



Great Lakes Grazing Newsletter

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

Osceola County MSU Extension
301 W. Upton Ave
Reed City, MI 49677

Phone: 231-832-6139
Toll Free: 888-678-3464
Email: lindquis@anr.msu.edu

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Dear Great Lakes Grazier,

We have enjoyed a much better growing season this summer thus far and pastures and hayfields across much of Michigan have responded. 1st and 2nd cutting hay yields have been above average and pasture growth has been abundant for at least 2/3s of the State.

In this newsletter there are announcements for a number of upcoming pasture related events sponsored by Michigan State University. Hope you can make it out to some of them!

Pasture walks are events where a great deal of knowledge and information can be gained. Much of this education comes from the formal presentations provided by the speakers and farm owners at the event, but also a lot of it comes from being able to see for yourself the farm, the pasture layout, equipment, the animals and the forage that is present. The knowledge gain also comes from all of the other attendees that have a similar interest in grazing. We have learned over the years that as much information is gained at a pasture walk during the informal break-out discussions, as during the formal presentations.

To get the most knowledge for your specific needs at a pasture walk be sure to participate in the walk at your pace. Don't feel compelled or obligated to follow the herd. If you want to learn more about the cattle, or a certain part of the grazing operation and the leaders breeze past it, break from the pack and spend more time investigating that aspect yourself, maybe with another member of the host farm family or work crew, or others that have the same interest. Break out group discussions are part of the informal learning process at pasture walks and are highly encouraged.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer and try to attend an upcoming grazing event near you.

Jerry Lindquist

MSU Extension Grazing Educator

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Fly Control Management

Jerry Lindquist, Michigan State University Extension

With the heat and humidity comes flies and the summer of 2013 appears to be a good year for all three in Michigan. Anytime we graze livestock flies will be present. The flies of economic importance on livestock include the stable, horn, and face fly. At times of the summer the deer, house and horse fly can also become a nuisance. The simplest way to identify them is to observe where they attack the animal. On cattle the stable fly prefers the lower leg, the horn fly feeds on the shoulder and loin area, and face fly as the name implies is found around the head concentrating on the nose and eyes of the animal.

Numerous studies have shown the economic impact of flies on cattle with most of them measuring the impact on feeder calf weights. Whenever cattle on a hot summer day are huddled together in a pack, grazing side by side as a group, standing in water or mud they are doing it to avoid flies. In this close proximity their forage intake goes down, the cow produces less milk, and the feeder calf puts on less gain. Research shows these weaning weights can be anywhere from 13 – 50 lbs. lower per calf over a summer season. The wide variation in weight in these studies is believed to be related to variable weather patterns we experience each summer. Some years are bad for flies and some summers that are cooler appear to have less need for fly control.

Also research is noticing with growing fly resistancy to insecticides, there are no longer methods of control that attain even close to 100% fly free control. Thus the benefit of control is less, causing some to question whether control is even worth the effort. Focus in the livestock industry is shifting toward more cultural and biological control methods especially with organic, natural and grass-fed meat protocols of today restricting the use of chemical insecticides. This has stimulated the discussion of control vs. no control, biological control vs. pesticides, and even selection methods to breed livestock that are resistant to flies.

Just as the fly population is evolving, the animal industry must evolve with new techniques of fly control management. All of these discussions and research projects can be beneficial as one or more may lead to a new effective control measure. Until they do, as the research reveals, there are certain years when the fly population explodes and the tried and true methods of fly control must still be relied upon. Here are a few guidelines of what to do in a year like this:

- Sanitation should be the first thing to consider if animals are near any of these fly breeding areas: barn buildings with un-scraped manure, waste feed, rotting hay, calf hutches with wet bedding, leaking water systems, etc., cleaning and repair is in order to reduce these fly breeding sites
- Fly traps with artificial lures and baits, rotting meat scraps, sticky tapes etc. can help reduce fly populations if they are kept near animals, but they alone will not keep populations below economic thresholds in the bad years. Fly walk thru traps or boxes have shown some success if animals pass through them on a daily basis like a milking dairy herd on the way to the parlor. Check out Bruce Walk Thru Cattle Traps or Cow Vacs on-line as organic dairy farms are now using these fly control methods with some success
- Biological parasitic wasps planting have shown varying results but they must be started early in the fly season and must continue to be introduced throughout the summer to stay ahead of the flies. This method alone without sanitation may not be enough
- Bird houses for swallows, purple martins, etc. can help but again are not enough by themselves for most herds
- Horn flies suck blood from many mammals but only deposit their eggs in the fresh manure of cattle so disruption of these manure piles with dragging or with the scratching of chickens in a mobile chicken tractor (chicken coop that can be dragged) across the pasture can help. The use of rotational grazing can help as cattle movement to distant pastures can keep fly populations on the herd lower 10 – 20 days after they dropped the manure
- Moving grazing livestock away from wooded areas at certain times of the summer can reduced the fly impact of those flies, like the deer fly, that rely upon trees and brush for cover

...Continued on page 4

Fly Control Management Continued...

