

Hay & Cows

continued from page 30

the cows in for the evening milking from a pasture about a half-mile away. There was a small pond in that pasture that my father called “Lake Inferior” and our cows often stood in that “lake” and refused to start the trip to the barn. That caused considerable frustration for that small boy until he remembered to bring his trusty Daisy BB gun. (That trusty weapon was also used when driving boar hogs to make them move along much more briskly. For some reason it didn’t work as well on gilts and barrows. That procedure worked well until Dad discovered my methodology.) Oh well, my point is that cows stood in ponds long before FTO.

◆ ◆ ◆

It is 98 degrees right now and 108 is forecast for tomorrow and I have just returned from checking some long yearling heifers that are grazing a mostly reed canarygrass pasture located in my creek bottom land. Despite the past 35 days of heat and lack of moisture the grass is still green and the cattle appear not to have lost condition. I believe reed canarygrass’ reputation for lack of palatability is the result of two factors. (1) The common and wild RCG was unpalatable because of its high alkaloid content and it was often referred to as rip-gut. The named varieties now on the market have been selected for their low levels of alkaloids and are readily accepted by grazing animals; (2) Cattle do not like tall course RCG but that can be said of all pasture grasses. If early growth can not be controlled by grazing, use a rotary mower to get rid of those early seed stalks, the same technique that is used on tall fescue.

◆ ◆ ◆

Congratulations to Norman Garton and family for their top load of Angus steers in the recent Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity.

◆ ◆ ◆

It is now early August and locally there is lots of fescue being harvested for the first cutting of hay. The term fescue is used very loosely because those fields contain more green material of rag weeds, bull thistle and smart weeds than fescue. Pity the poor cows using that this coming winter.

It has been my experience that late cut fescue can be made into useable hay if some management is used. Rule one is to use a rotary

mower set just above or slightly into the leafy growth in mid June to destroy the fescue seed heads and stalks and tentatively control or set-back many of the emerging tall weeds. Clipping fescue stems encourages more leafy growth during the next 30 or 45 days. However, in this summer drought and heat about the only extra growth is from rag weeds.

◆ ◆ ◆

It will not be long before its weaning time for this year’s winter and spring born calves. Recent research has found that weaning as early as 120 days does not affect their subsequent performance. When there are feed and pasture shortages early weaning can be an excellent alternative. Recently I came across an article about fence line weaning (FLW) written by Prof. Glenn Selk of OSU. That brought back a memory of long ago because he was a fellow graduate student at UK at the same time that I was there. Incidentally, the late Dr. Homer Sewell, UMC rumen nutritionist, was also a member of that group. Little did I dream at that time that years later I would have the opportunity to work with and be a fellow faculty member with Homer. He was a tremendous person as well as an outstanding rumen nutritionist.

I have been a fan of fence line weaning for many years because it lessens stress on the calves. There is no doubt that both cows and calves adjust to separation much more quickly when they have the opportunity to see and/or smell each other across an electric fence. One of the best ways to reduce health problems in weaning calves is to have them in a grassy environment rather than in a dusty corral. If it was necessary for me to make a choice between penning cows or their calves in a dusty corral at weaning time, I would choose to pen the cows and let the calves run in the pasture.

Another key to lessen problems at weaning time is to have the calves “bunk broke” and at least semi-adjusted to their new feed.

◆ ◆ ◆

Grain farmers would not like it but a wet September and early October would sure be a benefit to the beef cow industry. A couple of months of grazing fresh green grass would improve their body condition and help them later in the winter when they are faced with that late cut weedy fescue hay that was harvested last July and August.

◆ ◆ ◆

God Bless.

HNW 

Black Book Deadline Extended

Order now to receive black books for promotional materials.

Ranchers wanting a convenient, effective record system still have time to purchase custom black books through the American Angus Association®— the deadline has been extended to Oct. 1. These cost-effective books are made in the United States and are designed for the commercial and purebred cattleman.

The 2012 Beef Record Service (BRS)/AngusSource® books are available in any quantity for \$3 each and can be customized — free of charge — with purchases of 100 or more.

“For less than 1 cent per day, your advertising dollar can put your farm or ranch name, logo and contact information in your customer’s hands 365 days per year,” says Ginette Kurtz, AngusSource® program manager.

The pocket-sized book features a calendar; your logo or the Association’s logo; and space to keep management records including: calving activity, herd health, pasture usage, feed consumption, and breeding information.

“This handy pocket calendar has easy-to-use pages to record pertinent herd management records to determine profitability while you are working in the field or office,” Kurtz says.

Order your customized book before Oct. 1 or any quantity of books featuring the Association while supplies last at 816-383-5100 or email blackbook@angus.org.

“The quicker you order them, the quicker you will have them for promotional use,” Kurtz says. 