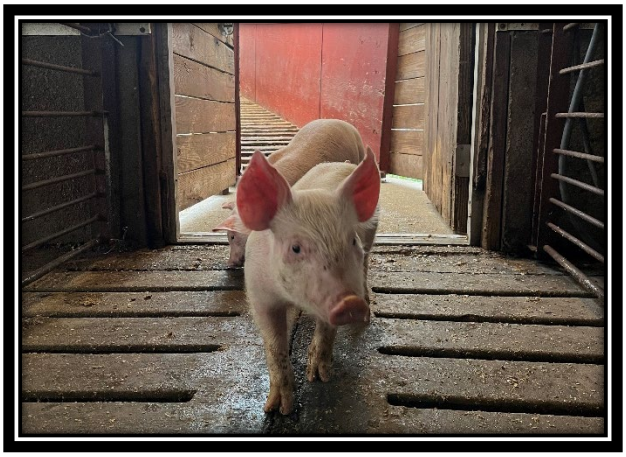
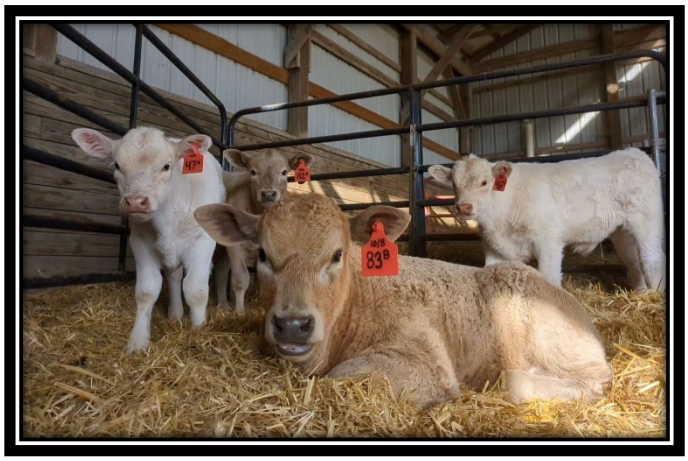
CFAES

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

COSHOCTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES





January 3, 2024 (Edition #3)

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Did you know….?
Interesting Facts on the mighty soybean

Greetings Coshocton County:

Just like that, another year is history and we're welcoming a new year.

Lots of sickness floating around, please be safe and well.

SAVE THE DATES!

Pesticide Applicator's Training Jan. 17
Agronomy School Jan. 22

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Four Steps to Prepare for Small Ruminant Kidding and Lambing

Michael Metzger, Michigan State University Extension Educator
(Previously published on MSU Extension, Sheep & Goat: December 13, 2023)

(Image Source: Michael Metzger: MSU Extension)

With kidding and lambing season right around the corner, owners should prepare their animals to get the best outcome.

Kidding and lambing season is here again and there are steps that owners should take to make sure their herd or flock is prepared. By taking the time to prepare, owners will mitigate issues that could arise, and they will be set-up for the best possible outcome. With proper care and planning, problems can be kept to a minimum as animals give birth.

Step one: Implement a vaccination program for your herd or flock

Four to six weeks before the animals are due to deliver, they should receive a booster with Clostridium perfringens type C and D and tetanus (CDT) vaccine and selenium and vitamin E (BoSe) if not providing selenium through feed or mineral mix.

Step two: Monitor your feeding program to meet nutritional needs of the gestating animals

Does and ewes in the last trimester of pregnancy should have their feed intake monitored. As the fetuses continue to grow in the uterus, their nutritional demands also grow. These nutritional needs are difficult to meet, and it can be further complicated by the reduced size of the rumen due to the increased space occupied by multiple fetuses. It is important to feed a highly digestible forage such as a good quality hay and an energy dense supplement such as corn to meet these demands. Failure to meet the needs of these expectant animals can result in ketosis or other metabolic conditions.

