Beef/Forage Update - April 2004

Due to popular demand, the UK Beef/Forage group is sponsoring the Beef/Forage Update. The Beef Forage Update will be distributed monthly to agents and specialists in the University of Kentucky Extension System. The intent of the Beef/Forage Update is to improve communication between the Specialists and Agents relating to on-going programs. Anyone interested in putting information in the Beef/Forage Update should contact Dr. Les Anderson at landerso@uky.edu.

IRM

This year, the IRM Core Committee was reappointed by Dean Turner. The committee consists of Les Anderson (Chair), Darrh Bullock, Roy Burris, Gary Carter, Jimmy Henning, Cristy Honaker, Charlene Jacobs, Lee Meyer, Benjy Mikel, Patty Scharko, Doug Shepherd, and Darrell Simpson. The Extension Associates that assist the IRM Committee include Jim Akers (IRM Coordinator), Alison Smith (Master Cattleman Coordinator), Kevin Laurant (Western KY), Laurentia van Rensburg (Records Coordinator), and Lori Porter (IT Coordinator). At a two-day retreat, the IRM committee decided to reorganize their focus. Two distinct phases of effort were determined. Phase 1 would concentrate on educational materials and programs for beef producers and agents. Phase 2 would focus on county-based programming and leadership development.

The IRM committee has developed numerous educational materials for Kentucky beef producers and agents. The IRM committee will continue to print the IRM Calendar, the IRM pocket record-keeping books, and will revise and publish a new Kentucky Beef Book (due our December 2004).

Educational programs designed for beef producers previously supported by the IRM Committee will continue. Cow College, BQA, Grazing School, and Master Cattleman will still be offered. Alison Smith has developed and is piloting a Master Cattleman’s program for youth called “Cow Pokes”. Jim Akers and Patty Scharko are developing BQA #2 for recertification of beef producers.

New agent training programs are being developed. New agents will receive training in basic plant and animal science via curriculum being developed now. We will also sponsor BQA, Grazing School, Cow College, and leadership development courses for agents. Ultimately, we envision developing a “Master Beef Agent” certification and/or MS program.

Lastly, our record-keeping programs will be expanded. Data will be collected from current users and new users involved in the Electronic ID (EID) program and the Value-Added Targeting Marketing (VATM) program. Our goal is to develop a state-wide database that can be used to establish benchmarks for producers to identify deficiencies or inefficient production practices.
Phase 2 will concentrate on new programs. Two new areas for programming were developed. First, the new educational programs for beef consumers are being developed. A committee called the Consumer Focus Committee was appointed. This committee consists of Animal Science, Food Science, and Family Consumer Science agents and specialists. Beef 101 and Consumer BQA will be offered again for FCS agents and FCS clientele. Two new programs are also being developed. First, the “Farm-to-Table” program will focus on educating beef consumers on the beef production process and the selection and preparation of different cuts of beef. Second, the “Thrill-of-the-Grill” program will focus teaching youth about beef production and preparation. Information on these programs will be available in future Beef/Forage Updates.

The second focus of Phase 2 is expansion of CPH and leadership development. A committee was formed to develop a conference to support both leadership development and new county CPH programs. More information will be available from this committee in future Beef/Forage Update issues. Submitted by Les Anderson.

Cow College

Enrollment in Cow College 2004 is currently being sought. Cow College is our most advanced class for information regarding beef production. The dates for Cow College are as follows: Economics/Marketing (Lexington), July 7-8; Nutrition/EID, August 4-5; Herd Health/Facilities, August 31-September 1; Reproduction/Genetics, September 29-30; Forage/End Product, October 19-20. Anyone interested in Cow College should contact either Laurentia van Rensburg (ljvanr2@uky.edu; 278-0899) or Dr. Les Anderson. Submitted by Laurentia van Rensburg.

Record-Keeping

We currently have 335 CHAPS users. In March, 13 new producers signed up to use CHAPS. The Kentucky database is being built and should be ready by June 2004. We have 2 users of SPA. Efforts are being made to increase the use of SPA (economic analysis).

Alan Miller from University of Illinois will be conducting SPA training with Laurentia van Rensburg, Kenny Burdine, Alison Smith, and Rick Costin on April 9th. Training session for agents and producers will be offered this summer. For more information contact Laurentia van Rensburg. Submitted by Laurentia van Rensburg.

Value-Added Targeted Marketing

The Value Added, Targeted Marketing (VATM) program's key objective is to improve Kentucky's beef operations by tracking cattle through feedlot and harvest. Once the data is collected and available, educational programs will help producers use their records to aid in decision making. Like the Five State Project, this effort provides cost share to participating producers - 1/2 of the cost and up to 3/4 cost if they participate in
the CHAPS and SPA record-keeping programs. They'll also get assistance in using the information in their decision making.

