

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SAN JOAQUIN AND STANISLAUS COUNTIES

CORRAL TALK

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MANAGING IRRIGATED PASTURES WHEN WATER SUPPLY IS SHORT

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MANAGING IRRIGATED PASTURES WHEN WATER SUPPLY IS SHORT

There are over 140,000 acres of irrigated pasture in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties. This is an important part of the area's agriculture. Much of this acreage is in a short water supply situation. To maximize production, growers are advised to go for full production on whatever acreage can be adequately irrigated, rather than trying to stretch available water over all planted acreage. This could mean abandoning pastures that cannot be adequately irrigated.

Irrigated pastures yield in direct response to the amount of water applied, up to maximum growth potentials. Therefore, it is important to give adequate irrigation for best economic return.

How much water does irrigated pasture require? Estimates indicate that actual plant requirements (ET) will be about 44 to 49 inches for the season. Furthermore, there is always some inefficiency in an irrigation system. A typical flood irrigation efficiency level of say 65% would bring total seasonal needs per acre up to about 68 inches of water. Use of this water is highest during June, July and August when up to 7 or 8 inches per month are used. Cooler weather of spring and fall drop monthly needs to 3½ to 4½ inches.

Make irrigation as efficient as possible. Time irrigations to your crop needs by checking soil moisture. Install and use return flow systems to recover and reuse tail water. Shorter irrigation runs are more efficient than longer runs and might be considered when deciding which field has to be abandoned. Plug leaks in ditches, levees, pipelines and valves, and replace worn sprinkler parts. Sprinkler irrigation should be avoided during high winds.

If you are faced with having to abandon acreage, consider older, weedy pastures; those which have variable soil textures; and those with long, inefficient irrigating checks.

Our latest Stanislaus County cost study shows that it will cost about $57 to re-establish an irrigated pasture when water becomes available again.

Regarding fertilization--when clover makes up over 20% to 25% of the stand, we usually see good response from 300 to 400 lbs./acre single superphosphate. The addition of nitrogen would favor grass development over the clover. Experience tells us that the real good weight gains per acre come from pastures high in clover.

All-grass pastures, however, will thrive on two 40 lb. applications of nitrogen; one in the spring and one in midsummer.

The University of California's Agricultural Extension Programs are available to all, without regard to race, color, or national origin.
Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and University of California Cooperating.

EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK FEED PROGRAM EXTENDED

We have been advised that the emergency livestock feed and cattle transportation programs have been extended to June 15, 1977.

According to H. J. Biedenweg, County Executive Director of the Stanislaus-Tuolumne ASCS (Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service) office, extension of an existing application is not automatic. Livestock producers who have been approved during the previous time period (ending October 30, 1977) must file a new application at the local county ASCS Office for assistance for extended period.

JUNE REGISTRATION, JULY VOTE TENTATIVELY SET FOR BEEF REFERENDUM

Tentative dates of June 6-17 for registering and July 5-15 for voting in the national Beef Referendum have been announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The dates are termed tentative by USDA until the public comment period on the Referendum rules ends April 30. The proposed rules and the final Beef Research and Information Order were published in the Federal Register on April 15.

The Referendum on the final order will allow the nation's cattlemen to vote on establishing a national uniform collection plan to fund beef research, promotion and consumer information programs.

If two-thirds of the cattlemen voting in the Referendum approve the order, 3/10 of 1% of the price of all cattle sold will be assessed to fund the programs. The BDT estimates that between $30-$40 million per year will be raised.

The funds will be administrated by a Beef Board composed of 68 cattlemen.

A massive educational program is now under way to inform all cattlemen--beef and dairy producers alike--about the merits of the program and to encourage them to register and vote. Cooperative Extension is helping with the educational effort.

Never has there been such a concerted and dedicated effort among cattlemen. Over 80 state and national beef and dairy organizations have endorsed this plan plus a number of general farm organizations.

To vote in the Referendum, producers must first register at the local ASCS office and certify that they have owned cattle at some time during the past 12 months. They should return, after the two-week waiting period to vote at the ASCS office. Absentee forms will be available, upon request, for producers who prefer to register and vote by mail.

