

JUNE 2010

Dear Farmers and Ranchers,

**Wibaux County
Extension Office**

Please mark the dates of July 12th and July 23rd on your calendar. July 12th is the date for the Tri-County Weed Tour and July 23rd is the date for the annual Wibaux and Golden Valley County Crops Tour. Enclosed please find schedules and topics to be covered. The Weed Tour will offer both private and commercial pesticide applicator credits. All interested persons are encouraged to attend.

In this newsletter you will also find information on Dealing With Wet Conditions During Haying, Animal Identification, Williston Research Extension Center Field Day, and dates of interest.

If you have questions or if we can be of help in any way, please let us know.

Sincerely,

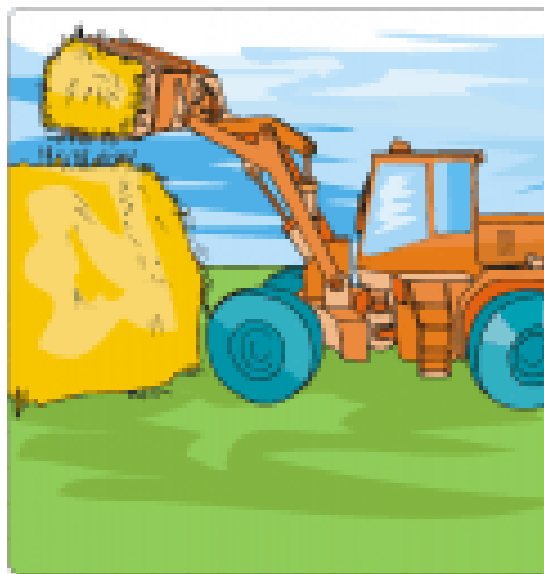
David L. Bertelsen
County Extension Agent

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TRI-COUNTY LEAFY SPURGE TOUR MONDAY, JULY 12TH

The Fallon/Carter, Prairie and Wibaux County Extension Offices and Weed Districts are again hosting a Tri-County Weed Tour on Monday, July 12th, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

The tour will begin at the intersection of Wibaux County Pine Unit Road and Oil Field Road. Three (3) private, commercial and governmental pesticide recertification credits will be available. Tour highlights are listed below:

2:00 p.m. Using Controlled Burns to Manage Rangeland: Mike Ford, BLM Fire Management Officer, and Bobbi Blankenship, Reno Creek Ranch, will discuss the use of fire to manage cedar trees on Reno Creek Ranch. Ford will discuss how controlled burns are implemented by the BLM and how they can be used as a tool to control weeds. Blankenship will share her experiences working with a controlled burn from a landowner/land manager perspective.

3:00 p.m. Noxious Weed Identification: Noxious weeds are a continual threat to rangeland. Early identification and eradication is the key to noxious weed control. Kimberly Mann, USDA-ARS, will present some weed specimens and talk about how to identify noxious weeds.

4:00 p.m. Using Early Detection and Rapid Response to Protect Rangeland: Sharla Sackman, Prairie County Extension Agent, will discuss the principles of early detection of noxious weeds and rapid response to eradicate the weeds detected. Sackman will also discuss how this strategy can be implemented in conjunction with other treatment efforts such as controlled burns or herbicide treatments.

Following the tour, supper will be served by the Cabin Creek Homemakers Club.



JOINT CROPS TOUR

Friday, July 23rd

The Annual Wibaux and Golden Valley County Crops Tour will be held on Friday, July 23rd, beginning at 3:00 p.m. The tour will begin at the Golden Valley County Fairgrounds. Transportation will be provided. For those going from Wibaux, the bus will leave the USDA building at 2:30 p.m. After the tour, a supper will be served at the Golden Valley County Fairgrounds sponsored by the Beach Co-Op Grain Co. and Golva Co-Op Elevator.

Stops on the tour will include cover crop trials, alfalfa salt tolerance trials, a corn fertilizer study, Eastern Ag Research Center Off-Station Spring Wheat & Durum Nursery, pulse crops, and more.

Sponsors on the tour include the Wibaux and Golden Valley County Extension Offices, the Beach Co-Op Grain Co., Golva Co-Op Elevator, and the Wibaux and Golden Valley Conservation Districts. Refreshments will be served throughout the afternoon.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please call the Wibaux or Golden Valley County Extension Offices at 796-2486 or 872-4332.