We are now actively recruiting managers of cow-calf operations for the VATM project. Agents will be getting more details very soon. In addition, agent training sessions related to the Five State and VATM programs are scheduled for June 2 (Wed) in Princeton and June 3 (Thurs.) in Lexington. Please mark your calendars!

For more information, contact any of the project leaders: John Johns (jtjohns@uky.edu, Kenny Burdine (kburdine@uky.edu), Jim Akers (jakers@uky.edu), Lee Meyer (lmeyer@uky.edu) or RW Eldridge (red73501@yahoo.com). Submitted by Lee Meyer.

Animal Identification

The past month has a very busy one for the issue of animal ID and the impending federal mandate on food animal traceability. As of this writing the Kentucky delegation is meeting leaders from all over the nation for the NCBA annual spring congressional tour in Washington, D. C. to communicate our concerns and ideas on the subject.

Kentucky continues to maintain a leadership role on a national level and much of the information we have accumulated over the past years relative to costs and procedures are playing a big role in helping to formulate the national program. Even though it is frustrating that we don’t know the answers to every question right now it is important that we remain active in this issue. This is a very hot topic in Washington and the discussion of how and at what level to fund animal ID is taking place. Our focus has been on making sure that USDA and congressional leaders recognize that the funding needs to extend beyond the needs at the federal level and should extend down to cover the needs of the State Veterinarians and the infrastructure necessary to provide inexpensive and efficient data collection at the producer level. We have some time to continue our discussions about “how” we will comply with the program.

There has been considerable internal discussion over the past week about the unrealistic timelines that have been published in the animal ID materials. Right now USDA continues to say they will move forward with the animal ID program in 2004 and that registering Premise ID’s is the first step. We probably are looking at fall before we actually have a system in place to begin that process.

The message to producers continues to be consistent with what you heard in the agent trainings. Now is the time to think about increasing local efforts on basic record keeping and consider the added value that could be created by voluntarily source verifying livestock this year. I expect that there will be considerable news coming out of this week in Washington and I will share that as soon as we return. For more information of Animal Identification contact Jim Akers (jakers@uky.edu; 278-0899). Submitted by Jim Akers.
Over 75 producers, agents and market operators met in Bardstown on March 23rd to review the past marketing season and discuss any changes needed in the CPH 45 guidelines. Billy Glenn Turpin, Chairman of the KCA Stocker/Feeder Committee led the meeting.

No changes were made to the rules and regulations of the CPH 45 program; however it was agreed to add to the vaccination requirements a statement to encourage producers to give the first round of respiratory vaccines while the calves are still on the cows.

Much time was spent discussing the importance of local leadership and the need for all locations to have credible and active producer groups making the decisions on conduct of the sales. Each of the sale groups represented received a summary of how their location performed compared to the other locations around the state. Many of the sales that had the greatest premiums were the locations that consistently have over 1,000 head of calves and have a strong producer committee leading the effort. Overall, numbers of CPH 45 calves marketed was down from last year due to the high prices we experienced last fall and lower overall cattle numbers.

The group discussed electronic identification as a requirement but decided to leave that a local decision for now. Several of the sale locations currently use electronic id voluntarily and other expressed interest in bringing the technology into their programs. Submitted by Jim Akers.

Kentucky Beef Network

Jim Akers expressed appreciation for the many facilitator evaluations that have come back into his office. He was very pleased to report that they have been overwhelmingly positive and the few that have been critical have been constructive with suggestions about how to improve.

Always keep in mind that what we have going on here in Kentucky is completely unique; there is no model to follow. Jim has had many questions about the job description of the facilitators and why it is not more concrete and defined. The whole concept behind the facilitators was to find people that we could allow flexibility to respond to local needs. We never intended for the work that we give them to fill every minute of their day, but to leave them flexible to respond to requests from agents and local leaders. Jim encourages you to communicate your perceptions of what they need to be doing.

We recently held another in a series of trainings with the facilitators. Some already have electronic data collection equipment and the rest will have it within the next month. The facilitators are being equipped with scales, scale heads and EID scanners to compliment the laptops they already use. This equipment is to be used within their areas to support the herds on the EID On-farm program, to collect source/origin verification information and for use in educating local producers in the possibilities of
using EID to collect farm records. Jim encourages agents to make use of this equipment in their programs; it could be very useful for documenting case studies on CPH 45 calves as well as assisting producers in starting records programs with CHAPS. Jim hopes that at the very least we are able to do EID demonstrations at county field days all over the state this summer.