Step three: Source the necessary supplies to have on hand

When preparing for kidding/lambing season it is important to have some basic supplies on hand to assist with the delivery process if needed. Some suggestions include:

- Disinfectant or anti-bacterial soap for cleaning before and after the exam
- Towels for drying kids/lambs
- Iodine for dipping navels
- Disposable obstetrical (OB) gloves for exams or pulling kids/lambs
- OB lubricant for exams
- Clean bucket for warm, soapy water for preparing animal for exam
- Kid/lamb puller
- Large syringe and stomach tube for feeding neonates that can't or won't nurse

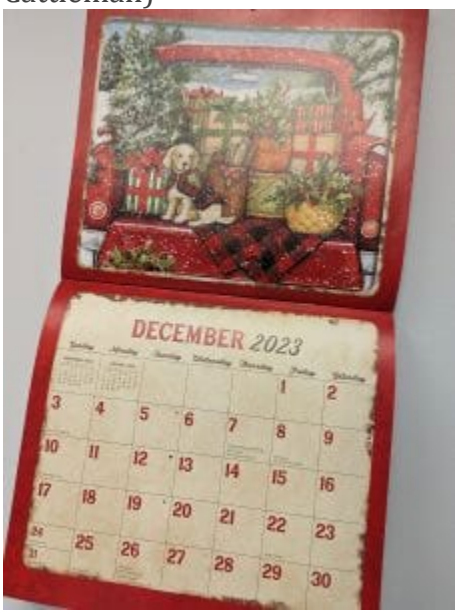
Step four: Prepare area for kidding or lambing

As the due date approaches animals should be placed in well bedded pens in a dry, draft free area if kidding or lambing during cold weather.

Once you have taken the steps to properly prepare for the kidding or lambing season on your farm you will be ready to assist the animals in your flock or herd. One of the most important things to remember as animals go into labor, is to give the process time and not rush things. Most animals will deliver with no problem on their own if left to themselves. The first stages of labor can take anywhere from one to four hours. This stage includes the animal isolating herself, if possible, restlessness and nesting behavior. It also includes the "water breaking'. The second stage of labor should last less than 45 minutes and include the fetus moving into the pelvic canal and hard labor resulting in delivery of the fetus. It is recommended that if you see no progress for 20 minutes in the second stage of delivery that owners intervene and check for normal delivery position. Assisting an animal during the birthing process requires some expertise. If owners are unsure or inexperienced, they should contact their veterinarian. Michigan State University Extension is offering a webinar series on the birth management of small ruminants.

What are Your Plans for 2024?

– Garth Ruff, Beef Cattle Field Specialist, Ohio State University Extension (originally published in The Ohio Cattleman)



As we retire the 2023 calendar how are you planning for success in the cattle business in '24? It's hard to believe that we are already hanging a 2024 calendar on the wall. 2023 has been a roller coaster ride at times across the board. We have seen several ups: record cattle prices, Jim Harbaugh caught in a cheating scandal, great hay making weather. However, with the ups come the downs: high input costs, a Buckeye loss to TTUN for the third time in a row, Joe Burrow's broken wrist, lower hay yields.

Early 2023 will be remembered by cattlemen for the record cattle prices that have continued to soften since September. In early November in a typically benign WASDE report, USDA raised their beef production projection 2% for 2024.This increase sent some shock through the markets. This increase in projected beef production is likely due to higher feedlot placements this fall due to weather. Look for this to be somewhat short lived as the cattle supply continues to be tight. While cattle prices have been softer since mid-September, the long-term outlook is still rather favorable as the cow herd continues to shrink.

At this point, I am optimistic going forward. A strong Replacement Female sale on Black Friday was an indication that there is demand for quality cattle with known genetics and there is greater willingness to pay for quality cattle than one may have thought given the greater scope of the economy.
As we retire the 2023 calendar what are you going to do to be successful in the cattle business in 2024. In my mind it comes down to three overarching themes: Producing the kind of calves that a buyer wants to buy, being more efficient with input costs where possible, and managing risk.

1) Produce the kind of cattle a buyer wants to buy. That statement seems like an oversimplification of the cattle business especially given the limited number of cattle available, but one that I see several producers struggle with.

Perhaps there should be an added caveat to that statement – Produce the kind of cattle a buyer wants to buy without being discounted at the market.

In 2024 to achieve the above, attention must be focused on uniformity and quality of a calf crop. A 90-day breeding and calving season today is almost too long, given calf prices. There are numerous research studies that show that earlier born, older, heavier calves are more valuable than younger lighter calves born at the end of the season. A 60 or even a 45 day breeding and calving season will improve the uniformity of a calf crop and there potentially increase lot size.