DEALING WITH WET CONDITIONS DURING HAYING

By Greg Lardy, NDSU Animal Sciences Department

This spring's wet weather has many people in the area beginning to worry about putting up good quality hay. As one person recently joked however, 'I would rather put up my own poor quality hay, than have to buy someone else's next spring'! That being said, this column will offer you some tips on how to deal with the excess moisture. Moist, humid conditions make it harder to dry swaths to proper moisture for baling. There is not much you can do about the weather but there are steps you can take that will increase your chances of being able to put up good quality forage in a timely fashion.

Equipment Adjustments.

Adjusting windrowing equipment can reduce the time it takes for swaths to dry.

The width of the swath and the swath density are two variables that can be controlled relatively easily in most modern hay making equipment. A wider, less dense swath, can reduce drying time; in some cases, by up to six hours.

Here are some other pointers to consider regarding fine tuning your haying equipment:

- Be sure that you don't spread the swath so thin that you are driving over it with the tractor tires. An area that has been driven over will dry more slowly than the remainder of the windrow.
- Check the settings on the conditioning rolls on the windrower. Recommendations vary slightly from manufacturer to manufacturer but 1/16 inch to 3/32 inch is a good general rule of thumb for the proper width between rolls. The rolls should be set so the stems are bent and crimping is obvious. However, don't set them so tight that it results in leaf loss or plant discoloration.

Continued ☹️

Dealing With Wet Conditions During Haying Continued...

Hay Preservatives, Desiccants, and other drying products.

Some producers may choose to use hay preservatives, desiccants, and organic acids to aid in baling hay at higher moisture levels. Hay desiccants are applied to the hay when it is cut as a means to speed drying. Hay desiccants contain potassium or sodium carbonate. They are effective on alfalfa and other legumes with a waxy cuticle. The potassium or sodium carbonate disturbs the cuticle and allows faster drying.

Hay preservatives are applied when the forage is baled and can be used to improve success with difficult drying conditions. Hay preservatives allow baling under higher moisture conditions without spoilage.

Hay preservatives have been classified into several types: organic acids, acid salts, salt, anhydrous ammonia, urea, fermentation products, anaerobic bacterial inoculants, and aerobic bacterial inoculants. The organic acids (propionic, acetic, citric) are very effective in preventing mold and heating.

Be sure to read the label and understand application rates needed for each particular product. Application rates will vary depending on moisture of the hay being baled.

Microbial products developed to aid ensiling (anaerobic products) appear to have limited effectiveness when used for hay preservation. Aerobic products appear to give variable results. Microbial products appear to work best with liquid application and may be priced less than the organic acids. Follow manufacturers' recommendations for application and storage of microbial solutions to retain bacterial viability.

Advantages of preservatives include:

- Hay baled at higher moisture levels can reduce the time it takes to get hay put up and may reduce the risk of rain damage. In wet weather conditions, being able to bale hay sooner becomes quite valuable.
- Dry matter and nutrient loss caused by leaf shatter is reduced. Putting hay up at higher moisture contents ensures better quality forage. Depending on the nutrient requirements of the animals you will be feeding, this could be quite valuable and reduce or eliminate the need for supplementation.
- The potential baling period (for good quality forage) is lengthened. The use of preservatives allows you more flexibility in when you can cut and bale forage.

Disadvantages of preservatives include:

- Some preservatives, such as propionic acid, are corrosive and can damage machinery and cause injury if handled improperly. Be sure to take the proper steps to ensure you and your employees or family members have the proper training and safety equipment to handle these products. Ammonium propionate (also called buffered propionic acid) is less caustic and is considered a safer and less corrosive alternative.
- Some preservatives have not been thoroughly tested under a wide variety of haying conditions. Ask to see reliable data that indicates the usefulness of specific products under conditions similar to yours.
- Some preservatives may not be cost effective. This is a harder one to get a handle on. It will require you to estimate the value of baling sooner and how much of an increase you expect in feed quality for you to make an informed decision.

For more information regarding hay and forage issues see this web site from the University of Wisconsin: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/forage/>.

BEEF TALK: NEW THINGS ARE HAPPENING, SO STAY TUNED

By Kris Ringwall, NDSU Beef Specialist

Is the subject of animal identification still relevant? The thought behind the comment was the news that the U.S. Department of Agriculture was not going to pursue an animal identification system.

That is a very good question from the haze of the debate over animal identification. Sometimes, the basic reasons why the debate was initiated are lost. The point remains that, regardless of the reason, cattle are not always very easy to tell apart. Therefore, the concept of an ear tag, ear notching, brand or some other distinguishing mark has been around for a long time.

Throughout the centuries of working domesticated cattle, the archives are full of people who have contested the ownership of a certain set of cattle. Historically, these would be neighbors or people in proximity to each other trying to keep their herds straight. With the exception of cattle rustlers, the process would be sincere and well-intended.