Thanks for your continued efforts to make this innovative program a success. Jim hears from other states, all the time, regarding how lucky we are in Kentucky to have the programs we do and the people necessary to get them done. We hope that each of us realize that anytime you have this level of activity going on, there will be the occasional problem. Let’s keep focused on the fact that we are doing great things for the producers in Kentucky and that is what we are all here to do. For more information regarding the Kentucky Beef Network, contact Jim Akers. Submitted by Jim Akers.

**Kentucky Master Cattleman Program**

This year 16 Master Cattleman programs are being conducted across the state. Groups which are scheduled for this year are: Boyle, Garrard and Lincoln counties; Breckinridge and Grayson counties; Center of Kentucky; Gateway; Green River; Kentucky Heartland; Kentucky River; Louisville; Mammoth Cave; Mammoth Cave West; Mountain Cattlemen’s Association; Northern Kentucky; Northeast; Pennyrile, South District 5 and Wilderness Trail.

If you would like to find more information about a specific Master Cattleman group you can go to http://www.uky.edu/Projects/BeefIRM/ and click on Ag Agents (user name: agagent; password:kybeef).

The 2004 Master Cattleman Field Days are set. One day will focus on Genetics, Nutrition, Herd Health, and Facilities/Environmental Stewardship. We will have a separate day for the Reproduction session (as long as 30 people register). A brochure will be sent to current Master Cattleman participants. Producers will be able to choose the following dates:

**Reproduction (choose 1)**

- October 6 Princeton Research and Education Center  9:30 AM CT
- October 15 Animal Research Center, Versailles  9:30 AM ET

**Nutrition, Genetics, Herd Health, and Facilities/Environmental Stewardship (choose 1)**

- October 7 Princeton Research and Education Center  9:30 AM CT
- October 11 Animal Research Center, Versailles  9:30 AM ET
- October 12 Animal Research Center, Versailles  9:30 AM ET

On August 13, 2004, the 2005 Master Cattleman Planning meeting will be held at the Kentucky Cattlemen’s Office at 9:30 AM. All agents interested in helping plan the 2005
Master Cattleman program are welcome. For more information contact Alison Smith (asmith2@uky.edu; 278-0899).

Kentucky Cowpokes

Over the past four years, the Master Cattleman program has focused on educating adult beef producers. However, there is a gap between the current youth and adult programs and would like to bridge that gap with the Kentucky Cowpokes Program. Cowpokes would provide training on beef management for youth in agriculture thus preparing future producers for the challenges and rewards they face in beef industry.

The Cowpokes program consists of 15 one-hour sessions with optional laboratory/interactive activities that include; Management Skills, Nutrition, Forages, Facilities and Animal Behavior, Environmental Stewardship and Industry Issues, Herd Health, Reproduction, Genetics, Marketing and Profitability, End Product, Beef Quality Assurance, Showmanship, Wholesome Beef Preparation, Careers, and Selection.

The sessions are currently being developed and piloted with Washington and Todd Counties and the Kentucky Junior Cattlemen’s Association. For more information contact Alison Smith. Submitted by Alison Smith.

Forages

SPRING GRAZING SCHOOL - FINAL CALL: The Kentucky Spring Grazing School will be held at the Hardin County Extension Office April 20-21, 2004. Registration fee is $100.00 and includes all materials, grazing notebook, Southern Forage Book, breaks and selected meals. If you would like to reserve a spot in the Grazing School, make check payable to: Kentucky Forage & Grassland Council and send to Rebecca Smith, 400 W.P. Garrigus Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0215, phone: 859-257-5985.

FORAGE EXTENSION WEBSITE: Our THANKS to all who have passed on compliments and suggestions for our new Forage Website http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage. We appreciate all the suggestions for additional "links". We have added many new links and will continue to expand the site. New this month is the Forage Book section. Thanks again for your support, encouragement and suggestions.

ROTATIONAL GRAZING’S EFFICIENT: Switching from conventional to rotational grazing can increase pasture efficiency from 30-35% to as high as 75%. That's according to Stan Pace, a Mississippi State University agronomic crops agent. "Cows are selective graziers, just like people," says Pace. "They'll eat butter beans and leave the beets. When put in a selective forage situation, they'll overgraze some spots and undergraze others. Over time, you will have poor-quality grass and less total forage." He divided a 25-acre field in half, then subdivided one half into seven paddocks of 1.7 acres each. Twenty-five cows are rotated through the paddocks,
spending three or four days in each one. Forage utilization efficiency has increased 50-60%, says Pace. Rotating cattle every day would increase efficiency to about 75%, he adds. "Rotational grazing improves both the production and quality of forages," says Richard Watson, Mississippi extension forage specialist. The practice has been recommended for years, but most producers don't do it. Due to recent high stored-feed prices, more are considering it, says Watson. (SOURCE: Hay & Forage Grower Magazine, March 2004). Submitted by Jimmy Henning.