

Animal Industry News Update

from the LCES Animal Science Specialists



Poultry (Dr. Theresia Lavergne) **Good Neighbor Relations**

Throughout the United States there is increasing urbanization and decreasing acres of agricultural land. Also, "city" people are moving to the country. Most of these people do not understand commercial agricultural practices. And, they do not like the dust, odors, or insect pests that are a normal part of farming. This leads to neighbor conflicts, and even lawsuits in some cases. Therefore, it is imperative for poultry growers, as well as all farmers, to minimize possible conflicts with neighbors.

The following list is suggested practices for poultry growers.

- Meet your neighbors – people will communicate and compromise with people they like and respect
- Appreciate your neighbor's concerns – operate your farm as if you were living next door
- "Out of sight, out of mind" – use trees, buffer zones, or landscapes to screen production, manure and composting facilities from your neighbor's view
- Cover litter – store litter in a litter barn and tarp it during transport
- Be considerate when applying litter to land – consider prevailing winds and weather conditions
- Keep litter and feed dry – wet litter and feed create flies and odor
- Consider the appearance of your farm – a well-maintained, clean farm makes a good impression
- Develop and use a nutrient management plan – this plan can be beneficial for handling neighbor conflicts
- Comply with all regulations – make sure you follow federal, state and local environmental and zoning laws
- Use proper dead bird disposal – make sure that the compost bins and/or incinerators are working properly

(Source: The Communicator, Spring 2006, USPEA)

Horses (Dr. Clint Depew) **Water for Horses**

In the summer months it is very important to consider the water consumption of your horse. Water is the most essential nutrient that we provide in a horse's diet and since the horse's body is made up of approximately 70% water, the horse has about 700 to 800 pounds of water in its body.

Horses will consume 5 to 10 gallons of water daily; however intake varies as a result of

temperature, humidity, lactation and exercise. When the temperature and humidity increase, a horse may double its water intake. When a horse is working and sweating profusely they can lose 5 to 10% of their body weight. Therefore horsemen should be very concerned about providing adequate water.

Additionally broodmares produce 30 to 40 pounds of milk per day for their growing foals and need water to replenish their body. Lactation doubles a mare's water requirement.

Horses should be given unlimited quantities of clean, fresh water at all times. Always check the water troughs and/or buckets to ensure that the water is clean, fresh and readily available. When traveling with horses it is advisable to carry water from home since horses tend to be reluctant to drink water that tastes different. If a horse is not drinking adequate water, feed consumption should be reduced accordingly to avoid impactions and colics.

Horsemen need to be cognizant of their horse's water consumption, and ensure that they have water available at all times.

Lactating Mares

The lactating mare has a high nutritional requirement. Her requirement for energy and water are at their highest. If supplemental feed is not available the mare will lose weight, be harder to rebreed and the foal's growth will be reduced. This all occurs because the mare produces 4 to 5 gallons of milk daily during the first 3 to 4 months of lactation. Milk production peaks between the 2nd and 3rd month of lactation and declines slowly thereafter. At three months, the foal's nutrient needs are greater than the mare's production and, therefore, the foal should be eating grain and/or pasture to supplement their growth. If the mare is losing weight during the breeding season and becomes thin, she is less likely to rebreed. A thin mare has a great risk of losing a pregnancy or having a small, weak foal.

A mare should be fed 2 to 5 pounds of grain a day until foaling. Immediately after foaling she should be fed 8 to 10 pounds of grain per day, and high quality hay and/or pasture. Her protein requirement increases to 14% and her energy needs are drastically increased.

Foals should be provided access to feed as early as possible, and fed as much as they will eat for the first 6 to 8 months of their lives. A foal will eat about 1 pound/day for every month of age, which means a 3 month old foal should be eating about 3 pounds per day. Feed consumption should increase until a year of age. At that time they should be eating 8 to 10 pounds per day.

With the provision of adequate nutrition, optimal foal growth and mare rebreeding should occur.

Dairy (Dr. Charlie Hutchison)

Milk-Feed Ratio Drops Again

A 50-cent drop in the all-milk price led the way to further declines in the milk-feed ratio. The April milk-feed ratio was announced last week at 2.47, which is 0.23 points less than in March and 0.71 points less than a year ago. This level is well below the level that would deter producers, particularly in the Western United States, from expanding their operations. This should result in higher slaughter numbers with less productive cows going to market.

