



December 2008

**Wibaux County
Extension Office**

Dear Farmers & Ranchers,

Please mark the date of **January 15th** on your calendar. This is the date for the 15th Annual Extension Winter Series. Enclosed please find a schedule and information on the topics to be covered. Again this year we still start the programming at 10:00 a.m., have a dinner at noon, and conclude at about 3:15 p.m. We think we have some interesting topics and good speakers lined up and hope everyone who is interested will be able to attend. If you will be able to attend, we do ask that you **RSVP by Monday, January 12th**, so we have some idea how many to plan on for dinner.

In this newsletter you will also find information on Country-of-Origin Labeling, Manage Your Land for Wildlife, Make the Most of Cull Cow Marketing, and more.

If you have questions or would like additional information on these or other topics, please let us know.

From the Wibaux County Extension Office,
Patti and I do wish you and your family a very
Joyous Holiday Season.

Sincerely,

David L. Bertelsen
County Extension Agent



*Montana State University,
U.S. Department of
Agriculture and Montana
Counties Cooperating.
MSU Extension is an equal
opportunity/affirmative
action provider of
educational outreach.*

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Mountains & Minds

EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS

\$	MT200805AG	Chemicals and Animal Safety
\$	MT200809AG	The Montana Private Applicator Program
\$	MT200811AG	Cheatgrass: Identification, Biology and Integrated Management
\$	MT200813AG	An Introduction to the Principles and Practices of Sustainable Farming
\$	MT200814AG	Recordkeeping and Inspections for Animal Feeding Operations
\$	EB0184	Using Manure as Fertilizer
\$	EB0185	Montana Master Gardener Handbook (\$40.00)
\$	4508	Managing Your Land for Wildlife (\$29.95)
\$	MT199217AG	Growing Tomatoes in Montana
\$	MT200214AG	Recordkeeping for Private Pesticide Applicators in Montana
\$	MT200601AG	Integrated Strategies for Managing Agricultural Weeds
\$	MT200016HR	50 Stress Busting Ideas for Your Well-Being
\$	DVD006	Fun On The Farm: Starting a Farm and Ranch Recreation Business (\$14.95)
\$	DVD007	Improving the Quality of Montana Wool (\$14.95)



SOUTHEASTERN MONTANA EXTENSION WINTER SERIES

Thursday, January 15th

The 15th Annual Extension Winter Series will be held in Wibaux on Thursday, January 15th, with a series of programming beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Wibaux County Courtroom. The programming will run from 10:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Topics this year will include: Feeding, Efficiency and Longevity; Early Weaning - An Alternative Management Tool?; Fire and Post-Fire Grazing Management; and Wind Energy.

The schedule will include the following:

10:00 - 11:00 a.m. Andy Roberts, Research Animal Scientist, Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory: “Feeding, Efficiency and Longevity”: Andy will give a review of Fort Keogh research on how level of feeding during heifer development and winter supplementation may affect production cost, efficiency and longevity, and will provide information concerning potential impacts that production traits may have on lifetime productivity.

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Richard Waterman, Research Animal Scientist, Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory: “Early Weaning - An Alternative Management Tool?”: Richard will review Fort Keogh’s research on cow reproductive responses, heifer development, and steer finishing in response to early weaning.

12:15 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Dinner at the Palace Café.

1:00 - 2:00 p.m. Lance Vermeire, Acting Research Leader, Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory: “Fire and Post-Fire Grazing Management”: Lance will give an overview of Fort Keogh research on rangeland response to fire and grazing management following fire.

2:15 - 3:15 p.m. Sarah Hamlen, MSU Area Economic Development Coordinator: “Wind Energy”: Wind energy development presents exciting potential to landowners and communities throughout the United States. Many landowners welcome the concept of wind energy development on their property, however, when confronted with a wind lease agreement, landowners typically find that they need more information. What questions should I be asking? How do I know what the intentions of this developer might be? What can I do to help myself and my legal counsel to get more information about this opportunity? This workshop is designed to address landowner concerns regarding lease agreements. The presentation will cover general



information about wind development, questions that landowner can ask, and some issues that landowners should bear in mind as they work through the leasing process.

All interested persons are encouraged to attend. We are asking those planning to participate to **RSVP by Monday, January 12th** so we know how many to plan on for dinner. The phone number for the Wibaux County Extension Office is (406) 796-2486. The Extension Winter Series is being sponsored by the Wibaux County Extension Office.

