

Virginia Cooperative Extension



FARM NOTES

November 2014

Marketing Grain and Livestock Educational Meeting

Wednesday, December 10, from 6:30-9:00 p.m.
at the Butcher Block in Stephens City

Please let us know you will be attending by calling 540-459-6140 no later than December 5. There is a \$5 per person cover fee, payable at the door.



Speakers

Mr. Dave Fogel and Mr. Ryan Fogel
Advanced Trading, Inc.

Mr. Jonah Bowles

Senior Agricultural Market Analyst with the Virginia Farm Bureau



The purpose of this meeting is to teach grain and livestock producers simple and straightforward techniques to use a combination of the futures market, cash contracts, and the USDA Risk Management Program to protect themselves against massive price volatility. This includes techniques that allow farmers to take advantage of rising prices while at the same time protecting themselves against falling prices. This meeting is not designed to teach speculators how to “outguess” the market.

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Upcoming Meetings

2014

- November 18 and 19 - Virginia Beginner Grazer School, Clermont Farm, Berryville.
Advanced registration required.
- November 20 - Improving Animal Performance on Tall Fescue, Weyers Cave Community Center,
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.; Matt Booher.
- December 2 - Farm to Table Conference, BRCC, Weyers Cave, 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., \$25-\$80;
Lauren Arbogast.
- December 3 - Farm to Table Conference, BRCC, Weyers Cave, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., \$25-\$80;
Lauren Arbogast.

2015

- January 8 - Orchardgrass Research Update Meeting, Speaker: Gordon Jones, Creekside Plain and
Fancy, Edinburg.
- February 3 - Virginia No-Till Alliance Annual Conference, Rockingham County Fairgrounds,
Harrisonburg.
- Late February or Early March - Bus Tour to the Piedmont to look at grazing systems.

**Go to this link for
2014 Farm Bill Information**

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/fbapp?area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>

Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Trainings

Recertification Meetings for Both Category 90 and 91

- December 9 1:00-4:00 p.m. Alson H. Smith Jr. AREC, Winchester
- December 9 6:00-9:00 p.m. Warren County Government Center, Front Royal

Recertification Meeting for Category 90

- December 16 6:00-9:00 p.m. Shenandoah County Extension Office, Woodstock
- December 18 6:00-9:00 p.m. Page County Extension Office, Stanley

Other private pesticide applicator recertification trainings offered nearby:

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
December 2	Rockingham County Government Center, Harrisonburg	7:00 p.m.
December 9	Augusta County Government Center, Verona	7:00 p.m.
December 10	Woodmen of the World, Dayton	1:00 p.m.
January 13, 2015	Northern Virginia 4-H Educational Center, Front Royal	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Forage Production Update meeting

Over the past few years, Matt Booher, Extension Agent housed in Augusta County, has focused on several forage related topics. Matt will review the results of his work at two meetings that will be held in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. The first meeting is on December 16 at the Shenandoah County Extension Office and the second is on December 18 at the Page County Extension Office. Both meetings run from 6:00-9:00 p.m. There is no meal and no need to register in advance. This meeting is also serving as a private pesticide applicator recertification training.

Topics to be covered at this meeting include:

Overview of Pasture Weed Control Test Plots

Matt Booher, Extension Agent

Pesticide Legal Update

Bobby Clark, Senior Extension Agent

Management of Fescue Toxicity

Matt Booher, Extension Agent.

Report Feral Swine



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and Natural Resources**

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Please Report

**Hog Sightings
Hog Damage**



Striving to Achieve Cost Savings, Simplicity and Sustainability

J.B. Daniel, Forage Agronomist with USDA NRCS

Jay Hafner owns and operates a livestock operation at Jumping Run Farm in Edinburg, VA. Jay is a farmer and contractor with an economics degree, so he pays attention to the input costs of his farming enterprise. Over the years he had heard of and somewhat tried stockpiling fall forage for winter grazing, but recently he became curious about the alleged benefits of strip-grazing the stockpile.