Here in Ohio with smaller sized cow herds, lot size remains the greatest obstacle for many producers avoiding discounts when selling feeder cattle.

With regards to calf quality, everything starts with genetics of the cow herd and the bull. Be intentional when selecting or purchasing replacement females. Be even more intentional when buying a bull. Purchase a bull that has the genetic ability to improve the genetics of your herd. A bull purchase can have a decade long impact on calf value if retaining females.

2) Be more efficient with input costs. Interest rates are high. Can that new tractor or baler purchase wait? Should we take a harder look at that operating note? Can better stockmanship and management save some money on the back end? All questions that I think are worth consideration.

I have had several discussions about how this peak in the cattle cycle hasn't been as profitable on the cow-calf side as it was in 2014, even though cattle prices have been high. It all comes back to input costs. Consider the cost to operate in 2014 vs 2023. Fuel, trucking, machinery, fence, interest, veterinary costs have all significantly increased over time. Inflation could be the word of the year in 2023.

Hay and stored forage are often a necessary evil given our climate and stocking rates. Feed can amount to 70% of the cost in a cow-calf operation. Consider ways to optimize forage use.

Develop a budget and sharpen a pencil. A budget will provide guardrails for your operation. Utilize a balance sheet for more than doing your taxes, it can provide a financial snapshot at any point in time and be used as a decision making tool.

3) Manage risk. In the past I have written about various risk management programs that are available to producers. Programs such as Livestock Risk Protection, are viable tools given the value of cattle and volatility the market can bring at times. With high food costs, conflict in Europe and the Middle East, drought, and who knows what other curveballs are out there, protection against risk is key.

I also like to think about risk management as it relates to animal health and performance. Having a sound vaccination plan, practicing biosecurity, feeding quality mineral are all risk management tools against preventing open cows.

You are going to hear a lot about these practices to manage risk going forward as we begin dealing with new cattle diseases, specifically Theileria, that is transmitted by the Asian Longhorn Tick.

The small cow herd and subsequent calf crops of the next year or two have cause for optimism going forward; so long as farm finance, risk management, and calf quality and uniformity are at the forefront of producers minds. Have a safe and beef filled holiday season and a Happy New Year.

UPCOMING BEEF RELATED SEMINARS AND MEETINGS

January 18, 2024, 6 p.m.
Beef School Webinar series, Session 1, "*Breeding, Growing, Processing and Marketing Local Beef*"
Hold the date, more details coming soon

January 26, 2024, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Ohio Beef Cattle Herd Health Seminar, with OSU College of Vet Med, Caldwell OH
Contact Garth Ruff (740-305-3201) for more information

January 30, 2024, 7 p.m.
Beef Quality Assurance Certification & REcertification, Muskingum Livestock, Zanesville
No reservation needed, contact Clifton Martin (740-454-0144) for more information

February 9, 2024, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.
Ohio Forage and Grasslands Council Annual Meeting, Cambridge, OH
Visit OFGC for more details

February 15, 2024, 6 p.m.
Beef School Webinar series, Session 2, "*Breeding, Growing, Processing and Marketing Local Beef*"
Hold the date, more details coming soon

February 23 & 24, 2024
BEEF 509, OSU Animal Sciences Building, Columbus
For more information contact Luke McKee

March 8, 2024
Cow/Calf School, Licking County
Save the date, more details to be announced

March 14-17, 2024
Ohio Beef Expo
March 19, 2024, 7 p.m.
Beef Quality Assurance Certification & REcertification, Muskingum Livestock, Zanesville
No reservation needed, contact Clifton Martin (740-454-0144) for more information

March 21, 2024, 6 p.m.
Beef School Webinar series, Session 3, "*Breeding, Growing, Processing and Marketing Local Beef*"
Hold the date, more details coming soon

Beef School Webinar series, Session 4, "*Breeding, Growing, Processing and Marketing Local Beef*"
Hold the date, more details coming soon
July 24-August 4, 2024

Woodlands Make Poor Pastures

Kathy Smith, Extension Program Director–Forestry, School of Environment and Natural Resources, The Ohio State University

Ever since the early settlement of the United States, woodlands have been used as pasture and range land. Even with low forage values, eastern forests were grazed until early farmers could clear enough land to plant crops for their livestock.