The programs of MSU Extension are available to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or

family status.

COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN LABELING

The following information was copied from the Iowa Beef Center website and gives an overview of what is expected of cow-calf producers to comply with mandatory country of origin labeling (mCOOL) which began September 28, 2008.

Beef products will be labeled a product of the United States if they are born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States. Beef products shall be designated as a “product of the United States and Country X” if they are imported as feeder animals from either Canada or Mexico and are fed in the United States before going to slaughter. Beef products from cattle imported for immediate slaughter from Country X will be designated as “product of Country X and the United States.” Currently, feeder cattle imported from either Mexico or Canada are permanently identified with a brand. However, buyers may still request a signed affidavit from the seller declaring the origin of the cattle.

The USDA has not specified a single record system to use. Cowherd owners should develop a record system to document that the calves born on their farms are “products of the U.S.” While not required, tagging calves and recording birth dates, tag number, and a description of the calf in a calving book would be a good place to start. Another strategy may be an established record system like the Iowa Green Tag program or a private sector electronic identification system. In both cases the cattle are entered into a formal database. Keep in mind that you likely will be asked for this documentation if you sell the cattle. Sellers may be asked to provide an affidavit declaring the origin of the cattle. Typical business records are sufficient to prove origin of cattle if an audit occurs. Cattle producers with production and financial records should feel confident providing a signed affidavit.

Country-of-Origin Documentation Recommendations At-A-Glance

Cow-Calf Producers: To begin building a good foundation for verification, producers can begin with:

- Ear tags
- Calving books
- Herd inventories
- Purchase receipts of herd animals
- Sale bills from sold animals

Feedlots: Cattle feeders will also need to document that cattle were “raised” in the U.S.

Appropriate documentation can include:

- A declaration of origin from the seller
- Scale tickets with in- and out-weight
- Closeout records

Feedlots will need documentation on where the cattle were before the feedlot, place of birth, and stocker operation. Feedlot owners need to begin thinking about what type of documentation they will require from sellers and how information will be transferred through the marketing channel (auction market, order buyer, trucker). Cattle feeders should also discuss COOL with their buyers to determine what information must be forwarded with the cattle when sold.

As proposed, COOL will require retailers to develop and maintain an audit trail on the products

they sell to verify the label indicating the country of origin. Members of the supply chain will have to keep sufficient records to support their claim of origin.

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Buyers should request a signed affidavit from the seller identifying the date of sale, number of animals, seller contact information, and the country where the animals were born and raised prior to sale (see sample form at www.iowabeefcenter.org).

The buyers should maintain the records listed below and be able to provide the documents if audited. USDA has also identified common production and business that are acceptable. Auction markets, order buyers, and other market intermediaries should maintain records and sign as the seller, or pass the seller’s information to the buyer.

Sellers that sign the affidavit are responsible for maintaining adequate records to support country of origin claims if audited.

A coalition of Iowa agricultural organizations prepared the following suggestions to meet the mCOOL rules.

Examples of documents to maintain at least two years as an audit trail.

Buyers of livestock		Original producers of livestock	
\$	Signed affidavit from seller of livestock	\$	Birth records (calving book, Red Book)
\$	Bill of sale	\$	Inventory records that reconcile
\$	Health papers	\$	Purchase and sales receipts
\$	Brand inspection	\$	Supporting documents identified by
\$	Supporting documents identified by USDA		USDA

Country of Origin Label Declaration

Date: _____

Seller contact information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City and State: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of animals: _____

General description: _____

Based on the documents in my possession these animals were born in _____

and

were raised in _____.

Signed: _____, Seller

The Iowa COOL Coalition representing the Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Cattlemens Association, Iowa Pork Producers Association, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and the Iowa Pork Industry Center and Iowa Beef Center at Iowa State University have prepared the above example affidavit for sellers to sign and present to buyers of cattle, hogs and sheep to establish an audit trail required by USDA as published in the October 30, 2004 Federal Register announcement of Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling.

**MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR FEEDSTUFFS
BY CONDUCTING NUTRIENT ANALYSES**

By Rachel Endecott, MSU Extension Beef Cattle Specialist

Are you ready to implement your winter feeding programs? Although some input costs are decreasing, supplemental feed could still cause a drain on ranch funds, and hay prices are pretty astronomical in most parts of the state. While I advocate nutrient analyses for feedstuffs regardless of the economic climate, it could make a difference in your winter-feeding bottom line this year. If the nutrient composition of your feeds is known, rations can be balanced more efficiently and accurately for optimal animal performance.