The voting rules should be available sometime in early May. We will attempt to get that information to you as soon as we receive it.

BLUETONGUE VACCINE AVAILABLE

I am passing on to you the following information received from Dr. Robert Bushnell, UC Extension Veterniarian. Dr. Bushnell has been a leader in the development of this vaccine.

Bluetongue has become an important economic disease of the sheep and cattle industries in California the past few years. Field evidence indicates that the increase in clinical disease of bluetongue in vaccinated flocks was concurrent with the withdrawal of the old Cutter egg attenuated vaccine.

Identification of several bluetongue viruses from clinical outbreaks in the past year in California indicates that types 17,13,10 and 12 are all present. Most of the breaks have been attributed to type 17. A small research trial was done recently with both tissue attenuated and egg attenuated vaccines. Subsequent challenges with type 10 and 17 bluetongue virus indicated that protection against type 10 with both vaccines occurs; however, it is suggested that the egg attenuated vaccine may have more cross-immunity with type 17 virus.

The egg attenuated vaccine is now available for use only in California and is being distributed through the CLAIFORNIA WOOL GROWERS ASSOCIATION. For best results, sheep 4 months and older should be vaccinated during the months April-June. Pregnant ewes should not be vaccinated.

Those veterinarians or producers wishing to obtain a supply of the vaccine should phone or contact:

CALIFORNIA WOOL GROWERS ASSOCIATION
3382 El Camino Avenue, Suite 6
Sacramento, CA 95821
Phone: (916) 482-9680

It will be necessary for the Wool Growers Association to keep a record of vaccine sales, including the following information: 1) Complete a "Record of Sale" form for each sale made directly to a sheepowner; 2) Provide a supply of the Report of Sale form to each veterinarian receiving vaccine and require: (a) Veterinarian to make sales directly to owners of sheep and (b) Veterinarian to complete a Report of Sale form for each sale and return it to the California Wool Growers Association.

FINNSHEEP PERFORMANCE

Results of five years of research measuring the performance of 5 groups of ewes at Hopland has been summarized by UC Animal Scientist Dr. Eric Bradford in a recent report.

These results include performance through 5 years of age. The averages for various traits are as follows:

	Whiteface (control)	1/2 Finn. 1/2 W. F.	1/4 Finn. 3/4 W. F.	1/4 Finn. 1/4 Suffolk 1/2 W. F.	1/2 Suffolk 1/2 W. F.
Ewe Survival from 1.5-5.5 yrs. of age	68.0	53.0	71.0	66.0	72.0
Percent ewes lambing	90.0	98.0	92.0	94.0	88.0
Lambs born per ewe lambing	1.27	1.87	1.51	1.67	1.48
Lambs weaned per ewe bred	.81	1.15	1.00	1.05	.91
Average weight of single lambs weaned	69.0	70.0	71.0	71.0	73.0

All crossbred groups are superior to the standard white face (Targhee-Corriedale type) in number of lambs born and weaned per ewe mated, the average being about 25% advantage in lambs weaned.

Half Finn ewes have the highest number of lambs born and weaned but the ewes have suffered higher mortality. Weight of individual single lambs differs little among groups of ewes, suggesting similar milk production.

Dr. Bradford is also conducting studies in selection for multiple births in sheep. He points out that infusion of 25% Finnish Landrace inheritance results in slightly more improvement in prolificacy in one generation than 13 years of selection for prolificacy. The 25% Finn ewes are also at least equal to white face ewes in ewe viability, lamb viability, fertility and lamb weaning weight.

COMING EVENTS

MAY 15 (SUNDAY) - SAN JOAQUIN-STANISLAUS CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION FUN DAY, CLEMENTS RODEO GROUNDS. MAIN ACTIVITIES INCLUDE TEAM ROPING AND A STEAK BARBECUE.

MAY 26 & 27 -- CALIFORNIA LIVESTOCK SYMPOSIUM, FRESNO FAIRGROUNDS, FRESNO, CALIFORNIA.

William J. van Riet

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