If you have no reservations against using chemical insecticides then also consider utilizing the following:

- In dairy milk houses and parlors various fly baits and insect sprays are approved for use
- These baits can be hung at watering and mineral feeding sites out of reach of the livestock and ground animals and protected from rainfall
- Insecticidal ear tags are still effective if measures are taken to avoid flies building resistance to a certain product. To avoid this: 1. do not apply tags until late June in Michigan; 2. rotate the type of chemical used each year from pyrethroids to organophosphates
- Feeding a larvicide in the mineral or other feed products can reduce the fly populations that are breeding in the pasture manure piles, especially the horn flies.
- Utilizing back rubbers and cloth face strips drenched with an insecticide during the intense fly season can be effective when hung at gateways and around water and mineral feeding sites
- Insecticidal pour-ons over the topline of cattle can provide 2-3 weeks of fly relief for beef cattle that can be run into a handling chute and can be used to protect cattle during fly population peaks

The research shows that there is no perfect solution to fly control on farm animals. It also shows that it may not be warranted every year but in many years the economic gain, as well as livestock comfort as well as the perception of the general public may be well worth the effort.

Tools for Efficient Pasture Productivity on Dairy Farms

A workshop for dairy farmers, livestock producers, educators, and consultants

Kellogg Biological Station, Pasture Dairy Center



This workshop will explore the art and science of managing pasture forage supply in changing weather patterns. It will provide answers to questions such as:

- How is your pasture affected from last year's grazing practice?
- How much forage do you need?
- How much forage do you have?
- How to plan ahead?
- What are other successful dairy farmers doing?

Date: Friday, July 26, 2013

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: W. K. Kellogg Biological Station, Pasture Dairy Center
10461 N. 40th St., Hickory Corners, MI 49060

Pre-registration is required by Monday, July 22, 2013;
There is no fee to attend

Contact Misty Klotz at:

klotzmis@msu.edu or 269-671-2402

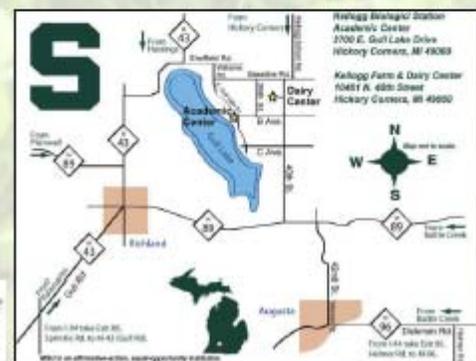
Learn about the KBS Pasture Dairy at:
<http://pasturedairy.kbs.msu.edu/>

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MSUE Pasture Walk

Jim and Claudia Chapman

8480 Metzke Rd

Alpena, MI 49707



Join the Chapmans & Dr. Bartlett for an evening of discussion on fencing, water, and pasture condition

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Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by contacting *Debbie Mason* at MSUE Gladwin County, (989) 426-7741 or msue26@msu.edu by *July 25, 2013* to make arrangements. Requests received after this date will be fulfilled when possible.

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Condition of pasture and time to start stockpiling.

Date:

July 30, 2013

Time:

6:00-8:00pm

Hamburgers and hotdogs will be provided, by the Chapman family.

Contact Kable Thurlow for more information:

Office : (989) 426-7741

Cell : (989) 802-3384

Email: thurlowk@anr.msu.edu

RSVP Appreciated:

Call the Gladwin County

MSUE Office by July 29th.

(989) 426-7741



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MSUE Pasture Walk

J. Nelson Farm
4240 N Stark Road
Hope Michigan 48628

A “show and tell” on, fencing, water, lanes, cattle.

Also discussions on plans to produce grass finished beef.

Experience with summer and fall seeded crops for producing a winter feed supply.

Date: Thursday
August 1, 2013

Time:
6:00pm-8:30pm

“The Nelson Family will provide Sloppy Joes, Tea, and Lemonade.”