The first step in feedstuff nutrient analysis is collecting a representative sample. A general recommendation is to sample 10% of the available feedstuff. Hay should be sampled with a probe that takes cores from the bale. Contact your local Extension Office about borrowing a hay probe if you don't have one. For the greatest accuracy, different samples should be taken for each cutting and for each particular field. When sampling most other feeds, such as silage, grain, or cubes, grabbing handfuls is acceptable. It is also a great idea to have water sources tested for mineral content to get a clearer picture of total mineral intake.

There are many testing laboratories available, and most local Extension agents have a relationship with a lab that can analyze your feed and water samples. A typical feed analysis printout includes dry matter, crude protein, an estimation of energy content such as total digestible nutrients (TDN) or net energy, and fiber content. Depending on the laboratory, concentrations of a few minerals, such as calcium and phosphorus, may also be included in a basic forage analysis. You may also choose to receive a complete mineral analysis on your feedstuff that would include major minerals and trace minerals. For small-grain forages, nitrate testing may be advisable as well.

Depending on the analysis you choose, costs range from \$15 to \$40, and results can be obtained within 10 days or sooner depending on the laboratory.

Once you've received the nutrient analysis of your feedstuffs, it's time to balance rations for your particular situation. If you would like assistance in balancing rations, your local Extension agent has access to ration balancing software and can help you formulate a least-cost ration.

For more information on winter-feeding, ration balancing, or any other beef cattle production questions, contact Rachel Endecott at (406) 874-8286 or via email at rachel.endecott@montana.edu.

“MANAGE YOUR LAND FOR WILDLIFE” BOOK NOW AVAILABLE

Most landowners don't realize how much impact they can have on the wildlife on their land. A new book available from Montana State University Extension Publications can help landowners manage both their land and wildlife.

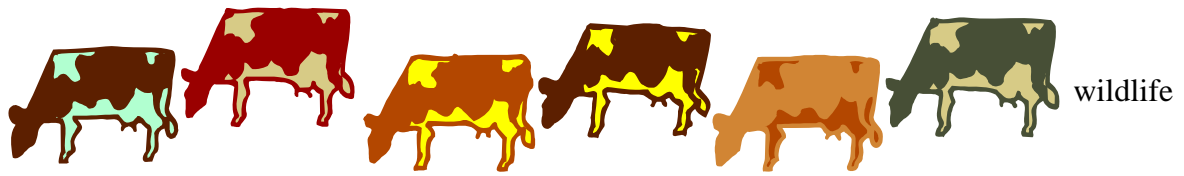
“Manage Your book written by Knight, for Rocky who want to and quality on their 25 years as an specialist before Extension's

“If you are a



Land for Wildlife” Is a wildlife biologist, James Mountain landowners improve wildlife habitat land. Knight worked for Extension wildlife becoming MSU associate director.

landowner, you are a



manager,” Knight said. “You can influence how healthy the wildlife populations are on your land, where they congregate, and how their habitat and populations are managed.”

The book provides information useful for landowners of both small plots and large acreages. It includes information on developing trophy wildlife antlers and horns, harvest strategies, and how to monitor big-game populations.

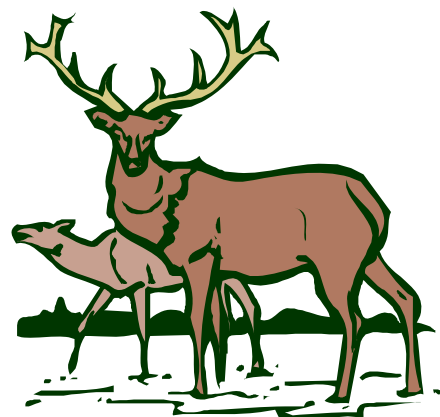
During Knight’s 40 years of professional experience, he has developed strategies and techniques to help landowners be better wildlife managers. He has shared that information through hundreds of articles, radio and television appearances, lectures, workshops, and one-on-one consultations.

“Other than the superb treatment of management techniques, this book also addresses such vital subjects as wildlife damage and control, wildlife management assistance, and the ins and outs of conservation easements,” wrote Jim Zumbo, host of Jim Zumbo Outdoors television program and former hunting editor of “Outdoor Life” magazine. “My only regret is that this work wasn’t written sooner.”

