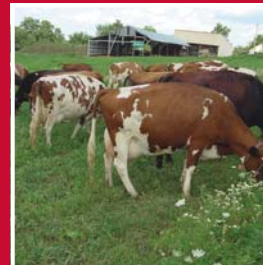


FIELD & FEEDLOT



ISU EXTENSION—NORTHWEST REGIONS

OCTOBER 2011 ISSUE

Extension Web Sites

Ag Decision Maker

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/>

Beef Center

<http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/>

Manure Management

<http://www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag/>

Pork Center

<http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/>

ISU Extension Dairy Team

Have You "Herd" ?

By Beth Ellen Doran, ISU Extension Beef Program Specialist

Manure Applicator Certification Reminder – Livestock owners with more than 500 animal units housed in a confinement operation are required to meet manure applicator certification requirements. This applies to manure from all species and both liquid and dry manure from a confinement. Employees and family members engaged in manure application must also meet certification requirements.

If a commercial manure applicator is hired to handle, transport or land-apply manure, the commercial applicator also needs to be certified. If a trucking company is hired to haul the manure to the field, the company and the employees hauling the manure need to be certified. Commercial applicator certification requirements apply to all sources of manure – confinement or open lot, and liquid or dry.

For information on how to meet certification requirements, contact your local county Extension Office or DNR Field Office.

(Submitted by Angie Rieck-Hinz, program specialist in ISU Agronomy)

Where Are You Feeding the Cows? – With the emphasis on water quality, be sure to examine where you plan to feed your cows and prevent run-off. The Environmental Protection Agency has indicated they will be checking feeding areas where animals have been for 45 days, where there is no vegetation, and where there is a discharge to a water of the state. Locate feeding areas on flatter ground and avoid run-off to a stream, waterway or ditch. Be proactive!

Ida County Beef Facilities Tour – More than 263 people from four states attended the Beef Facilities Tour on August 22 near Holstein! Two things were evident. First, there is a lot of interest in feedlot expansion and improvements, and second, there is a growing number of younger cattle producers entering the industry. Because of the large turnout, there were not enough materials for everyone. However, the materials have been placed on the Iowa Beef Center website at <http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/meetinginfo.html> for public access.

Heat Stress – It was July 19, 3:00 p.m. The weather was sunny, 95°, southerly wind of 5.8 mph and 58% relative humidity. The heat index was 111°. An infrared gun was used to obtain temperatures at a central Iowa feedlot that had both open lots and a narrow mono-slope barn.

Ground temperatures were measured. Temperatures for concrete in the sun, mud on concrete by the sprinklers and shaded concrete in the barn were 125°, 110° and 99°, respectively. Shade reduced the ground temperature more than water.

A calf standing in the sun in the open lot had a hide temperature of 125°; and a calf in the open lot that had been under the sprinkler was 115°. A calf in the front of the building had a hide temperature of 109°; whereas, a calf in the back of the building had a hide temperature of 103°. One benefit of a building is the solar protection.

Hide color makes a difference. A black calf and a white calf (both outside in the sun) had hide temperatures of 114° and 107°, respectively. Lighter-colored animals will have lower hide temperatures than darker-colored animals.

Increasing Calf Value – With high-priced feeds and high feeder prices, cow-calf producers are considering selling their calves at weaning. Calf prices should be strong, based on smaller inventories this fall. However, there are still things you can do to maximize the value of your calves.

Uniformity and lot size are important. Almost always, sale prices for large, uniform groups of high-quality calves are greater than smaller or more variable groups of calves. Consider not only uniformity in weight, but also frame, conformation, and color.

Pre-condition the calves. This includes de-horning, castration, prescribed vaccinations, treating for internal and external parasites, and having calves started on feed at least 30 days. Work with your local sale barn to consign these calves in one of their special pre-conditioned feeder cattle sales this fall and winter.

Consider age and source verification. Although age and source verification will require additional record-keeping and on-farm audits, it can offer benefits. A Kansas State study of Superior Livestock Auction sales from 2004-2010 found a premium of \$1.50 to \$2 per hundredweight for age- and source-verified cattle.

Employee Management: Get the Right Start in Hiring Employees

By Melissa O'Rourke – Farm & Agribusiness Management Specialist, morourke@iastate.edu

Probably the most important category of resources in any business operation is human resources. That definitely includes our farm and agribusiness operations. Labor costs are often one of the highest cost categories – particularly in dairy, swine and beef feedlot operations – so it is vital to hire right and then train and retain those good employees. Here are a few notes on how to improve your hiring process.

First, review the needs of your farm and hiring practices that you have used in the past. Reviewing the needs of your operation may require an analysis of costs and cash flow for your operation to help determine what labor costs you can afford. Analyze whether full-time or part-time employees are needed, and perhaps more specifically, when the labor needs are greatest -- such as week-ends, evenings or early mornings. There may even be times of the year. For example, in dairy operations there may be peak periods of freshening when the labor requirement is somewhat increased.