After finding out more about strip-grazing from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Jay agreed to try this management strategy on a 10 acre pasture in 2012/2013. To begin the process the livestock grazed off the summer growth and Jay applied approximately 3 tons/acre poultry litter as fall fertilization on September 10, 2012. The pasture was set aside for the forage to grow and stockpile until winter. Unfortunately, the fall weather was very dry. Low rainfall resulted in below average forage growth. This in turn made strip-grazing even more important to maximize utilization of the limited forage that was available.



Jay Hafner and his nephew Bryan, pictured above, are excited to begin the strip-grazing demonstration.

In late November, samples of the stockpiled forage were measured and estimated to have accumulated about 2,100 lbs. dry matter per acre above the 3 inch grazing height. The forage stand was a mixture of about 50% fescue with the balance of bluegrass, orchard grass and common forbs. A composite sample of the stockpile was analyzed for forage quality then compared to similar samples of his stored hay. Each month thereafter composite samples of the stockpile forage were analyzed to track nutritional quality as the winter progressed (See table on Page 5).

2014 Farm Bill Programs

Below is a few aspects of the 2014 farm bill that apply to farmers in this area. That was written by James Pease, Extension Economist with Virginia Cooperative Extension. This list is by no means all of the farm bill but it is some information. We plan to provide more information this winter.

Base reallocation:

Farm owners have a one-time opportunity to choose between 1) maintain the farm's 2013 base acres of covered commodities through 2018; or (2) reallocate base acres among those covered commodities planted on the farm at any time during the 2009 - 2012 crop years (excluding upland cotton bases). In addition, owners have a 1-time opportunity to update payment yields (for PLC payments only, see below). USDA/FSA sent letters to farmers and landowners on July 28 notifying them of their planted and considered planted acreage history from 2008 to 2012. The Summary Acreage History Report shows a farm's base acres, counter-cyclical yields, and 2008-2012 planted, prevented, double-cropped, and acres planted after failed or prevented. Deadline for review (and any dispute) of program yield and base acreage reallocation information is **September 28**. Participation decisions in PLC/ARC are **NOT** required until later (see PLC/ARC below).

Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC):

Both PLC and ARC are risk management products that are intended to be used in addition to desired yield and revenue insurance available from crop insurers or USDA. PLC covers low prices, much like earlier target price programs. Payments are made when marketing year US price for the program commodity falls below a fixed reference price. ARC/County is an area-based revenue program that covers low crop revenues, and payments are made when actual county yield times the marketing year price for the commodity falls below a benchmark revenue. Both PLC and ARC/County are selected on a crop-by-crop basis. In addition, ARC/farm can be elected, combining all program crops on the farm together, and payments are made if the weighted average of program commodity revenue falls below the guarantee. The one-time decision deadline for 2014-2018 has not been set by FSA, but will likely occur between **December 2014 and mid-March 2015**.

Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO):

SCO is an optional county-level yield or revenue insurance program for those who select PLC for the covered crop. Enrollment is crop-by-crop, and will not be available until at least the 2015 crop year. SCO is intended to protect some of the margin between coverage from traditional yield or revenue crop insurance and expected yield or revenue. Participants in ARC are not eligible for SCO. Payments are made if a 14 percent county loss is suffered, and individual payments depend upon selected coverage selection up to the coverage level of the underlying crop yield/revenue insurance policy. SCO for Virginia 2015 winter wheat crop year will be available only in **Southampton, Northampton, and Northumberland** counties. The sign-up deadline for 2015 wheat SCO is **September 30, 2014**, but farmers who subsequently decide to select ARC are allowed to withdraw without penalty until at least **December 15, 2014**.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP):

NAP provides support to producers of noninsurable crops when damaging weather or natural disasters cause low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs. The weather or natural disaster payments are triggered if yields exceed 50 percent or if more than 35 percent of intended crop acres were not able to be planted. Retroactive coverage under the 2012 NAP is available in selected counties, if the loss was due to a natural disaster. In Virginia, the only eligible counties are Lee and Scott. NAP has been expanded to include protection at higher coverage levels, similar to buy-up provisions offered under the federal crop insurance program. Sign-up deadlines depend upon the crop.

Striving to Achieve Cost Savings, Simplicity and Sustainability (continued from Page 3)

Forage Quality Summary	Stockpiled Fescue	Stockpiled Fescue	Stockpiled Fescue	1 st Cut Orchardgrass Clover Hay	2 nd Cut Orchardgrass Clover Hay
Sample Date	Nov 29 th	Jan 3 rd	Feb 5	Nov 29 th	Nov 29 th
Crude Protein (%)	14	14	14	11	14
Total Digestible Nutrients (%)	68.4	62	60	52	61

After nearly 3 months of stockpiling, Jay began strip-grazing on Dec 6th. The small herd consisted of 8 heifers, 7 dry cows and 1 bull (estimated 18.5 AEU animal unit equivalents) on this 10 acre field. The herd was provided a new strip of forage every 2 days on average. This helped maximize the actual utilization of the forage by the livestock which greatly helped the situation since it was only about 21,000 lbs. of available dry matter stockpiled for the herd. Twice during the grazing period of this demonstration the combination of snow and ice resulted in the cattle being moved off the pasture to a feeding location for a total of 20 days to avoid unnecessary damage to the pasture sod. By February 16th all the forage had been grazed and the cattle were moved to another pasture and strip grazed until March 23rd. As the grass was greening up the cattle rotated onto the main pasture and 10 more round bales were fed there before they went completely on spring forage.

In summary the livestock strip-grazed 52 days on the 10 acre stockpiled field. This truly exceeded the estimates of grazing utilization while maintaining the small herd in excellent body condition. Jay and his nephew Bryan took their time moving the fence enjoying the opportunity to pay close attention to the cattle and the grass. The fertilized stockpile fescue maintained excellent quality through early February far exceeding his first hay cut and consistent with premium 2nd cut orchard grass and clover hay (CP 14% TDN 61%) easily sold for top quality horse hay (see forage quality summary table).



Alston Horn, CBF, provides training on the practical of using portable electric fencing for strip-grazing.

When the project was over Jay shared his thoughts with us. “Looking back I enjoyed the process of strip-grazing. The cattle trained easy. The biggest surprise to me was the feed value of the sampled stockpiled fescue in February! The greatest benefit to me is the cost savings, the simplicity and sustainability. Added benefits of prepping the pasture for renovation and the fact that you can see the cattle so much better on ground level than on a tractor is a real advantage. The field itself was much better off with an even distribution of manure from the cattle, no tractor rutting, no sacrifice feed areas etc. Overall it was a tremendous experience and when people ask, I share what I learned. “

Jay concluded by saying, “This experience makes me want to try mob grazing next summer. The practice is definitely worth doing each winter. My only disappointment was the lack of rainfall; I look forward to what the sward of grass will be with good rainfall conditions during the stockpiling period next year!”

Demonstrations like this take time, effort, coordination and follow-up to accurately document the activities, develop trustworthy relationships and to spread the positive results about this grazing management technique. The investment in this demonstration provides a learning experience for all parties involved and results in practical changes on the farms throughout the region.

VFGC wants to thank Jay Hafner and his nephew Bryan for their commitment to this demonstration and acknowledge the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for providing funding to support the basic supplies and analysis needed to successfully conduct this grazing project. The VFGC also wants to acknowledge our local partners including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation who provided on the ground support of the demonstration and planned and promoted the outreach and field meetings for this project.



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Throughout the year Virginia Cooperative Extension organizes multiple educational meetings. The following agribusinesses graciously provide funding to help support these meetings. Their support is very helpful to our educational effort.

AMVAC	Mathias Brothers
BASF	MidAtlantic Farm Credit
Bayer CropScience	Monsanto Company
Binkley & Hurst	Page Cooperative Farm Bureau
CFC Farm & Home Center	Rockingham Cooperative Farm Bureau
Dow AgroSciences LLC	Southern States – Front Royal
Farm Family Insurance	Southern States – Luray
First Bank & Trust Company	Southern States – Winchester
Helena Chemical Company	Syngenta
Hubner Seed	Valley Fertilizer & Chemical Company
James River Equipment	Winchester Equipment Company

Robert A. Clark
Senior Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resources

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If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services, or other accommodations to participate in these activities, please contact Robert A. Clark, Senior Extension Agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources, at the Shenandoah County Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension at (540) 459-6140/TDD during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations five days prior to the event.*

**TDD number is (800) 828-1120.*

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