The book is designed for landowners who want to improve wildlife habitat and populations while increasing enjoyment of the animals that make their homes on the improved land.

The 256-page book has management information on more than 20 species of animals, including life history, habitat needs, water and nutrition requirements, disease and predation dangers and more. It also includes 21 full-page, full-color photos, as well as full-color diagrams of planting and habitat recommendations.

The book can be ordered from the MSU Extension Distribution Center for \$29.95, which includes postage. Contact the Distribution Center online at publications@montana.edu or by calling (406) 994-3273.



MAKE THE MOST OF CULL COW MARKETING

By Greg Lardy, NDSU Extension Beef Cattle Specialist

Cull cow marketing is an important, but often overlooked, aspect of the cow-calf business. Whether you operate a seedstock or commercial cow-calf operation, effective cull cow marketing can add dollars to your bottom line and improve the profitability of your ranching operation. Depending on the relationship between calf and cull cow prices, as well as culling rates, revenue from cull cows and bulls comprise 15 to 30 percent of the revenue in a cow-calf operation.

In this article, I'll offer some pointers on effectively marketing your cull cows.

Make Effective Culling Decisions. Cows are culled for a variety of reasons. The most common reasons include pregnancy status (being open), soundness problems such as lameness, and age. To make effective culling decisions, monitor your cow herd frequently and look for cows that appear to be losing condition or are in poor health. These cows should be culled before they go further downhill or lose more weight.

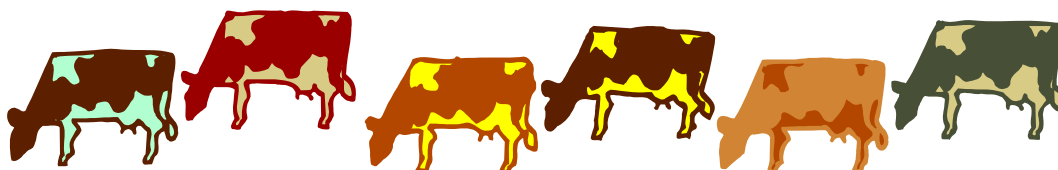
In some cases, cows that are thin due to lack of energy in the diet may regain weight rapidly when fed a higher quality diet. These cows are good candidates for a short period of feeding prior to marketing.

Pregnancy test cull cows prior to sale. In some cases, marketing a cow as a bred cow at a later date may present a profit opportunity.

In research conducted at South Dakota State University, 23 percent of cull cows purchased at sale barns for feeding were diagnosed as more than five months pregnant.

Take advantage of market seasonality. Cull cow markets are seasonal in nature. In the northern plains, cull cow prices are typically lowest in the fall when cows come off pasture and rise through the spring. Seasonal price indexes typically peak in March and April. Marketing cull cows at that time is one way to improve overall profitability and revenue from cull cows.

Taking advantage of these pointers can help you derive more revenue from your cull cows and improve ranch economics. In today's economy, everything you can do to increase revenue or lower costs will be valuable.



Impact of Age and Source Verification, Weaning, and Vaccination on Montana Feeder Calf Value

By Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

Montana State University animal scientists analyzed data from the Superior Livestock Video Auction to determine if a premium was being paid for source and age verified feeder calves. They summarized data on 68,665 Montana calves marketed during June and July of 2007. Average sale weight of all calves was 584 pounds, and average sale price was \$1.17/lb with an average lot size of 116 calves. Less than one third (31%) of all calves sold were age and source verified. As expected, the majority of the calves were steers (60%).

When calculated for a 600 pound calf, the premium received per head for source and age verification was \$12.83. The Montana scientists also calculated the premiums received for vaccinating, weaning, and steers versus heifers. For 600 pound calves, the advantages per head were: vaccinated, \$14.81; weaned, \$17.64; steers, \$52.43 more than heifers. These authors concluded that when Montana calves were source and age verified, weaned, and/or followed a vaccination protocol, additional dollars were received when marked via the video auction. In this time of cost/price squeezes, all cow calf producers would benefit from utilizing value-enhancing records, and management techniques to receive the maximum possible return at sale time. (*Source: Kellom and co-workers. 2008. Proceedings. Western Section American Society of Animal Science. 59:137*).