

COW/CALF CORNER

The Newsletter

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Dry Conditions Limits Winter Wheat Grazing

Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

Despite the fact that we are receiving some snow in Oklahoma as I write this, it is extremely dry in most of the winter wheat grazing areas of the Southern Plains. Dry conditions last fall made it difficult to establish wheat pasture in many areas and limited growth for winter grazing. With high feeder prices and limited feeder supplies, there is a lot of interest in how many wheat pasture cattle are out this winter and what will be the timing of those cattle into the market?

Wheat pasture conditions vary considerably in different regions and it is difficult to make an overall assessment. Most wheat pasture was planted late and developed late delaying placement

of wheat pasture cattle. High wheat prices may have limited grazing interest somewhat but attractive wheat grazing prospects remain much of the fall. However, emerging dry conditions truncated grazing prospects prior to Christmas so the overall window for placing wheat pasture cattle was fairly narrow. All of that leads me to the conclusion that the number of cattle on wheat is probably no greater than it was last year and may be somewhat less.

I traveled some over the holiday period and noticed a wide range of wheat pasture conditions at this time. Most notable to me were several sets of cattle grazing extremely short or limited wheat. Those cattle will have to move very soon to other pasture or be marketed. The cold weather currently in place certainly means that no growth is occurring and the amount of lush wheat pasture is, I believe, quite limited. Cattle prices are attractive (though they may go higher yet), and strong wheat prices means that producers will want to minimize risk to grain yield. There seems to be little incentive to hold on to cattle, particularly if forage is short. I would not be surprised to begin seeing wheat cattle trickling into the market in the coming weeks. I don't expect to see any sizable bunching of wheat pasture cattle or a noticeable "run" of any size going into early March.

January Brings New "Trich" Regulations to Oklahoma

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist

The turn of the calendar to 2011 has brought the enforcement of important new regulations for Oklahoma cattle producers. Trichomoniasis is a venereal disease of cattle that can result in loss of valuable income due to early pregnancy abortion and temporary infertility. Some herds have seen calving percentages as low as 50% due to the presence of trichomoniasis (commonly called 'trich'). Infected bulls are the primary transmitters of the disease. Infected bulls carry the disease-causing protozoa *Trichomonas foetus* on their penis and prepuce. Therefore, Oklahoma (and other states) are enforcing regulations that focus on breeding bulls, the reservoir for the disease.

Effective January 1, 2011, any bull changing ownership in Oklahoma by private sale, public sale, lease, trade, or barter must have a negative test for Trichomoniasis within 30 days of change of ownership. Exceptions are:

- Bulls that are less than 24 months of age and can be certified as virgin bulls.
- Bulls that are being sold directly to a slaughter establishment
- Cutter bulls that will be fed for slaughter only

Untested bulls consigned to livestock markets will be allowed to be sampled at the market at the buyer's expense and transported to the buyer's premise under quarantine until negative test results have been reported. The livestock market will not be liable for bulls that test positive after the sale. Those bulls must be castrated or sold for slaughter only within 10 days of notification.

If a bull tests positive he must be sold directly for slaughter or castrated within 10 days of notification. The herd of origin will be notified that a bull from the herd tested positive for "trich". The herd owner will be advised to contact their veterinarian for assistance in managing and eradicating the disease from the herd.

Bulls entering Oklahoma from any state must be tested negative for Trichomoniasis within 30 days of entry be identified with an official identification device.

Oklahoma beef producers are strongly urged to learn more about the disease and the current regulations that are being implemented to help reduce the loss of production and profit from Oklahoma herds. Visit with your veterinarian about testing procedures. Go to the [Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry website](http://www.oda.state.ok.us/ais/trichregulations.pdf) and read about the disease and the new regulations: <http://www.oda.state.ok.us/ais/trichregulations.pdf> . If you have questions, call Dr. Rod Hall in the Animal Industry Division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry at 405-522-6126.

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