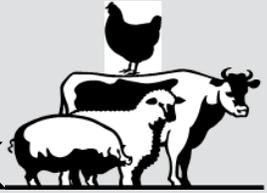


# Athens County Livestock



April | 2015



## Living in Ohio

*Photo: Dark Chocolate on the Brown Farm*

### Greetings and Salutations

It has now been six months since I started here as the agriculture & natural resources educator for Athens County. I have been able to meet many you through various meetings and personal consultations. It has been a whirlwind of getting re-established in the community and introducing my family to what I have always considered home. Everyone has made me feel welcome.

There has been a lot going on since I got here; meetings, both day and night, fixing up the old home place every free moment that I had (the pig was very thankful for a warm place to stay and so was my wife), and relearning the language (It took me a long time to say y'all and I ended up always saying 'you all'. Now I have to switch back to 'you guys').

This newsletter is here to help you and your operation. Take a look and be honest with me if it's lacking a little something.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Brown".

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## Producer Spotlight

Each month I would like to highlight a producer in the county. They may have been doing everything right for years, may be just starting out, or may have not had the best operation, but are turning things around. If this fits you or someone you know, please let me know and we will see if we can highlight them in this column. My goal is to encourage all of the producers in the county to do the best with what they have. And remember, this includes all livestock.

This month I don't have a producer to spotlight, but an organization, the Athens-Meigs-Washington (AMW) Cattlemen's Association.

Several years ago there was an active group in the area, but after many years, there was a decline in activity and membership until it stopped meeting altogether. That all changed late last year when a group of volunteers decide to try and revive the organization. Introductory meetings were held in each of the member counties in order to gauge interest and support. The biggest meeting, by far, was held at the Carthage township volunteer fire department in southeast Athens County.

*The AMW Cattlemen's Association is alive and well once again*

It was decided that there was enough interest to move forward. Officers were elected and bylaws enacted. They

are now holding regular meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at the Carthage Township Volunteer Fire Department on Twp. Rd. 570C between Guysville and Coolville.

At the monthly meetings, they serve a meal, have a speaker present a program and then have a short business meeting. They have stated that they want this organization to be family oriented and encourage all members of the family to attend. They have been averaging over 40 people at each meeting and would like to see more.

Looking forward, they would like to do programming that encourages both the youth and adults alike to be better cattlemen. We hope to hear good things coming from this group in the months and years ahead.

## AMW Cattlemen's Association



If you would like information about joining, you can find them on Facebook at [AMW Cattlemen's Association](#) or by writing to PO Box 335, Tupper Plains, Ohio 45783

# Calves = Very Valuable; Bulls Deemed "Satisfactory Potential Breeders" = Priceless!

[John F. Grimes](#), OSU Extension Beef Coordinator and [Stan Smith](#), OSU Extension PA, Fairfield County

Sounds simple enough: purchase bull; put bull with cows; calves appear in ~ 283 days; collect calves 205 days later; sell calves for good prices! Well maybe it should be that simple, but . . . I think most Ohio cattlemen will agree it isn't!

When considering all of the traits of importance to today's cattleman and current market prices for all classes of beef cattle, the primary focus of any cow-calf producer should be fertility. While both the male and female contribute to herd's level of fertility and its ultimate productivity, the herd sire is the more important component. An individual cow with poor fertility will certainly impact one potential calf a year. However, the bull impacts every potential calf in a given herd or breeding pasture.

A Breeding Soundness Examination (BSE) performed by an accredited veterinarian is a necessary management tool for improving herd fertility levels. Through a BSE, a bull is given a physical and semen evaluation to determine his status as a satisfactory potential breeder on the test date. The physical examination portion of the test can include the evaluation of body condition, feet and legs, eyes, and the organs of the reproductive system. The semen evaluation looks at characteristics such as sperm motility, % normal cells, and % primary and secondary abnormalities. The typical cost for a BSE falls in the \$50-\$60 range.

## Production Survey

I am developing several newsletters to meet the needs of both producers and the general public. Some of you answered the interest survey when you signed up to be on the mailing list. That has helped me to decide some of the things that will go into this newsletter. Now that I know what areas you're interested in, I will be sending out a survey about which production practices you are currently using. It would be real helpful if you could fill that out and send it back so that I can put out information that is helpful to you instead of wasting your time.

I am interested in your hay production, marketing, animal management, and other practices. The goal is to provide information, hold workshops, conduct field days, and do one on one consultation that will help your bottom line and maintain your farm for generations to come.