Annual Average Mailbox Prices, 2004 & 2005 for Selected Areas

Areas		Mailbox milk price ²		Change 2005 from 2004
Reporting	Area ¹	2004	2005	
-----\$/cwt.-----				
	Florida	18.28	17.58	-0.70
	Southeast States ⁴	16.79	15.96	-0.83
	Wisconsin	16.57	15.35	-1.22
	Minnesota	16.30	15.12	-1.18
	Northeast FMO	16.29	15.39	-0.90
	Appalachian states ³	16.21	15.27	-0.94
	Illinois	16.14	15.14	-1.00
	Iowa	16.06	15.07	-0.99
	Indiana	16.03	15.03	-1.00
	Ohio	15.92	15.06	-0.86
	Southern Missouri ⁵	15.69	14.67	-1.02
	Western Texas ⁶	15.19	14.05	-1.14
	Corn Belt States ⁷	14.79	14.03	-0.76
	California ⁸	14.76	13.88	-0.88
	New Mexico	14.11	13.23	-0.88
All federal order areas		15.90	14.98	-0.92

1/ Information is shown for those areas for which prices are reported for at least 75% of the milk marketed under federal milk orders. The price shown is the weighed average of the prices reported for all orders receiving milk from the area. As applicable, includes depooled milk. 2/ Net pay price received by dairy farmers for milk. Includes all payments received for milk sold and all cost associated with marketing the milk. Price is a weighted average for the reporting area and is reported at the average butterfat test. Mailbox price does not include any Milk Income Loss Contracts payments. All figures, except California, are weighted annual averages using the applicable monthly prices and producer milk receipts for the respective area or group of areas for which the price is reported. 3/ Includes Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. 4/ Includes Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi. 5/ Includes the counties of Vernon, Cedar, Polk, Dallas, Laclede, Texas, Dent, Crawford, Washington, St. Francois and Perry and all those to the south of these. 6/ All counties to the west of Fanin, Hunt, Van Zandt, Henderson, Anderson, Houston, Cherokee, Nacogdoches and Shelby. 7/ Includes Kansas, Nebraska and the Missouri counties to the north of those listed in 5. 8/ Calculated by California Department of Food and Agriculture and published in "California Dairy Information Bulletin." Annual average is the simple average of monthly prices.

: Source: USDA Dairy Market News, Volume 73, Report 16

The reporting areas are listed according to the 2004 mailbox price from highest to lowest and this trend continues for 2005 except for a couple of areas. For 2005, mailbox prices for the reporting areas averaged \$14.98/cwt, which is \$0.92 less than 2004. The component tests of producer milk in 2005 averaged: 3.67% butterfat, 3.04% protein and 5.7% other solids. During 2005, mailbox prices peaked in January,

decreased through June, increased through October, and decreased through the end of the year.

Milk Income Loss Contract Extension (MILCX) Payments

The class 1 price of milk for May was announced as \$14.07/cwt at the Atlanta zone. This would make an MILCX payment of \$0.9248/cwt for the month of May. Estimates for the months of June through September are: \$0.8979, \$0.8709, \$0.7697 and \$0.6468/cwt based on milk futures as of April 25, 2006.

High Milk Production Shortens Estrus

According to Dr. Milo Wiltbank, reproductive physiologist at the University of Wisconsin, recent research indicates that high-producing cows are in estrus for a shorter period of time than low-producing cows. "If a cow is producing about 70 pounds per day, a four-time-per-day heat-detection program will detect about 90 percent of cows that are in estrus," says Dr. Wiltbank. "However, this same program will only detect about 50 percent of cows in heat if they are producing above 100 pounds per day." Dr. Wiltbank shared this insight at the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The use of heat detection aids for high producing cows can detect more animals in heat. Also, the use of synchronization programs with timed breeding might be warranted to help obtain a higher pregnancy rate for high producing cows.

