Midwest Messenger ISSINGLE ROUNDUP ROUNDUP

Steps taken now can alleviate pasture troubles in the future

By Jager Robinson Tri-State Neighbor Reporter

With a number of challenges facing producers coming into the summer grazing season, Jeff Clark, a market development specialist in Alberson, West Virginia for Corteva Agriscience, said now is the time to dig deep into pasture management.

This year has brought tighter margins in the livestock industry, rising corn prices, pasture ground turned up for crops, higher fertilizer prices, and dry weather nearly everywhere. Grazing is shaping up to be a challenge in 2021, but Clark has advice.

"Don't make emotional decisions because that can be costly when those prices correct," Clark said. "But I understand it. I do."

The biggest change in 2021 has been the corn prices, according to Clark. He has been encouraging producers over the year not to turn pasture ground into crop ground. He gets why producers would want to make extra money on the year, he said.

The biggest problem with the reactionary approach, he said, is that while it takes just a season to turn pasture into crop ground, it takes roughly three years to get crop ground back to a workable pasture.

When corn prices saw their last big increase in 2014-15, Clark said he watched millions of acres get turned into crop ground that was forced to return to pasture over time. While producers made extra money on the year, they were losing money on that field constantly over the next handful of years trying to get it back to what it was.

Old or new pasture ground, Clark said the first step any producer should take this year to get pasture ground to working levels is to get a soil test.

"Make sure your soil Ph is in the proper stage," he said. "Whatever that is ground is telling you, don't cheat that."

While fertilizer may be in short supply - and expensive - Clark said skimping on pasture nutrients can only hurt your bottom line because supplemental feed will be required later.

Once the soil Ph is there, Clark said the next step for the dry weather would be to

LIVESTOCK CALENDAR

JUNE

- 18 Burwell Livestock, Special Cattle Auction, Burwell, NE
 18 Et Pierre Livestock, Rig Fall Of Grass
- 18 Ft. Pierre Livestock, Big Fall Clf, Grass, Feeder/Replacement Hfr Sale, Ft. Pierre, SD

- 23 Ogallala Livestock, Special Stock Cow & Cow/Calf Pair Sale w/Regular Sale, Ogallala, NE......17
- 24 Broken Bow Livestock, Special Weigh Up

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24 Valentine Livestock, Special Fall Bred

JULY

9 Lexington Livestock, Special Feeder Auction, Lexington, NE



Tri-State Neighbor file photo by Janelle Atyeo

Cattle graze on pasture in late May 2017. This year's dryness is cause for concern as summer grazing ramps up.

tighten up the pasture rotations.

"We talk a lot about rotational grazing, but when you get dry you have to tighten up that window on when you rotate those cattle," he said.

When the grass is fighting for survival against dry weather, Clark said that forage shouldn't be allowed to dip below 4 inches. While leased land is hard to come by right now, and pasture may be limited, Clark said those who overgraze will definitely be looking to sell cattle this year, and "this just isn't the market."

Fertilizer prices aren't going down, and Clark said he doesn't have a crystal ball for when they'll return to normal, but he advised not to ignore fertilizer applications this year. Rather, use it more precisely.

Especially for those who cut their own hay, skimping on fertilizer will lower the quality of year-round feed available for your cattle. With the current conditions, Clark advised starting at the top, rather than at the bottom. Making sure the best pastures produce at their highest level is more profitable than trying to raise the quality of bad pastures, he said.

"You have the make your best pastures count," he said.

For those who skirt by the year or experience unexpected trouble, Clark said now is a great time for long-term planning. Clark and Corteva both advise three-year programs and working with pasture management specialists to get your ground to the right spot.

The first step of the program is to identify the trouble areas. Those usually pop up in June through September in most areas. Producers should quickly take steps to fix those problems over time.

The biggest step is removing the weeds in the pasture that limit grass root growth. Unlike fertilizer, herbicide is in ample supply at the moment. Clark said it's a good time to destroy any unwanted weeds in the pasture to allow grass roots to dig deep.

"We want to make sure that every inch and blade of grass is taken this year," he said. "Don't suppress the weeds. Control and destroy them."

Mowing causes big issues in pastures, Clark pointed out. Spreading weed seeds across the whole field and matting down the other grasses is only asking for trouble, he said. On average, mowing adds two years to weed control issues, according to Clark.

While this summer may begin with troubles and be difficult to manage, a good herbicide and pasture management plan can make future years easier.

"Put a plan together and it doesn't cost the producer anything other than a glass of sweet tea or something," he said.

Jager Robinson reports for Tri-State Neighbor from southeastern South Dakota. Reach him at jager.robinson@lee.net.

Like father, like sons

Nebraska high school rodeo cowboys work in the arena alongside their dad

By Ruth Nicolaus for the Adams County Ag Society

It's a family affair when the Heikels work a rodeo.
Lance, and he and wife Marti's sons Cinch and Riggin, work as pickup men at high school rodeos across the state.

