



NETFC NOW



SULPHUR SPRINGS GREENVILLE CANTON CLARKSVILLE

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GENERAL MANAGER'S VIEWPOINT

by Brad Johnson

Inside this issue:

January proved to be the most challenging time in 30 years maintaining an ingredient pipeline to make all of our formulas for our cattle sector. Weather, plant shut-downs, and transportation difficulties created a shortage in the entire Southwest. We are seeing the logistics improve to the point that we look to be in good shape on all ingredients by the second week in February.

We apologize for any inconvenience. Our goal was to at least have an alternative in place at all times.

We will have our series of Spring Expo meetings starting in late February. We will have available timely presentations and vendor booths for you to inquire about your specific needs for your operation. Please see the schedules listed in the newsletter for your best date & location.

We continue to strive to meet your Farm & Ranch needs and appreciate your patronage.

Have a great February.

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RETAIL FARM SUPPLY & SULPHUR SPRINGS FERTILIZER

by Jim Ratzlaff

903 885 3143 Store 903 885 5036 Fertilizer
800 722 0174 Fertilizer

- Mark your calendars for our Spring Expo. Greenville Civic Center Monday February 26; Sulphur Springs Civic Center Tuesday February 27; Canton at the new Farm and Ranch Center Monday March 5; Clarksville at the new Farm and Ranch Center Tuesday March 6. At all locations booths can be visited starting at 4:30 to 6:00 with hamburger meal served. Meeting from 6:45 to 8:00 PM ending with door prizes.
- We are in a new year with new and changing challenges, there are several things we can do to get prepared for this year.
- As my high school basketball coach told us, make sure you are covering the basics. The following nutrition basics are in the order of priority, air, water, energy, protein, the four major minerals, calcium, phosphorus, salt and magnesium, the three major vitamins, "A", "D" & "E" followed by the trace elements. After you have these needs covered you can think about implants, Bovatec, Rumensin, and so on.
- Air here in Northeast Texas is not a problem unless we have our cattle confined in a closed barn. But water is a big deal in some areas here in Northeast Texas. Water will be in big control of everything else in the above list. Poor water intake will result in poor intake of the other nutrients as well. Not only that, if the water is carrying a even a low level of bacteria, that creates an extra stress on the cattle that cuts directly into production. I have had people say, that is the only water they have so they have to drink it. That may be the only water they have, but many times they may not drink to their full needs and that will cut production. I have seen a change in water change both feed consumption and weight gains.

•Energy is next on the list. Many will want to put protein a head of energy. But I have seen cattle starve to death eating more than enough protein but die due to lack of energy for the heart to make a beat with. When the heart quits beating, it is all over. Protein helps to digest energy, but first you got to have the energy there to digest. The more mature the forage is the lower the energy is of that forage. Most do not want to run out of feed so they allow the forage to get too mature, and the more the forage matures the more the forage becomes like wood chips. You can have all the wood chips in the world but that cow or calf will starve to death eating them. And if they do not starve to death production will be less. Forage needs to be harvested based upon maximizing beef production or milk production not pounds of forage per acre. This is very critical here in Northeast Texas because we have to freight in energy. If we can utilize the energy when it is at or near its peak in our forages, we increase production and lower the cost of supplementing for gains or milk production. Forage maturity is based upon how close the plant is to switching from the forage growing stage to maturing making seed. Ideally, we want to harvest just before the plant makes that switch. If we see the plant in the boot stage, we are just a hair late, harvest immediately. Winter forages will not make that switch for several month or until warm weather triggers the plant to switch. Warm season grasses have a little different cycle in that generally after green up after harvesting 21 to 24 days is the ideal time frame to get the most beef or milk production per acre of forage. Try not to go pass 28 days after green up as energy really starts to go down fast.