Not until recent times has the cattle business been asked to account for comingled lots of cattle. These are cattle not comingled among neighbors, but literally among people living in different countries. That is a change. Regardless of how one feels about identification processes, there is a real need to keep track of cattle as they are shifted or moved throughout the industry.

I am reminded of the meaning of a handshake in the beef business. A handshake means thank you or good luck (or many other unspoken greetings) and serves to consummate communication that seals the deal.

Again, historically, the business side of the beef business has been fairly simple. The paperwork is not excessive. Excellent sales personnel listen, note the situation and close the deal, not with a pen, but with a gavel, a nod and a twitch of the forefinger. The freshly sold calves or cows are repenned, loaded and hauled the length of the highway with the ink still in the pen. The industry demands the trusting nod and a producer's handshake.

However, times have changed and so have expectations in the beef industry. Those standard-looking cattle are now cookie-cutter images of lots of cattle. Trying to eyeball a set of previously owned cattle among a sea of predominately black or red cattle is impossible. We often ponder why all the black cattle, but black is a dominant color in cattle, and once the black gene is introduced into a line of cattle, the uniqueness of color disappears fast.

The other color that travels with the black gene is red. Although genetically recessive to black, if selected for, establishing the red color is fairly simple. Essentially, the second base color for cattle is red and once bred into a herd, the cattle will be red. With the exception of a few marking, dilutor or modifying genes, it is impossible to produce very unique-looking cattle that are one of a kind.

With that in mind, we tag, brand or mark the cattle. To make matters even more difficult, we pride ourselves on uniform lots of cattle. In the ideal world, they should all look alike, but that is where the problem lies. All those cattle that have the same phenotype may have radically different genotypes. To make matters more difficult, the consumer is asking for some level of assurance that what is offered for sale not only has the traits we easily can see, such as color, but also has an established level of acceptance for traits that cannot be seen.

For instance, eating quality, palatability and perhaps a little production history may be asked for as the cattle are sold. To ratchet things up a bit more, the question is increasingly not about program or industry standards, but about the individual animal. That is where the challenge begins.

Most days, it's just the producer "choring" the cows just like the cows have always been "chored" and probably always will be as long as cows are cows.

Producers get to know the cattle and the cattle get to know the producer. This creates a feeling of good sense that is at the heart of every talented cattle producer.

But the challenge remains. How does one communicate that "good sense" to an ever widening consumer base that is no longer local, but literally worldwide, and do it with the twitch of the finger and pounding on the gavel?

Yes, animal identification is very relevant. New things are happening, so stay tuned.

FIELD DAY AT WILLISTON RESEARCH EXTENSION CENTER SET FOR JULY 15TH

The annual field day will be held Thursday, July 15th, at the North Dakota State University Williston Research Extension Center. The day begins with coffee at 8:30 a.m. CDT. Jerry Bergman, WREC director; Neil Riveland, assistant director; and staff will be in charge of the tours.

The crops tour will begin at 9:20 a.m. NDSU research and Extension specialists will lead discussions on new varieties of barley, wheat, durum and oats. Other topics include pea and lentil production, weed control and insect problems in crops, such as sawflies.

A concurrent horticulture program will begin at 10 a.m. at the Ernie French Center for those who enjoy flowers, gardens and fruit production. The morning program will conclude with a groundbreaking ceremony for the office and lab addition to the Ernie French Center.

At noon, the traditional barbecue chicken luncheon will be served. The luncheon is sponsored by area agribusinesses and the Williston Chamber of Commerce Agricultural Committee.

The afternoon program begins at 1:30 with a discussion on soils. A soil pit will allow guests to view soil properties and learn how the different properties influence crop growth. The program concludes at 3 p.m.

There will be water quality screening at the Ernie French Center from 9 a.m. to noon. Bring your water sample in for testing. Samples should be collected in any clean plastic bottle capable of holding 15 to 20 ounces.

The public is invited to attend and participate in all activities.

2010 DATES OF INTEREST

- ♠ July 13th Swank Farm Tour, Culbertson, MT
- ♠ July 15th NDSU-Williston Research Extension Center Field Day, Williston, ND
- ♠ July 22nd USDA-ARS Friends and Neighbors Day, Mandan, ND
- ♠ July 28th MSU-Eastern Ag Research Center Field Day, Sidney, MT
- ♠ July 29th Nesson Valley Irrigation Field Day, Williston, ND
- ♠ August 3-5 MonDak Regional Ag Open, Williston, ND
- ♠ August 4-7 Richland County Fair & Rodeo, Sidney, MT