A pickup man's duties are to help the rider safely dismount from a bucking horse, as he takes off the bucking horse's back cinch and flank strap and maneuvers his own horse close to the action.

It's not a job for the faint of heart, and it helps if the pickup man is a good horseman.

Lance started picking up in 1992, working for regional rodeo associations and for PRCA stock contractors.

Older son Cinch, who is eighteen, started with his dad at Nebraska State High School Rodeo Association rodeos five years ago, and Riggin, who is 15, started this year.

It's more than what goes on in the arena, however. Pickup men often help feed and sort cattle, and if the boys choose to stay out with friends till late, Lance still makes them get up and get to work. He tells them, "you're hired to do a job. There isn't any sleeping in."

The boys are no strangers to hard work. While their dad works at the Kearney sale barn, they take care of the family's cattle herd.

Being a pickup man requires the ability to be a good horseman and read livestock, Lance said.

"You have to have livestock savvy," he said, "and be able to read animals. And you have to ride a good horse."

The Heikel have good partners, as Lance calls their horses. They make most of their own, and use them for more than just picking up at rodeos. They ranch and compete on them, both in high school rodeo and at ranch rodeos.

"We have a theory at our place," he said. "They have to

do all the above or we don't keep them.'

Being on good horses makes picking up easier. "You have to ride a good horse. If you have a good one underneath you, it makes it 10 times easier."

Cinch is a 2021 graduate of Pleasanton High School. Riggin will be a sophomore at Pleasanton High this fall. Both boys compete in the Nebraska State High School Rodeo Association, in the tie-down roping and the team roping. Last year, Cinch finished as reserve state champ header and qualified for the National High School Finals Rodeo in the team roping, heading for Hunter Heath.

Cinch has some rodeos lined out for this summer, to pick up. Then, this fall, he'll attend horseshoeing school, and be back to work, shoeing horses, working for local ranchers, and picking up. Riggin will be in the high school rodeo arenas, alongside his dad, picking up.

Being a pickup man provides a front seat to the action in the arena, Lance said.

"If your (equine) partner is good, the horses are bucking and the cowboys are riding, there's no better feeling in the

world," he said. "Picking up is really just about being a cowboy."

Riggin, who heels for Everett Blackburn, will compete at the Nebraska State High School Finals Rodeo in Hastings June 17-19. The rodeo takes place at the Adams County Fairgrounds, 947 S. Baltimore St. The



Submitted photo by Steph Miller

The Heikels: Lance, Cinch, 18, on the right, and Riggin, 15, work as pickup men at a 2021 Nebraska High School Rodeo. The boys follow in their dad's footsteps; Lance started picking up at age 20.

first round is June 17 at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; the second round is June 18 at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. The finals are at 1 p.m. June 19.

For more information, visit AdamsCountyFairgrounds. com or hsrodeo-nebraska.com, or call 402-462-3247.

Piglets pay the price of mom's heat stress

USDA Agricultural Research Service

Piglets born to heat-stressed sows may carry the burden of their mom's discomfort later in life in the form of health complications and diminished performance. Now, this so-called "in utero heat stress" may also hypersensitize the piglet's immune system, potentially doing more harm than good to the young animals, a team of Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and university scientists has learned.

Pigs are more susceptible to heat stress due to an inability to sweat. This places them at greater risk of health and production problems that can add up to millions of dollars annually in revenue losses to swine producers.

Research has shown that pigs experiencing heat stress during pregnancy can predispose their offspring to complications later in life that can lead to diminished performance, including efficient feed use, growth rate and ultimately, pork production. However, less is known about how this heat stress affects their offspring's innate immunity, or first-line defense against disease-causing bacteria and other pathogens, noted Jay S. Johnson, an animal scientist at the ARS Livestock Behavior Research Unit in West Lafavette. Indiana.

To learn more, Johnson teamed with his ARS laboratory colleagues and scientists from the Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, the Oak Ridge

Institute for Science and Education in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri.

Following established animal care and welfare guidelines, the team evaluated two groups of piglets. The first group consisted of 16 piglets born to mothers exposed to stressful temperature cycles ranging from 79 to 97 degrees Fahrenheit during the first half of pregnancy. The second group of 16 were born to moms exposed to a "comfortable" 64 degrees Fahrenheit.

The researchers then simulated a pathogen attack on the piglets using lipopolysaccharide, a molecule found in the cell walls of some bacteria. Blood samples were drawn to monitor certain markers of the piglets' innate immune response, including glucose, insulin, non-esterified fatty acids, cortisol (a stress hormone) and cytokines (markers of inflammation). These, along with white blood cell counts, were compared to a lipopolysaccharide-free group of piglets used as controls.