Forested pastures make the job of locating livestock and protecting them against predatory animals much more difficult than does an open pasture. Open pastures supply livestock an increased quantity and quality of forage compared to that of forested pasture. In addition to supplying poor forage, Ohio woodlands can contain plants that are harmful or poisonous to livestock. Plants such as white snakeroot, black cherry, buckthorn, and Kentucky coffee tree all are poisonous to livestock in some manner, whether it comes from eating the fruit, leaves, or bark. However, despite the obvious advantages of grazing open pastures and the disadvantages of grazing woodlands, presently, thousands of Ohio's woodland acres are still being grazed. This woodland grazing negatively impacts not only the forest ecosystem but also the overall health of the watershed and its stream system.

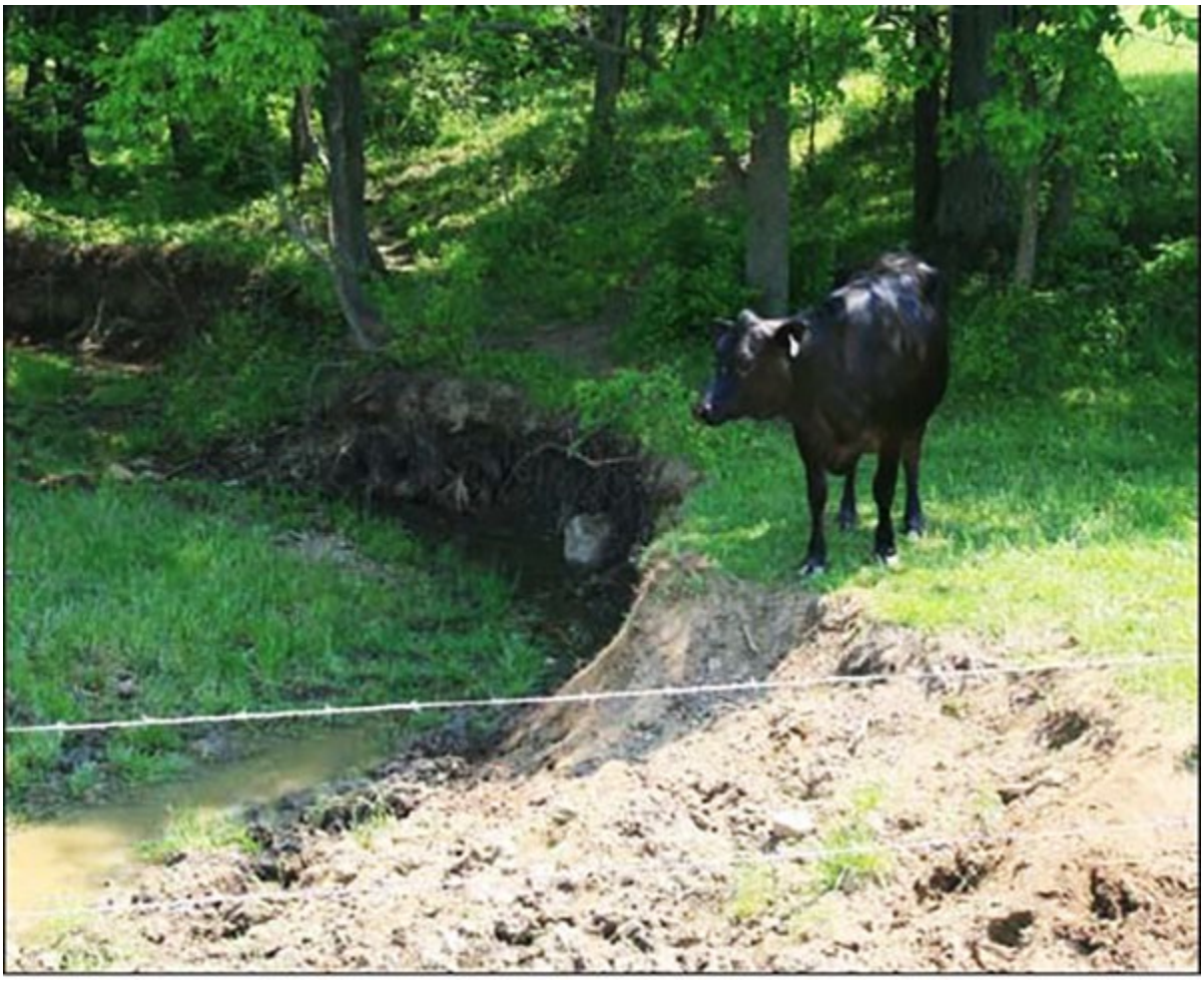
Valuable Topsoil Lost

Based on the National Resources Inventory, historically livestock grazing is the major cause of erosion in woodlands. Soil losses are as high as 44 tons per acre annually on steep, wooded slopes.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Ohio, three-quarters of a million acres of grazed Ohio woodlands are eroding at an annual rate 12 times greater than woodlands protected from grazing. At this rate of erosion, 1 inch of valuable topsoil is removed every 20 years.

Livestock cause increased woodland soil erosion by clearing vegetation and compacting the soil. They clear the land by eating the understory plants and pulverizing the leaf litter, leaving a bare soil surface. No matter what type of livestock, they carry a large amount of body weight on small, hard hooves. These hooves cause porous forest soils to become compacted to the point where they are prevented from absorbing rainwater. This forces rainfall to run off, carrying soil particles with it.

Woodland soils, waterways, and timber production suffer when a woodland is grazed. Also, wildlife cover and food supply are reduced or eliminated, and the quantity of wildlife is diminished. Other forest products such as firewood, mushrooms, and ginseng are eliminated or reduced in grazed woodlands.



Livestock grazing along a wooded stream compacts the soil, eliminates regeneration, and destroys the streambank, causing soil to be eroded into the stream. Photo by Kathy Smith, The Ohio State University.

The simple solution to the woodland erosion problem is to fence livestock out of the woods. Convert marginal woodlands into productive pasture, and fence to protect remaining woodlands from pasturing. If desired, a small corner of the woods may be included in the pasture for summer shade and winter wind protection, while the remaining area is protected from livestock.

Streamside Forests