The Nelson Farm currently has 170 head of cattle, and 345 acres dedicated to pasture and hay, Including 70 acres with 9 paddocks. There is 2500 feet of underground water line, and 2000 feet of above ground water line, along with portable fence and watering tanks.

Contact Kable Thurlow for more information:

Office : (989) 426-7741

Cell : (989) 802-3384



Upper Peninsula Sheep and Goat Day

Tuesday, July 23 10 am to 4 pm



10 a.m. - 1 p.m.: Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center Chatham, MI 49816

1- 4 p.m.: Log Cabin Livestock, Ben and Denise Bartlett, N4632 ET Rd Traunuk, MI 49891

Are you interested in raising sheep and goat in Northern Michigan and/or looking for a nice, scenic get away while learning more about sheep and goats? If so, you won't want to miss this informative and fun day in the central UP. We will spend the morning learning about sheep, goats, forage and land management and the afternoon with a tour, youth activities and fun for all!

Morning session:

Dr. Richard Ehrhardt, MSU Small Ruminant Specialist and Dr. Kim Cassida, MSU Forage Specialist will discuss: forage, land, predator control and marketing challenges for sheep and goat production in the UP.

Lunch: catered lunch available for \$10

Afternoon session:

Frank Wardynski and Mike Metzger, MSUE livestock educators will join Drs Cassida and Ehrhardt at the beautiful Bartlett property where we will have a farm tour along with fun youth events.

Registration for lunch, \$10/ person available on line at: https://commerce.cashnet.com/msu_3645 or via mail (include name of participants, address, telephone and email) by sending to: UP sheep and goat day, 474 S. Shaw Lane, Room 1287, East Lansing, MI 48827. If you have questions regarding lunch registration contact Carla McLachlan (phone 517 432-5402 or email: MCLACHL2@msu.edu). For general questions contact: Dr. Richard Ehrhardt, email: ehrhards@msu.edu; phone (517) 353-2906

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Michigan State University Extension
Dr. Richard Ehrhardt
474 S. Shaw Lane, Room 1287
East Lansing, MI 48824
517-353-2906

Sustainable control of internal parasites in sheep and goat production

Join us for a series of web based discussions and a hands-on field day to learn more about sustainable control of parasites that impact sheep and goat production. This program will provide a series of 2 webinars to provide the information needed to understand and implement effective, sustainable control of parasites and will be followed by a workshop repeated in 2 locations in Michigan where producers will learn how to monitor parasite infection using the FAMACHA system and quantitative fecal egg counting. Novice and experienced producers alike will benefit from the information and techniques presented. Recorded presentations will be made available in a variety of formats for those who cannot attend the lectures and/or lack adequate internet access.

Webinars:

Thursday July 18: Parasite Biology, Risk Factors and Infection Symptoms

Dr. Richard Ehrhardt will identify the parasites of economic importance in the upper Midwest and set the stage necessary to understand the risk factors for infection and how to monitor infection.

Thursday July 25: Integrated parasite management for effective control

Dr. Richard Ehrhardt will discuss dewormer drugs, identification of effective drugs and how to slow down the development of drug resistance. This will be followed by an overview of control programs emphasizing a multi-faceted approach using effective drugs, grazing management and feasible plans for infection monitoring.

Each Webinar session will run from 7-9 pm. Log-on can begin at 6:30 to test connection and audio. Details necessary to connect from your personal computer are available at the links below:

Test your connection:

https://connect.msu.edu/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm

Test your connection to the MSU Adobe Connect servers: <https://connect.msu.edu/adobeconnectparticipanttest>

Get a quick overview: http://www.adobe.com/go/connectpro_overview

Webinar Connections for 7/18 & 7/25:

<https://connect.msu.edu/ruminant/>

Management Workshops:

July 27, Northern MI:

Larry and Sarah Hagadorn's Sheep Farm, 11934 M32 E Johannesburg, MI 49751

On farm Management Workshops will begin at 1 p.m. and conclude at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Aug 17, South Central MI:

MSU South Campus Sheep Farm, East Lansing, MI 48827

Workshop participants will receive a FAMACHA card and workshop proceedings

- * Webinar lecture access (both sessions) and/or web access to recorded sessions: free
- * CD copy of recorded webinars: \$10
- * Workshop: \$20;

If you prefer to register by mail; please be sure to include check made payable to MI State University. Include the name of all participants, address, telephone and email address. Also be sure to include information indicating which of the management workshops you are planning to attend. Please send to Parasite Management, 474 S. Shaw Lane, Room 1287, East Lansing, MI 48824.

