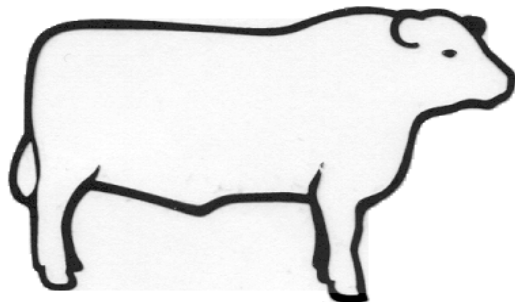


December 2004

Volume 6 Issue 22



THE LEADING EDGE

CATTLEMAN

Mississippi/Alabama Cattle Producers



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Leading Edge Cattleman Program Mission Statement:

"To improve profitability, management skills, and cattle of beef producers in participating counties."

County Cattlemen's Association
President

County Extension Agent

Leading Edge Participating Counties:

<u>Alabama</u>	<u>Mississippi</u>
Bibb	Chickasaw
Fayette	Clay
Greene	Lee
Hale	Lowndes
Lamar	Monroe
Pickens	Noxubee
Sumter	Oktibbeha
Walker	Webster
Tuscaloosa	Winston
Marion	Calhoun

Weed Control in Pastures

Micheal A. Davis, Regional Extension Agronomist-Forage Crops

Two of the most damaging weeds that occur in pastures are Hairy Buttercup and Thistle. Like other weeds, these take their toll on forage production by occupying space and intercepting much needed sunlight before it reaches the desirable forages and by the uptake of soil nutrients required by forages. Hairy buttercup (*Ranunculus sardous*) is a winter annual that germinates in the fall and over-winters as a tender seedling then begins growth in late winter with earnest and can dominate large areas with little or no desirable forages growing there. There are several Thistles that are present in Alabama pastures including Musk, Bull, Russian, and Yellow. Thistle is a biennial or, in some cases, a perennial that germinates in the fall and lies in the rosette stage through winter and early spring and bolts in the late spring of the second year. Buttercup and thistle are easily controlled with the herbicide Grazon P & D applied in the spring but the herbicide will also kill any clovers growing in the pasture.

In order to kill the buttercup and thistle without damaging existing clovers, a fall application of 2,4-D at the ½ pint/acre rate should be made. In December of 1999 two rates of 2,4-D Amine, 0.5 pints/acre and 0.7 pints/acre, were applied to dallisgrass/white clover pastures. These treatments were repeated in February, 2000, when most control treatments are typically applied. A check plot that received no treatment was used as a comparison to evaluate the amount of hairy buttercup control and the amount of damage to clovers. The treatments were analyzed on April 7, 2000 with the following results. The fall application of 0.5 pts/ac 2,4-D Amine resulted in approximately 85% control of hairy buttercup with no damage to white clover while the 0.7 pts/ac 2,4-D Amine resulted in greater than 90% control of hairy buttercup with no damage to the white clover. One bonus that was noticed was the control of thistle by the fall treatments; 0.5 pts/ac resulted in approximately 50% control of thistle while the higher rate resulted in about 90% control of the thistle.

The spring application of 0.5 pts/ac resulted in 75-80% control of hairy buttercup, 20% control of thistle and no damage to the clover. The higher rate of 0.7 pts/ac controlled 90-95% of the hairy buttercup, 30-35% of the thistle but reduced the clover content by greater than 50% and eliminated clover blooms almost completely. Based on this demonstration and work previously done at LSU, fall applications of 2,4-D Amine are recommended for control of hairy buttercup and thistle in pastures containing clover; apply 0.75 pts/ac of 2,4-D Amine in December when daytime temperatures are greater than 60 degrees F and no rainfall expected for at least 4 hours. Observe all grazing and hav restrictions when applying herbicides to forage crops.

CATTLE REPRODUCTION IS THE FIRST STEP TO PROFIT

In beef cattle production, the first step to profit is having a live calf every year. To help producers in our area learn more about reproduction, Mississippi State Extension Service and the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine will sponsor a cattle reproduction short course. The dates are Tuesday, January 11, 2005 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and January 12, 2005 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The cost for the course is \$5 per person. No meals are included. The deadline for registration is January 4th. For a registration form contact Jane Parish at (662)325-7466.

The course will be broadcast from the Bost Extension Center at MSU. The distance education sites available to view the course are; Central MS R&E Center in Raymond, North MS R&E Center in Verona, Forrest Co. Extension Office in Hattiesburg, Tate Co. Extension Office in Senatobia, Pike Co. Extension Office in Magnolia and the Newton Co. Extension Office in Decatur.

Adding Tools to the Toolbox

Auburn University Department of Animal Sciences is sponsoring a beef shortcourse on January 7-8, 2005. The course will be held at the Auburn University Hotel and Conference Center. Preregistration must be postmarked by January 3rd. The cost for the conference which includes 2 lunches, breaks, meetings and proceedings is \$85 per person early registration or late registration cost is \$100 per person.

Topics are; the directions of the U.S. Beef Industry; Confronting Issues Head On; The Essentials: Marketing, Reproduction and Nutrition.

For more information contact Lisa Kriese-Anderson at kriesla@auburn.edu.

Cattle Market Update

*Dr. Walt Prevatt
Extension Economist
Auburn University*

Looking ahead to 2005, the U.S. cattle market has three significant unknowns to address. The first unknown is "When is the U.S. and Canadian border going to open with trade of fed cattle and feeder cattle? The second unknown is "When will the U.S. begin exporting beef to Asian beef markets? And thirdly, how long will it take rebuild to the levels of beef previously exported to our trading partners? The answers to these questions will have a major impact of cattle market prices during 2005.

The U.S.-Canadian border is expected to re-open to fed and feeder cattle trade for animals less than 30 months of age during the first half of 2005 (probably between February and June). Depending on when the border opens, fed cattle imports from Canada are expected to be about 400,000-600,000 head during 2005. The five-year (1998-2002) average prior to 2003, fed cattle imports from Canada averaged about 723,000 head annually. In addition, Canada has incurred a backlog of feeder cattle and calf supplies that will have to be utilized. Look for another 300,000-400,000 head of feeder cattle to be imported from Canada during 2005. However, it is unlikely that cull cow or bull imports from Canada will resume in 2005. These animals are candidates with the highest risk of a BSE case and will likely not be included in the market trade.

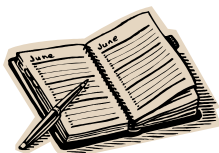
Canada's cattle inventory numbers have been expanding. However, in addition, they have been expanding their slaughter capacity. The Canadian slaughter level is expected to increase from an average of about 3.2 million head just prior to 2003 to approximately 4.6 million head annually in 2005 due to increased slaughter capacity and the growing inventory level. Canada is working hard to compete more effectively against the U.S. in the world beef market and to lessen its reliance on the U.S. We should expect some market price weakness (say \$2-\$3/Cwt.) when the announcement is made to open the U.S.-Canadian border for beef trade.

The U.S.-Asian beef trade is even more uncertain than the Canadian situation. The USDA announced in late October that Japan had agreed in principle to lift the ban on importing U.S. beef from animals 20 months of age and younger. However, there was no time table agreed upon about when beef trade would begin and certainly no assurances that beef products from the U.S. would be given preference over Canadian beef or other sources. In addition, there was a stipulation agreed upon that U.S. export beef to Japan would be from cattle that are 20 months of age and younger. This stipulation is expected to pose a challenge for U.S. producers and packers to verify that the cattle are indeed less than 21 months of age. At present, Japanese negotiators have agreed that records documenting cattle age via birth records will be acceptable. In addition, USDA has an ongoing study to determine if age can also be verified via bone ossification. Given the uncertainty surrounding the cattle age, it is unlikely that U.S. beef will be exported to Japan for several more months. Furthermore, a recent trip by Japanese government officials to analyze measures to prevent BSE in the U.S. and Canada produced a discouraging mission report. The mission report is reported to say "that while resumption of full-scale beef imports from Canada is highly likely if necessary conditions are met, imports of American beef will be substantially limited even when the ban is removed unless accurate production data become available." The mission report also mentioned that Canada has a nationwide system to trace each cow while the accuracy and storage of data on beef production in the United States vary greatly in the absence of a uniform recording system. This information suggests that the Japanese are very serious about verification of animal age and identity. Therefore, it may be the second half of 2005 before any measurable quantities of U.S. beef are exported to Japan. Any improvements in U.S. exports are expected to be price supportive for U.S. domestic beef prices.

The answer to question three regarding how long it will take to rebuild to the previous level of U.S. beef exports prior to December 2003 is the most uncertain of the three questions. First, we are not certain about when we will resume beef exports to Asian beef markets. Secondly, the level of beef demand in Japan has significantly declined due to the large number of positive BSE cases (about 15 BSE cases confirmed in the last few years in Japan) and the detection of CvJD in humans. Also, the substitution of other meats and food items for beef has been significant. Therefore, it will most likely take several years before U.S. beef exports to Japan and other countries approach the pre-December 2003 levels.

If we had to have a BSE case, it was good that it occurred when cattle inventories and beef production were lower and during a time period when domestic consumer beef demand increased. These factors have helped to make this situation considerably less painful.

The international beef trade issues will likely continue to dominate the U.S. beef outlook during 2005. The resolution of these trade issues will no doubt add much volatility to the U.S. beef market. U.S. Cattle prices during 2005 will likely dip below year earlier prices at times, but should remain cyclically strong and average close to the annual average for 2004 cattle prices (Choice steers - \$84.60, Feeder steers, 700-849# - \$104, and feeder steer calves, 500# - \$122).



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



- January 4, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. Cattlemen's Exchange at Verona, MS
- Friday, January 7, 2005 Deadline to nominate all breeds bulls and commercial heifers for the 2005 Mississippi Beef Agribition. Contact Mike Howell, Area Livestock Agent , P. O. Box 1690, Verona, MS 33379 or call at (662) 566-2201 (o), (662) 871-8468 (c)
- January 7 – 8, 2005 Beef Short course, Auburn University
- January 11-12, 2005 Cattle Reproduction Short course, Mississippi State University
- January 15, 2005 55th Annual Auburn University Bull Test Sale, Ham Wilson Arena, Auburn, AL
- February 2 – 5 NCBA Annual Convention & Trade Show, San Antonio, TX
- February 11 -12 Mississippi Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting & Trade Show, Jackson, MS
- February 11 -12 Alabama Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting & Trade Show, Mobile, AL
- February 18, 2005 EPD Bull and Heifer Sale, Mid-State Stockyards, Letohatchee, AL