Streamside forests provide a multitude of benefits for not only timber value and wildlife habitat but for water quality. The trees in a streamside forest function as filters for non-point source pollution and contribute greatly to having stable stream banks, which in turn minimizes in stream sedimentation. These same trees help to lower stream temperatures, which is critical to many aquatic species.

Streamside forests are located within the flood plain, and the natural stream system relies on porous forest soils to act as a sponge at times of high flow. When forest soils are grazed, they become compacted and the water is no longer absorbed but forced to flow downstream much more quickly than normal. This increased runoff contributes to downstream flooding problems and a greater amount of sediment added to the stream system.

Trees in a grazed forest grow more slowly as a result of the compacted soil, and are therefore less efficient at filtering the water as it passes through the forest. Water quality suffers since the water is not efficiently filtered and soil particles leave the site to contribute to the stream's sediment load.

Hardwood Timber Threatened

The influence of livestock grazing on Ohio's timber resource is pronounced. Livestock browsing destroys young hardwoods by girdling and physical deformation. Larger trees in the stand may have bark stripped and their root systems damaged from livestock hooves. Compacted soil around the roots reduces the amount of oxygen the root systems receive, causing the roots to slowly die. The elimination of the seedlings in the understory, along with the damage to larger trees, reduces the number of trees in the woodland and threatens the continued production of fine hardwood timber.

Grazing woodlands often result in changes in the species make-up of the woods to less desirable trees such as cedar, locust, buckeye, hawthorn, dogwood, and crabapple. The value of existing timber is reduced in grazed woodlands. Hoof damage to tree butts and exposed roots allow entry of damaging insects and diseases. Prolonged grazing results in log rotting and staining. A white oak veneer tree may become a lower value saw log after such staining.

Ohio is known for its quality hardwoods and hardwood timber industry. As the resource it depends on is degraded, the viability of the industry is reduced. This threatens the industry as well as landowners as they potentially can lose a source of farm income. The value of Ohio's forests is not in pastures but in the production of quality wood products.

AND FINALLY, THIS MONTH'S DID YOU KNOW…?

Ohio ranks fifth in the nation for soybean production. From over five million acres of soybeans in 2022, Ohio farmers produced nearly 282 million bushels of soybeans, making it Ohio's top exported agricultural product.