- Protein is the one we think about the most, and it is important. There are a lot of ways we can save on the cost of protein. Protein like energy is related to plant maturity, the older the plant the lower the protein. If we harvest the plant for the energy, we will generally have a good protein value as well. All protein is made up of nitrogen. With out nitrogen we have no protein. To save the most money on your protein bill, fertilizing with nitrogen is the least expensive way. For every pound of nitrogen the plant can make 6.25 lbs of crude protein in plant matter. When buying seed many will ask what is the protein potential for this plant? That depend mostly upon the stage of maturity and the amount of available nitrogen there was for the plant. The variety has some to do with it, but not as much as plant maturity and the available nitrogen. Soil testing is the best answer for determining fertilization needs for both production and protein potential. Many will only apply nitrogen because they know they need protein and hope for good plant growth. But the problem, is that the most limiting plant nutrient for production is the one nutrient that is the shortest of meeting that plants production potential. For an example, if we needed 60 lbs of nitrogen per acre and 15 lbs of phosphorus per acre, the soil test came back saying we needed 40 more pounds of nitrogen and 10 more pounds of phosphorus to make up the difference. If we put the 40 lbs of nitrogen down but only put down 5 lbs of phosphorus we have cut our production potential by a third, so in this case we may have wasted part of the nitrogen that we put down if we did not apply the proper amounts of phosphorus with it. That is why they recommend when money is in limited supply it is better to limit the number of acres rather than to limit the fertilizer per acre. I did not mention potassium, which is also in the equation for plant growth and development, in fact the table at the end of this article shows how important potassium is for Bermuda grass.
- I have asked our lab person Irene, to give me some Bermuda grass analysis she has ran. I have the table at the end this article. Note, that basically as the protein drops so does the NEL and the NEG (energy values). We know very little at what stage of maturity each sample was harvested, but I would bet that sample #6 was fertilized and then harvested pretty late. Samples 9 & 10 probably were not fertilized at all. A 1200 lb dry beef cow needs 1.4 lbs of crude protein a day. If she eats 22 lbs of # 5 hay she is short .277 lbs of protein or she will need 1.3 lbs of 20% cubes each day. However, if the same cow was eating sample #9 , she is short .67 lbs of protein or she would need 3.23lbs of a 20% cube each day.
- One other thing we need to look at is gain or the NEG potential. For a 500 lb stocker calf to gain a pound a day they need to have about .38 NEG per pound of feed. Note only the top 4 will contribute that much gain for a stocker calf. Now compare that to wheat, rye, or ryegrass pasture which would have an estimated NEG of .77, we could expect two or more pounds of gain. We could expect the same two or more pound of daily gains if the stocker calf was eating Bermuda grass pasture that was under 28 days of maturity. But you allow that grass to go beyond and gains start to drop pretty fast on coastal Bermuda grass pastures. That is why we vote for rotational grazing on our warm season grasses, because we can control the maturity cycle of the grass with an electric fence system.
- Remember what I said how some nutrient that were short could affect the production. Look at the table again and you will see that we included the P and the K levels. The trend as the protein and energy levels increase the P & K levels have increased as well, indicating that they support good utilization of nitrogen and aid in energy levels as well. So there is a direct relationship for plant nutrients in both the production and quality of forages. The last column on the below table shows the total pounds of nitrogen needed to produce one ton of forage at the protein the sample tested at. It took 44.9 lbs of nitrogen for a ton of 14% protein forage, and only 12.2 lbs of nitrogen to produce one ton of 3.82% protein forage. On the average a dry cow needs at least a 7% protein forage and a lactating cow needs a 12% protein forage to not to require protein supplementation.

- One other point that we need to look at the range of potassium was from 2.2% to over 3%. This means that even the worst hay took 44 lbs of potassium per ton off per acre. We will need to put that back some day. That is over \$10 worth of potassium per ton of hay.
- Rotational grazing not only increases the daily gains, but it also increases the pounds of beef produced per acre. Rotational grazing is like jumping out of an airplane for the first couple of times, after that you will gladly pay to do it.
- Growing quality forage is one thing and harvesting quality forage is another thing. That is why I went to on my cow herd to buying hay because I could control when I harvested the summer grass by rotational grazing and in the winter time, most of the time I can grow ryegrass and clovers in my pasture to take up the slack of the poor quality hay I may have purchased that was harvested probably a little late and unfertilized. Plus the legumes in my pastures like clovers provide much of the nitrogen needed for the summer Bermuda grass. I also found out that my Bermuda grass had better quality and quantity in July and August when I grazed clovers in the winter time.
- Bottom line, is improved when we improve the quality of our forages by managing when we harvest and how we fertilize them. A livestock operator should be an expert forage producer first, a nutritionist second and a cattlemen third, but most of us are cattlemen first and what in the world were the other two?
- We have several products on hands that are of the biological type. Where as they them selves have no plant nutrient factors but they indirectly help release nutrients to the plant. E-Max is one that will help raise the pH level of the soil. It is suggested to be applied at the rate of one quart per acre early spring and again in the fall.