## Fertilizer Certification

There has been some question as to who needs to get fertilizer certification. Here are some of the key facts:

- Farmers who sell at least 50 acres of crops or hay need to be certified
- Farmers who use their crops or hay for their own livestock do not need to be certified
- Farmers who hold a current Pesticide Applicators license only need to attend a two-hour training class
- Farmers who do not hold a current Pesticide Applicators license need to attend a three-hour training class
- Your Fertilizer Applicator Certificate expires with your Pesticide license or after three years
- The deadline to certify is 2017
- Once you certify, you will need to start keeping fertilizer application records

*If you have any questions, you now have a full time Extension Educator ready to help. Call him up and make him earn his keep.*

## Hay Facts

- It costs around \$21.78 to harvest 1 acre of hay (medium round bales)
- Fertility costs can range from \$39 -\$118 per acre depending on grass production levels
- Hay removes 40-50 lbs. of Nitrogen, 10-15 lbs. of Phosphorus, and 40-45 lbs. of Potassium
- Hauling and waste add an additional \$12.50 to each medium round bale
- Feeding poor quality hay adds approximately an additional \$17/bale in supplemental feed
- Total cost of producing and feeding a medium round bale range from \$37-\$54/bale

Taking a look at the numbers, are you charging enough for your hay? Can you buy hay cheaper than you can produce it? Is it worth your time and effort to produce your own hay?

Next month I will discuss hay management and how to get the most out of your hay.

## The Cost of Hay

It is once again to sit and watch the grass grow. Well, maybe not so much sitting, but the grass is starting to grow. This means that production decisions need to be made now as you plan for the year ahead.

I was asked to speak to the Cattlemen's Association last month. I chose the topic of hay management. I discussed the cost of production and the management of nutrients contained in hay.

For most of American history, farmers have put up hay for their animals. It was what our parents and grandparents did. Many of you could probably tell a good story about putting up hay in your youth. It took a lot of effort and required a lot of people to get it done. Nowadays, we have expensive machines that take the place many of those people. The question is, "Is it worth the time and money to keep putting up our own hay?"

Take a look at the Hay Facts on the left. You might be surprised at the cost of producing hay, especially if you don't already have the equipment. Even then, you might be better off selling your old equipment and contracting your hay from another producer.

When counting the cost, it is not only the equipment cost and diesel fuel, but the upkeep of the equipment, fertilizer, transport to the storage area, quality loss while stored, and there is an additional cost if you are producing low quality hay because you will have to make up the difference by buying supplemental feed for your animals.

One of the biggest benefits of kicking the haying habit is that you are bringing someone else's nutrients onto your property. This means that you are not only getting the feed value for your animals, but you get some fertilizer for your fields.



*Baling hay*



Photo: Roger S. Ingram UCANR

# Multi-species Grazing

*Steven M. Jones, Associate Professor - Animal Science*  
*Linda Coffey, NCAT Agriculture Specialist*

As production costs increase and economical available land resources decrease for animal agriculture, there may be a need for diversification of species and a change in management strategies. Multispecies grazing is not a new concept and is practiced throughout the world.

Multispecies grazing may have a future, and the future may be now. Many farms in Arkansas are already involved as they have added meat goats and/or sheep to an existing traditional beef cattle operation. The question is, as a farm evaluation been made, goals outlined and a management plan been made to capture all potential benefits and/or avoid failures due to a poor management plan?

## Benefits of Multispecies Grazing

Mixed-species grazing has several advantages. Cattle prefer grass over other types of plants and are less selective when grazing than sheep or goats. Sheep and goats, on the other hand, are much more likely to eat weeds. Sheep prefer forbs (broad-leaved plants) to grass, and goats have a preference for browsing on brush and shrubs then broad-leaved weeds. Therefore, grazing cattle, sheep and goats together on a diverse pasture should result in all types of plants being eaten, thus controlling weeds and brush, while yielding more pounds of gain per acre compared to single-species grazing.<sup>1</sup>

The addition of goats to cattle pastures has been shown to benefit the cattle by reducing browse plants and broad-leaved weeds. This permits more grass growth. Goats will

control blackberry brambles, multiflora rose, honeysuckle and many other troublesome plants. It is thought that you can add one goat per cow to a pasture without any reduction in cattle performance, and with time, the weedy species will be controlled so that total carrying capacity is improved. This is a cheap way of renovating pastures, and you can sell the extra goats and kids for a profit as well. The same principle holds for sheep. Although they are less likely to clean up woody plants, sheep are quite effective at controlling other weeds, with proper stocking pressure.

*(Continued in May Newsletter)*



Photo by Brett Chedzoy

Goat grazing broad leaf plants



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## The Last Word

I am from the government and I am here to help you...really. Feel free to come by my office to ask a question or discuss your operation. If you would like me to look at something or just proud of what you have done on the farm, I am also available. Since the office is closed on Fridays, I like to be out in the field and see what's going on around the county. I could even meet with a group of farmers in your area to discuss issues or do a demonstration.



*Self-portrait taken in my office*