Swine (Dr. Tim Page)

Swine Brucellosis

Cases of swine brucellosis recently have been detected in Iowa and Georgia, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture officials. The two cases have been identified in transitional herds, following exposure of breeding stock to infected feral swine. In the last article I wrote for this newsletter I warned of pork producers preventing exposure of their herds to pseudorabies infected feral swine. Now there is another reason for concern, the possibility of transmission of swine brucellosis.

In Georgia, the herd was tested and depopulated. Although the producer had sold hogs from the farm, investigators concluded that the disease did not spread through those animals and was contained. After depopulation and disinfection, the producer repopulated, but not before a perimeter fence was established around the operation. Because of the risk of disease transmission, the Georgia Department of Agriculture has been trapping and testing feral swine in the area.

In Iowa, a state not known for its feral swine population, a small herd in the southeast portion of the state tested positive for swine brucellosis. The herd was indemnified and depopulated. An investigation of area producers has not identified any other cases. State officials are continuing to trap feral swine in the area, even though initial tests are negative. Iowa continues to work to address what

seems to be an increase in feral swine in the southern portions of the state.

These cases will not impact the brucellosis status for these states at this time. If more cases are found this may change. Brucellosis in pigs is an infectious and contagious disease caused by the bacteria *brucella suis*. It is mainly a disease of pigs but it can affect other domestic species and humans. It is primarily a genital disease, causing abortions in sows but it also affects other organs, especially bones and joints. One reason for writing this article is that we are currently working with a swine herd in Louisiana that is experiencing abortions. This herd may have been exposed to feral swine. The tests have not been completed and I want to emphasize, NO SWINE BRUCELLOSIS HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED YET. If any is diagnosed, we will notify everyone as soon as possible. In all fairness, it is probably not brucellosis but we can not let down our guard. Please remind all your pork producers (show pig and commercial) that they must prevent feral swine contact of any kind with their herd.

Beef (Dr. Jason Rowntree)

MANY SIGNS POINT TO DIMINISHING RETURNS FOR COW-CALF PRODUCERS

For the last few years, cow-calf producers have been enjoying record high prices for their cattle. However, market signals suggest this ride will come to an end. Specifically, expanding cowherds, higher energy prices which translate to higher trucking costs and grain prices, along with higher interest rates, all point to declining feeder cattle prices. Other factors, including less available capital for feedlots and short grain supplies, all point to a \$10-12.00/cwt decrease in feeder cattle prices this fall.

EFFICIENCIES.....WHERE DOES YOUR BOTTOM LINE LEAD YOU?

The 2006 Cattle-Fax Cow/Calf Survey states that the responding producers had an average calving percentage of 91% and weaning percentage of 88%. While the Louisiana landscape hinders us from accomplishing efficiencies that high, without question the amount of calves weaned per cow exposed denotes our profit margin in cow-calf production. The 2005 average out of pocket cow-cost was \$350.00. What is the difference in calf breakeven between weaning percentages of 80 vs 90%? For an average 500 lb calf, an 80% weaning percentage has a breakeven of \$88.00/cwt. If the weaning percentage is 90% the breakeven is \$78.00/cwt. What about cow costs? Comparing the \$350.00/yr cow cost to a \$450.00 cow cost to produce a 500 lb calf with an 80% weaning percentage, the breakeven is \$25.00/cwt higher for the more expensive cow. Plainly said, producers who focus on maintaining a moderate framed cow that calves every year are the ones who are constantly in the black. When cow size

increases, cow costs increase with decreasing fertility.

WHATS YOUR BULL WORTH???

The average bull cost in the southeastern United States last year was \$2433. Sounds expensive.... Well in fact, the least profitable southeastern herds paid an average price of \$2000/bull, while the most profitable cowherd's average price was \$2550/bull. Thus, producers who paid more money for their bulls enjoyed greater calf performance due to their investment and ultimately made more money. Those who got out on the cheap, got what they paid for.

ALL INFORMATION DERIVED FROM CATTLE-FAX FINALLY.....

Don't forget the Source Verification Short-Course scheduled May 19th, 2006, in Crowley, LA. Speakers from across the nation will convene in south Louisiana to discuss animal identification and how it interfaces with verifying age and production records of beef cattle. Distance Education sites across the state have been reserved. Also, walk-in registration is welcomed. Short-course registration begins at 8:30 am and the program starts at 9 am.