Among their findings, reported in the December 2020 issue of the Journal of Animal Science, the researchers observed:

The core body temperatures of the in utero heat-stressed and non-stressed piglets given the lipopolysaccharide were about the same.

However, in utero heat-stressed piglets had higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

These same piglets also had greater cytokine

(markers of inflammation) levels in response to the lipopolysaccharide challenge, which provided evidence of a hypersensitive immune response. The researchers worry this could translate to greater risk of pain, infection, organ failure and other complications in such piglets under real-world production systems.

Johnson said their research dovetails with increasing concern over the potential impacts of global climate change on swine welfare and management—especially in regions of the world prone to frequent or prolonged drought and heat waves.

With support from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the team is also taking a genomic approach to preempting the effects of in utero heat stress on piglets. Of particular interest is using genomic markers to flag traits for improved heat tolerance in sows used for breeding.

"To achieve this goal, we are partnering with two major swine breeding companies," Johnson said. "Our hope is that completion of this project will provide swine producers with a cost-effective strategy to reduce the negative impact of in utero heat stress on swine in the United States and globally."

The Agricultural Research Service is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific in-house research agency. Daily, ARS focuses on solutions to agricultural problems affecting America.

Making a business out of it

Nebraska cowgirls, sisters run successful braiding business

A pair of sisters in Broken Bow, Nebraska is running their own business.

Emma and Gracie Pearson, ages 16 and 13, are entrepreneurs and owners of Mighty Maverick Merchandise, a business that's been in existence for more than a year.

The cowgirls started their business, which consists of braiding horse halters, headstalls, hobbles, reins, dog leashes, and other custom order items in January of last year.

It was a business built out of necessity.

Becky Pearson, the girls' mother, told her girls she didn't need to keep transferring money into their account, when their debit cards "didn't work. I said, you need to figure out how to make this money stretch a little further, or make more money," she said.

So after tossing some ideas around, the girls came up with the braiding project.

It's a natural fit for them, as they both compete in rodeo, Emma in the Nebraska State High School Rodeo Association and Gracie in the Nebraska Junior High School Rodeo Association.

They know what their customers want, because they use those same items.

"We felt like we could relate to it, and understand the needs (of horse owners) and what we could do to make (the product) better," Emma said.

The sisters do all the work themselves, from the ordering of materials, to the braiding, bookkeeping, marketing, and shipping.

"They've taken over our basement," their dad Chris said.

And the girls have divvied up tasks, depending on their strengths. Emma is creative and good at marketing; Gracie is good with organization and numbers and keeps the spreadsheets. Gracie's also the one who sends reminder bills to customers who are slow in paying.

"I respond to the tough customers," she said. $\ensuremath{\mathsf{Emma}}$



Submitted photo

Emma, left, and Gracie Pearson of Broken Bow, Neb., own Mighty Maverick Merchandise, braiding and selling horse halters and other orders. Emma is a member of the Nebraska High School Rodeo Association. Gracie is a member of the Nebraska Junior High School Rodeo Association.

added, "Gracie isn't a softie."

The business takes a lot of their time. Students at Broken Bow School, Emma competes in the barrel racing, pole bending and cutting, and Gracie in the barrels, poles, goat tying and cutting. Each evening, they spend a few hours in the rodeo practice pen, then do homework, then spend another two hours each night, five nights a week, braiding. Weekends, they'll spend another 10 hours or so working. And in the summer,

they ride in the mornings and braid all afternoon and part of the evening.

They've made enough money to pay rodeo entry fees, buy much of their own clothes, and put some in savings, too.

They marketed via social media and have had two influential people endorse their products: a horse trainer on a podcast, and a cowgirl clothing line on a social media post.

Their dad, Chris, is most impressed by the time management they've been able to learn.

"They still ride, do their homework, and braid," he said. "They're figuring out how to manage their time tremendously well. They have to."

Mighty Maverick Merchandise has shipped products to thirty states, and the girls have learned from their endeavors.

"We've learned how to handle people better," Emma said, "and how to market."

It's grown faster than they thought it would, and it's a great learning experience, their parents believe. Both Chris and Becky each own their own

businesses, and they like it that their daughters are entrepreneurs.

"I think it teaches them so much about life," Becky

Emma was poised to compete at her second Nebraska High School Finals Rodeo, held in Hastings at the Adams County Fairgrounds, June 17-19. Gracie planned to compete at the Nebraska Junior High School Finals Rodeo, held in Broken Bow May 20.

Young stockmen learn about beef industry

A group of young producers spent three days touring various segments of the beef and dairy industries in Kansas in the second installment of the Kansas Livestock Association 2021 Young Stockmen's Academy May 10-12.

The first stop on the tour was at Hildebrand Dairy near Junction City. Owner and operator Melissa Hildebrand Reed discussed the protocols used to manage their dairy cows and took the class on a tour of the facility.