On line Registration at: https://commerce.cashnet.com/msu_3645

If you have questions regarding registration please contact Carla McLachlan at 517-432-5402, or email at MCLACHL2@msu.edu

Birdsfoot Trefoil Fills a Forage Need on Many Michigan Farms

Though not as common or widely planted as alfalfa or red clover, birdsfoot trefoil has desirable characteristics in specific situations

Jim Isleib, MSUE, and Kim Cassida, MSUE, Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences

Birdsfoot trefoil, *Lotus corniculatus*, seems to have dropped out of favor in Michigan pastures and hayfields. This is too bad, because birdsfoot trefoil is very well adapted to the Michigan environment and still has a lot to offer. Alfalfa will out-produce birdsfoot trefoil by 50 percent or more on well-drained, fertile soils, but on soils that are too poorly drained to support alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil is more likely to thrive. It is also more tolerant of acidic soils than alfalfa. These two characteristics alone make it a reasonable choice and recommended by Michigan State University Extension for use on sites with these kinds of adverse growing conditions.

In addition, birdsfoot trefoil is a perennial and reproduces itself by reseeding. Like alfalfa and clover, birdsfoot trefoil is a legume and fixes nitrogen from the atmosphere as long as the proper seed inoculant is used at the time of planting. From a nutritional perspective, grazing birdsfoot trefoil supports cattle gains of up to 3.5 pounds per day while improving plant protein use by livestock, reducing nitrogen losses to the environment, and reducing greenhouse gas production. As a bonus, birdsfoot trefoil consumed by grazing animals does not cause bloat and helps alleviate fescue toxicosis. Recent research at Michigan State University and other locations indicates grazing birdsfoot trefoil may also help naturally control gastrointestinal parasites in sheep and goats.

Birdsfoot trefoil can be grown in pure stands, but is usually planted in combination with one or more forage grass species to improve overall forage yield potential and support birdsfoot trefoil stems. Its structure is less erect than alfalfa, reaching a height of up to 12 to 20 inches, depending on variety. Prostrate stems may be considerably longer. On clay soil areas in the Upper Peninsula, timothy/trefoil stands are common since one- or two-cutting systems prevail and the clay soils in the region are somewhat poorly drained.

Birdsfoot trefoil is slow to establish and vulnerable to competition from other plant species during establishment. Early spring seedings are generally more successful in Michigan than summer seedings. Care must be taken to ensure good seed-to-soil contact and an acceptably low level of competition from companion crops or weeds to developing birdsfoot trefoil seedlings. If a small grain nurse crop or perennial companion grass is used, it is a good idea to use a relatively low seeding rate of nurse crop/grass and remove the nurse crop/grass when it reaches 8 to 10 inches in height. Be patient while birdsfoot trefoil establishes because it may take a year to see a vigorous stand.

Once established, good harvest management will be needed to allow adequate regrowth and seed set and dispersal. In contrast to alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil regrowth originates from buds on the stem rather than from the crown, so it is important to leave enough stem at harvest. Birdsfoot trefoil does not maintain as much root reserves as alfalfa and must be given time to build up before the next harvest. The first harvest of trefoil as hay should take place when the stand reaches 10 percent bloom. Nutritional quality will still be excellent at this stage because mature birdsfoot trefoil holds its nutritional quality better than alfalfa. The second harvest can be taken after full flowering and seed set. Under grazing, some lower stems tend to survive mowing or grazing and are able to set seed that results in new plant establishment. Birdsfoot trefoil stands survive a long time because of reseeding, not because individual plants have great longevity.

The variety Norcen has excellent winter hardiness and is the most widely grown birdsfoot trefoil variety in northern Michigan. Other varieties adapted for the region include Empire and Viking. Empire and similar varieties are well-adapted to grazing since they have fine stems, a more prostrate structure, and an indeterminate growth habit; they continue to grow after flowering. Norcen and Viking are considered 'European' types, are more upright in growth, and are suited to harvest as hay and haylage as well as by grazing. Because birdsfoot trefoil stands are managed to encourage reseeding, cross-pollination with other varieties is common resulting in a gradual decline of stand purity. So, if you buy birdsfoot trefoil seed from an old stand of Norcen, it will likely consist of some Norcen and some seed resulting from cross pollination from other varieties growing nearby. This seed may or may not be equivalent to the original Norcen. To avoid this problem, buy certified seed.

Birdsfoot trefoil has some great qualities and can contribute to good forage production on many Michigan farms.