Bermuda grass analysis 2017 crop

sample #	protein	NEL	NEG	p	K	lbs N/ton
1	14.03%	65%	38%	0.36%	3.28%	44.9
2	13.20%	65%	38%	0.27%	2.88%	42.2
3	9.23%	62%	34%	0.26%	3.09%	29.5
4	7.84%	57%	28%	0.26%	2.86%	25.1
5	6.48%	51%	21%	0.18%	2.52%	20.7
6	6.44%	45%	14%	0.27%	2.62%	20.6
7	5.74%	51%	21%	0.24%	2.68%	18.4
8	5.37%	52%	22%	0.21%	2.56%	17.2
9	3.97%	55%	26%	0.26%	2.93%	12.7
10	3.82%	54%	24%	0.22%	2.20%	12.2

SULPHUR SPRINGS FARM & RANCH CENTER

By Donnie Peters

903 885 3143

Preparing Coastal Fields



Time is quickly approaching to prepare you coastal meadows for the upcoming growing season. It seems that many producers with coastal bermuda grass fields prefer to not grow ryegrass in an effort to produce the first bale of coastal each year. So, to be one of the first to harvest pure coastal, the field must be cleaned of any other plants that may be growing. For ryegrass, and application of glyphosate may be applied. If you have henbit, you will have to add Patriot, Purestand or an application of 2,4-D ester. Glyphosate will ding up the henbit but won't kill it so it will requires the broadleaf weed killer. While applying the glyphosate, the pre-emerge may be applied as well. All this effort should be done as close to spring green up as possible. It will allow for all the spring growth to emerge and also give the pre-emerge the greatest amount of time to do its work. The pre-emerge should last 60-70 days providing a large rain doesn't come after the application and wash it down the creek. Now, many producers don't think about the rake breaking up the barrier that will allow the weeds to have a chance to survive. When the barrier is broken such as the beating the soil with the rake teeth, it will allow for the weeds under the barrier to have a chance to emerge and survive. Many times this could allow for the grassburs to have a chance to survive. Now many probably are familiar with the cost of Pastora or Outrider herbicides, but these are the products that will control grassy weeds in coastal production. And while considering options, consider applying 2 quarts to a gallon per acre of Humate when making your first application of herbicide. This will increase your yields by as much as 30% for a cost of \$3.50 to \$7 per acre. This will require adequate fertilizer to get this response. It will also increase the time for your next cutting to begin growing. Be sure to stop by the Co-op for your needs this spring.



Customer Service Representative

By David Holt

903 885 7221 903 885 5036 800 722 0174

The weather is on every ones mind, what is next? The first 3 weeks of the new year, we experienced a low of 13 and a high of 65 degrees. With this range of temperature changes one may need to check the body condition of the cattle they're caring for. Example, the optimum temperature for cattle is a range of 59 to 77 degrees, but as the temperature falls to a range of 23 to 59 degrees, to maintain the cattle, their intake goes up 3%, and as the temperatures fall to the 5 to the 23 degrees range, intake can increase 7%. Anything under 5 degrees can require an intake increase of 16%, note, I don't want to consider this bracket. When supplementing the forage most are targeting at least .5% to 1 % body weight to help maintain the proper health and body condition of the cattle, and if the cattle are nursing calves and the weather turns bad, the feeding rate would have to increase to provide the energy needed to keep the body condition up and avoid milking off their backs. Feeding calves most target the 1.5% to 2% body weight, and as the calves experience foul cold weather their energy level must rise also in order to maintain them, much less put on gain. The winter weather in our area does require a keen eye on the cattle and ups and downs with feeding requirements along with the temperatures. Now that this is clear as mud, have a safe and prosperous month. With respect the Scale House.

BULK FEED MEETING

FRIDAY, FEB 16TH 12:00 AT CLARKSVILLE FARM & RANCH CENTER

EXPO MEETINGS

MONDAY, FEB 26th 6:00 AT FLETCHER WARREN CIVIC CENTER

TUESDAY, FEB 27th 6:00 AT HOPKINS COUNTY REGIONAL CIVIC CENTER

MONDAY, MAR 5th 6:00 AT CANTON FARM & RANCH CENTER

TUESDAY, MAR 6th 6:00 AT CLARKSVILLE FARM & RANCH CENTER

VENDOR BOOTHS SET UP AT 4:30, REGISTER FOR DOOR PRIZES.

MEETING 6:45 TO 8:00 Closing with door prizes.

YEAR END INVENTORIES

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17th SULPHUR SPRINGS STORE CLOSED

SATURDAY, MARCH 10th CANTON STORE CLOSED

SATURDAY, MARCH 24th CLARKSVILLE STORE CLOSED

SATURDAY, MARCH 31st GREENVILLE STORE OPEN

“OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE”