days. So, if you don't have your cows rebred within 81 days after calving, the interval to the next calf will exceed 365 days. This is the least profitable situation.

Weaning weight, often synonymous with sale weight, is affected by age of calf at weaning. Because many ranchers wean calves in groups, calves that are born at the beginning of the calving season are older and heavier at weaning than calves born at the end of the calving season (see Figure 1). The older calves provide more pounds of calf to profit from. Also, the shorter the breeding season, the shorter the calving season, the more uniform the calf crop, which in most systems leads to better marketing potential.

Call me to discuss any of these topics, to get additional study materials (published references), and/or for help assessing your herd's situation.

Figure 1. Period of Season Calves Born and Weaning Weight (University of Wyoming)



SHEEP NOTES...

New publication - Sheep Management Handbook

by Dr. James M. Thompson, Extension Sheep Specialist, Department of Animal Sciences, Oregon State University. The handbook is available free on line (<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/em/em8916-e.pdf>) and contains great information for all. If you would like to take a sheep basics course using this handbook and other materials as guides, call Shelby Filley at 541-672-4461.

The following are 2 sections selected from the handbook...
Hopefully, this will wet your appetite for more.

Production Records (selected section) Adjusted Weaning Weight

Lamb performance to weaning is important because you want to know the effects of the ewe on the lamb's growth. A production testing program is not a contest. Its purpose is to locate the best-producing ewes and rams in each flock. They are "keepers." Culling the poor performers and breeding the keepers will improve the flock genetically.

One performance measure is the lamb's **adjusted weaning weight**. The age of the lamb, age of the dam, type of birth, and type of rearing all influence this performance rating.

An *unadjusted* weaning weight is misleading. A lamb that reaches expected weight in fewer days probably is better than one that takes longer, but that doesn't tell the whole story. A mature ewe usually produces lambs that perform better. Thus, if the laggard lamb is from a younger ewe, the unadjusted weight could mask a dam with high potential. You might cull this ewe from the flock, losing the opportunity for exceptional lambs in the future, because the unadjusted weight of her lambs at weaning doesn't compare well to lambs from older ewes.

To calculate adjusted weaning weight, you need to know the weight of the lamb at birth and the weight at weaning. If the range in age of the lambs is large, it is best to divide them into two groups for weighing.

After weighing a lamb at weaning, calculate its adjusted weaning weight as follows:

1. To adjust weaning weight for the age of the lamb, first subtract birth weight from weight at weaning. Then divide by age (in days) of the lamb when the second weight was taken. This gives the rate of gain from birth to weaning. Next, multiply the rate of gain by the **standard age** (age to which adjustment is made, which may be from 70 to 90 days). Then add the birth weight. The result is the adjusted weaning weight for age.

Example: Weaning weight at 75 days is 80 lb

Birth weight is 9 lb

$80 \text{ lb} - 9 \text{ lb} = 71 \text{ lb}$ gain from birth to weaning

$71 \text{ lb} \div 75 \text{ days} = 0.95 \text{ lb}$ gain per day

$0.95 \times 70 \text{ days} = 66.5 + 9 = 75.5 \text{ lb}$ adjusted weaning weight

2. Now, to adjust for the age of the dam, multiply the age-adjusted weaning weight (from Step 1) by the appropriate adjustment factor (see highlighted cell in Table 1 of the full publication).

Example: The lamb is a twin wether from a 4-year-old ewe and is being raised as a twin.

Multiply 75.5 lb by 1.08 (the adjustment factor), for an adjusted weaning weight of 81.5 lb.



Sheep Management Calendar (selected sections)

Prior to lambing—late pregnancy (4–6 weeks before lambing)

- Begin increasing nutrition by supplementing with grain, high-quality roughages, or pasture.
- Trim and check feet.
- Treat for internal parasites.
- Shear at least 2 weeks prior to lambing. If you do not shear the ewes at this time, crutch or tag them.
- Vaccinate ewes for enterotoxemia (about 30 days prior to lambing).
- Prepare lambing quarters, check supplies and equipment.

Lambing

- Be ready for the first lambs 142 days after turning rams with ewes. The normal gestation period is 148 days, but some ewes may lamb early.
- Watch ewes closely. Lambing season is the time to concentrate your labor. The extra effort will be repaid with more lambs at weaning. Hiring additional help might be money well spent.
- Provide assistance when needed.
- Place ewes that lamb in jugs or lambing pens.
- Clip, Dip, Strip, and Sip: Clip the navel cord to 1.5 inches. Dip the navel in 7 percent tincture of iodine. Strip the teat of the ewe to remove the wax plug from the teat canal. See that the lamb gets its first sip of colostrum.
- Check lambs and ewes in jugs several times each day to ensure that ewes are claiming lambs and that lambs are getting enough to eat.
- Remove ewes and lambs from jugs after 1 to 2 days and place them in small groups (four to eight ewes) for further observation. After a few days, combine these groups into workable units. Separate ewes with twins from those with singles.
- Begin to feed ewes at recommended levels for lactation about 3 days after lambing.
- Watch lambs for signs of pneumonia and scours.
- Give lambs an injection of Vitamin E + selenium.
- If soremouth is a problem in your flock, vaccinate lambs at 1 to 2 weeks of age. Vaccinate lambs for enterotoxemia if ewes were not vaccinated prior to lambing.
- Castrate and dock lambs as soon as they are off to a good start (2 days to 2 weeks of age).

End of lambing

- Continue to feed ewes for lactation based on the number of lambs suckling. Feed at this level until 6 weeks after lambing.
- If creep feeding is part of your lamb production system, get lambs started on creep feed when they are 10 to 14 days old.
- If lambs were not vaccinated for enterotoxemia shortly after birth (see “Lambing,” above), give them their first

vaccination at 5 to 7 weeks of age. Give a booster to those lambs already vaccinated.

- Observe ewes for signs of mastitis and lambs for signs of starvation.

FORAGE INFORMATION...



Hay Options:

When you're short on feed

By Shelby Filley (Regional Livestock & Forage Specialist) and Amy Peters (Livestock & Range, Coos/Curry County), Oregon State University Extension Service

Just about everyone is feeding hay this time of year. Sometimes pasture and hay growing conditions limit the amount of forage available in our fields and hay sheds. Do you have enough hay for the winter and early spring? This article takes a look at the current feed situation and how you might stretch your supply of hay by blending in other feeds to meet animal needs while maintaining balance rations, or making changes in the number of animals you own. At the end, there is a list of publications you should consider reading.

Current Feed Situation

Pastures greened up nicely after the fall rains we had, but short day-length and cold weather is slowing the grass growth. Also, some pastures and hayfields have been negatively impacted by weather over the last two or three years. Rising hay prices, pasture rental rates, and fertilizer and fuel costs all impact the cost of feeding our animals. Make sure you have enough hay secured for your winter and spring feeding. Keep an eye on current conditions through market reports. Go to <http://www.ams.usda.gov>. See “Resources” and click on Livestock and Grain, then click on Hay (on left rail). Call me if you need help accessing that report. You can get 24 hour market information on grain and livestock at 509-765-0311 or 503-326-2022.

Here are some options if you are short on hay...

Purchase Hay

The first thing you might want to try is to buy more grass hay. It is advisable to have the hay tested so you know the nutrient content. When you compare that to the nutrient requirement of the type and class of animals you will be feeding, you will be able to adjust the diet to meet the animal's needs for growth, milk, maintenance, etc. The OSU Extension Service has a hay probe you can borrow so you can sample the hay. The samples can then be sent to a lab for analysis.

Continued on page 7 . . .

Hay Options . . . Continued from page 6

Alfalfa Hay

Alfalfa hay may be an option for some. It is usually higher in protein and energy than grass hay, and sometimes available at a lower cost. It is possible that some rained on alfalfa hay would meet the nutrient requirements of your livestock. Alfalfa may be fed at strategic times like after lambing or calving. Test hay to be sure it meets nutrient requirement of the animals you are feeding. Feeding moldy hay is risky, and I advise you to not feed it.

Straw and Seed Screenings

Another option in times of forages shortages is to feed grass straw or grass screening pellets from the Willamette Valley. There are two things you should be aware of when buying grass straw. If you choose to buy fescue or ryegrass straw, make sure it is low-endophyte or blend it with another feed so the total diet is low in endophyte concentration. As you may know, endophytes are a type of fungus that helps protect the plant from disease. They are bred into turf grass type fescues but are toxic to livestock. The forage-type fescues and ryegrass sold in Oregon are endophyte-free. Information on endophyte testing and tolerances by livestock is available. And, make sure you check is the nutrient content of the straw. If the straw is 5-8% protein and your lactating cows require 10% protein, you will need to supplement the grass straw to meet the needs of the animal. Feed some feeder quality alfalfa hay (5 – 8 lbs) along with the grass straw.

Stockpiled Forage

Although the nutritive value of mature forage that is standing in the field can be very low, cows, sheep, and other ruminants can use this if supplemental protein is fed. Consider renting mature pasture and supplement with alfalfa hay or other protein source (soybean meal or cottonseed meal for example). You don't have to feed the protein supplement every day. Protein supplements are actually used more efficiently if you feed a double dose every other day, or three times the daily amount every three days. Labor costs, as well as feed efficiency, are improved.

Grain

Feeding some grain is another way to conserve forage. Depending on the cost of grain and hay, it may or may not be more expensive. Slowly adapt the animals to grain diets by substituting a few pounds of grain for a few pounds of hay. Every few days increase the amount of grain in the diet, until you reach the desired grain level. This could be done over a period of 2 – 3 weeks.

For example, a 1,200 lb cow will eat about 30 lb of feed (2.5% of her body weight) each day. She could be transitioned from an all-forage diet to a diet of 20 lb of forage and

10 lb of grain. If you need to feed more grain, take more time to slowly adapt her to the diet. Ruminants require at least 10% of the diet as forage (pasture or hay) for a functional digestive system. A high grain diet contains more energy than the most mature cows needs. Although the cow's need for feed may be satisfied, she will probably gain weight on this diet.

Diet Changes

Make any diet changes slowly so as not to upset the animal's digestive system, especially if adding grain. Major changes should be done over a two-week period, stepping up slowly. If you are feeding animals with low nutrient requirements (dry cows and ewes, bulls and rams, overwintering calves) good quality hay alone will probably be the least expensive ration. But, if you are feeding animals with higher requirements (lactating cows and ewes, replacement heifers and ewe lambs) or using low quality forage (poor quality hay or grass straw/screening pellets) you will need to add supplemental protein and energy. If feeding low quality hay, using grain may cost less than using higher quality hay (alfalfa or high quality grass hay) to make up the additional nutrients required for satisfactory animal performance. Check prices carefully before choosing a ration.

Feed Cooperatives

Some areas are fortunate to have Co-op stores; others have improvised and formed producer groups that go in on truckloads of different commodities. They decide what and how much they need, order a load, pick a delivery date, and then meet the truck along the highway at a convenient location that has scales. These groups buy commodities such as peas, corn, pellets, oats, and more, and it has worked out well for them.

Reduce Animal Numbers

Consider culling undesirable animals. Have your veterinarian pregnancy check your cows and ewes and get rid of the open ones when market conditions are favorable. Cows are normally culled in the late summer or early fall after calves are weaned, and therefore the market is flooded and prices lower at that time compared to the winter or spring months.

Some handy publications on buying and using feeds are available on my Regional Livestock & Forages Website at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas/L&F/livestock.php>. Click on Information (Item A) and then on the Livestock or Forage anchor. Especially look at the following: OSU Beef Nutrition Workbook, Feeding for Rebreeding, Nutrition for Lambing, Testing Hay, Matching Hay Quality with Animal Requirements, and Buying & Selling Feeds Using Corrections for Moisture & Concentration of Nutrients.

Regional Livestock & Forages Newsletter

For the Counties of
Benton, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, and Linn

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Regional Livestock and Forage
information brought to you by



Shelby Filley
Regional Livestock & Forage Specialist
OSU Extension Service
(541) 672-4461