For more information, contact Jim Isleib, Extension educator, at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu, or Kim Cassida, forage specialist, at 517-355-0271 ext. 1194 or cassida@msu.edu.

Michigan Hay Markets Beginning to Show Signs of Price Relief

After record-setting prices in the winter of 2013, hay prices in Michigan are showing some signs of softening

Jerry Lindquist, Michigan State University Extension

The Michigan hay markets are beginning to show signs of price relief for buyers from the drought-driven high prices of 2012-2013. Rainfall has returned across much of Michigan and hay yields have rebounded on the first cutting harvest. Even so, prices have not fallen to pre-2012 levels. There are a number of reasons for this very slow decline including:

1. The total carry-over supply of hay coming out of the winter was the lowest in the last fifty years as most hay barns were empty
2. Hay acres are also at the lowest levels in recent times as many sod fields have been planted to row crops because of the high market prices for these grain crops
3. Poor hay baling weather this June because of the abundant rainfall caused some hay intended for baling to be chopped
4. Reports from Wisconsin and Minnesota of severe winter kill of their alfalfa fields which will place some demand on Michigan hay
5. Alternative feeds prices, including the grains crops, are staying relatively high so there are few cheaper sources of feed to switch to

Still yields on first cutting, the biggest cutting of the season, have returned to near normal levels. Dairy quality alfalfa hays that were harvested in early June were slightly below normal. Some alfalfa fields were thinned by winter kill, but nothing as serious as the farms in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Even with this thinning, abundant soil moisture kept these yields near normal. Later-harvested first cutting hay intended for beef cattle and other livestock actually received some significant rainfall in June across much of the state and the yields of those alfalfa and alfalfa/grass mixed hays jumped significantly in yield.

In 2012, there was not a pronounced price difference between high-quality alfalfa hays and low-quality grass hays. They all were very highly priced because of the lack of supply of all types of hay. In 2013, the normal price spread between high- and low-quality hays is beginning to return. The abundant rainfall that hit Michigan at the beginning of the hay baling season limited the amount of early maturity, high-quality alfalfa hay that could be baled. Thus, those hays are still in low supply and are still currently highly priced. With the moisture that is still in the soil, it is anticipated that second cutting alfalfa yields could be good, and if favorable drying conditions prevail, higher quality hay supplies will begin to materialize.

At this point in the growing season, it is always difficult to predict what the seasonal price of hay will be by fall and over the winter. There is still a significant portion of the hay harvest season to complete, and the grain futures market is forecasting a falling grain price into the fall. If the grain price drop does materialize, feed prices will move lower which could start to decrease demand for hay.

The bottom price line is easier to predict for hay. Michigan State University Extension budgets for 2013 predict that the average Michigan producer with hay yields around 4 ton per acre of dry hay will realize a cost of production in the range of \$105 – 115 per ton at 16 percent moisture hay. Thus, most hay sellers that know their true cost of production will not be selling hay for less than \$115 per ton unless the hay supply greatly outpaces demand. This higher cost of hay production can be related to the still relatively high input costs such as fertilizer, land cost, fuel cost, and the cost of machinery and the related repairs on equipment.

Hay prices in Michigan are currently experiencing a wide range of prices as some buyers have drought phobia and are willing to pay as much as they did last winter for hay. But prices have moderated slightly on the lower quality first cut alfalfa/grass mixed hays. Those hays in round bale packages are bringing \$120 - \$180 per ton. In big and small square bale packages this same type of hay is bringing \$135 - \$245 per ton. The high-quality alfalfa hays are still in very short supply and are bringing \$200 - \$320 per ton with not much price difference between the round and square bales. Within these ranges lower quality and rained on hay runs at the lower end of the price range as does hays that are picked up at the field.

Once the last cuttings are harvested in the fall and the yields are compiled, the hay prices will start to adjust accordingly. MSU Extension forage staff advises those needing forage to feed their animals to maximize their yields this summer, and buyers looking for hay to buy, not wait too long hoping for cheap hay. Based on the many reasons mentioned above it may take several years to return the hay price to a pre-2011 price level and it will take a surplus hay year to do that.

To locate hay for sale or to list hay for sale go to the Michigan Hay Sellers List which can also provide an update on the average asking prices of hay for sale in Michigan. For more information, contact MSU Extension educators Phil Kaatz at kaatz@anr.msu.edu or 810-667-0341, and Jerry Lindquist at lindquist@anr.msu.edu or 231-832-6139.