The group then traveled to Tiffany Cattle Co. near Herington to tour the custom cattle feeding operation owned and operated by Shawn and Shane Tiffany. Creekstone Farms Premium Beef packing plant in Arkansas City also hosted the class, who got to see the beef grading process, fabrication floor and stateof-the-art beef distribution center.

During a stop near Sedan, Bill Sproul explained how Sproul Ranch has implemented a three-year, back-to-back fall prescribed burning plan to control sericea lespedeza on their stocker and cow-calf operation. The class learned more about seedstock production and the use of a live auction and private treaty marketing to sell genetics while visiting McCabe Genetics near Elk City.

Locke Cattle Co. shared how

they utilize prescribed burning and double stocking as part of the grazing management plan on their El Dorado ranch.

The young stockmen's class visited El Dorado Livestock Auction, where co-owner Josh Mueller took them on a tour of the modern facility that sells more than 50,000 head of cattle per year. While there, the group participated in a Beef Quality Assurance training seminar.

The third session for the class will be held in September. Members will have the opportunity to learn more about the agribusiness and retail beef industries.



Submitted photo

Pictured are Derek Neal of Wamego, front left, Cayden Daily of Great Bend, Audrey Schultz of Andover, Darcy Reeve of Maize, Clara Cross of Salina, Brooke Boulware of Scott City; Matthew Harrison of White City, back left, Clayton Kershner of Rush Center, Chris Mushrush of Elmdale, Colton Lowry of Almena, Josh Johnson of St. Francis, Brian Carlton of Larned and Trent Johnson of Fort Scott

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,	5	Blk strs,	w & dbl v	, 600-900#		Becky Wallin
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160 blk-bwf strs & hfrs (none kept) 550-700....Mike J & Brenda Davis 155 blk strs & hfrs (none kept) 550-700...... Jason & Chana Orton 150 blk strs & hfrs 450-600 Kyle Lingenfelter

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Years of A.I. genes, freeze branded. Dispersion .Wade Barry (605-842-5879) angus & bwf (15) (30 young) bred angus; cf 8-3 for 45 days. Extra

length in this liquidation Ryan Welke (402-760-0510) 45 rd angus (young; 1100#) bred rd angus; cf 8-25 for 30 days. Beckton,

Cross Diamond & Halls genes. HR, good milk in a moderate package Paxton Ranch (John Warren 308-650-9000)

rd angus, few blk (25 @ 3-4 yrs) bred rd angus (Dvorak & Hesseltine); cf 8-10 for 60 days. Genetics From top cow outfits- Suchy & Paxton

... Two Rivers/Stallard & Barrett (Tagg From 308-289-9663) rd (3-7 yrs) bred rd angus (Daiger-Orr); cf 8-16 for 45 days HR.

..... Finney Rn Co (Russ 308-546-0566) angus (3-6 yrs; 1400#) bred angus; cf 8-27 for 45 days. Years of the 67 best inputs from Slagle/Ostrand HR Mart McNutt (308-520-7535)

angus (19 @ 3-6 yrs; 8 @ 8-10 yrs) bred angus; cf 8-20. Long & good, ... Clayton Gurney & Sons (308-348-2036)

blk (young-solid mouth; 1200-1300#) bred angus; cf 8-20 for 50 days. Rothleutner F.P. (Todd 402-389-0614) HR-high end kind!.

blk, bwf (3-6 yrs; 1300-1400#) bred angus; cf 8-16 for 45 days. HR

.....Stallbaumer Farms (Curtis 308-870-1970) bwf & blk (3-8 yrs) bred angus (Daiger); cf 8-10 for 30 days. HR (Van Newkirk) long & plus on maternalDusty Paxton

blk (mostly 4 yrs; 1200-1300#) bred ang & simm/ang; cf 8-15 for 50 26 Bob & Jody Dexter (402-376-6735) blk (mostly 3 yrs, few 4 yrs) bred angus (Kraye); cf 8-20 for 40 days.

Mostly HR, cake & range...... Steven & Kay Dent (308-546-9443)

blk (3-6 yrs; 1300#) bred blk & Hfd; cf 8-25 for 60 days ... Logan Soles 20 blk (3 yrs) bred blk; cf 8-20 for 30 days......Pat Simonson

blk & rd (3-8 yrs) bred ang & rd; cf 8-1 for 60 days. HR..... Luthy Bros 20 Hereford (yg) bred blk; cf 8-1 for 60 days. (Van Newkirk) HR Jack King

ang & blk (3-7 yrs) bred angus; cf 8-15 for 60 days.. Dave & Nina Nelson blk (solid mouth) bred blk angus; cf 8-1 for 45 days

blk (solid mouth) bred blk; cf 9-1 for 45 days......Pat Simonson Plus more from Dave Nelson (9), B Hines (7)

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