Before posting that help wanted announcement, give careful thought to putting together a written position description. Don't just use a canned job description for farm workers. Sit down and make a list of all the different duties you may expect of this new employee. Then review the list and determine whether expectations are reasonable, or whether you need to prioritize some of those duties.

Be sure to include any physical requirements of the position, such as lifting, standing, reaching and stretching. Also list whether there is any knowledge, training, or previous work experience you expect the new employee to bring to the job. Finally, describe the working conditions, such as days and hours to be worked, flexibility required.

With any farm employment, it is always important to determine whether the position requires a regular driver's license or CDL. There is information on the Iowa Department of Transportation website: www.iowadot.gov/mvd/ods/cdl/cdlnut.pdf that can help an employer determine whether a CDL is needed for the position.

While it is not necessary to include a pay range in a job announcement or position description, a proposed pay range should be determined prior to starting the recruitment process. The pay range should be in line with what you can afford, but it is also needs to align with the expectations of the position. Consider possible incentive or bonus payments and benefits that may be offered with the position.

When you are ready to start recruiting a pool of possible applicants, be creative. Many of us come from an era of looking at "help wanted" ads in local newspapers or shoppers. However, many jobseekers these days never look in printed media. Depending on your needs, contact area schools who may have students seeking farm employment. Iowa Workforce Development is another source for listing your employment opportunities. Many local radio stations have on-air or on-line job boards or help-wanted sites. You may want to print a simple help-wanted flyer with contact information and post it on community bulletin boards. Finally, remember that word-of-mouth is one of the best ways to seek good employees. Ask your current good employees if they know anyone who may be interested in a farm labor position.

Determine what information you want from potential job applicants. Obtain or prepare a job application form for this purpose. Be sure that the form utilized does not seek information that is inappropriate or even illegal to request from job applicants. You will want to ask job applicants for references.

Prepare carefully for job interviews. Make a list of information that you want to share with applicants, such as the position description. Remember that many of your applicants will be unfamiliar with how a dairy farm operates and the kind of hours and duties that are required. Describe the hours and working conditions, and outline the training that will be provided to the new employee. Share information about the pay structure and benefits that come with the job.

Make a list of the questions that you want to be sure to ask each applicant. Again, seek legal guidance regarding inappropriate areas of inquiry. ISU Extension offers some interview guidance at www.extension.iastate.edu/valueaddedag/info/Hiringrightandretaininggoodemployees.htm.

Check references. References may be former employers, teachers, volunteer work coordinators, or even neighbors or community members. While persons acting as employment references may need to be careful regarding statements made about another, a potential employer can always ask a former employer to confirm employment dates and positions held. It is reasonable to ask the simple question, "Would you hire this person?" Ask the reference about the applicant's former job duties.

When you have interviewed possible applicants, make your evaluation and selection(s) and determine the nature of the job offer you wish to make. While the initial offer may be by

phone, it is a good idea to follow an oral offer with a written offer of employment. This written offer can confirm the details such as pay, benefits, hours, duties, and flexibility required in the position.

If the offer is accepted by your chosen applicant, be sure to contact the other applicants. Let them know of your decision. If this is a person that you might consider for other, future employment, let them know that you will keep their application on file for that purpose.

Once your employment offer has been accepted, there are a number of forms and procedures that must be completed to be in compliance with state and federal law. Those procedures will be the topic of a future article on farm & agribusiness employee management.

In the meantime, feel free to contact me with any of your employee management questions.

Soybean Harvest Management Considerations

By Paul Kassel – ISU Extension Field Agronomist

It is that time of year to begin soybean harvest. Some soybeans have already been harvested as of mid-September. You may be in full soybean harvest mode by the time you read this, but there are a few things that we need to remember as we complete soybean harvest.

The fall of 2009 was probably the most challenging fall for soybean harvest in recent memory. There was some harvest of soybeans during September the fall of 2009 and then some hit and miss harvesting during the month of October. Then the conditions changed and soybean harvest was completed with relative ease the first week of November. We hope that does not happen again. However, we need to be prepared in case it does.

Harvest preparation includes many things; preparing the combine, soybean platform, grain carts, wagons, trucks, augers, bins, etc. Most farmers have all of that figured out, so this article will focus on some items specific to soybean harvest.

This is a reminder to evaluate the soybean platform very thoroughly. Consider that even a few tenths of a bushel per acre loss can mean a substantial loss. Evaluate the cutting ability of your soybean platform (sickle sections, guards) carefully. An investment of \$2,000.00 in new parts in your soybean platform would pay for itself if you save 0.4 bu/acre on 500 acres.

There was a fair amount of questions on drying soybeans during the fall of 2009. However, usually the question on moisture and soybean harvest relates to soybeans that are too dry. How much yield is lost when soybeans are too dry? The loss is about 0.6 bushel per acre per point of moisture. For example, if soybeans are 10% moisture and the soybean yield is in the 60 bu/acre range, you are losing 1.8 bu/acre. Again, this is a hidden loss because you are substituting soybean dry matter for moisture when you

harvest soybeans that are too dry. This is in addition to added harvest losses that will certainly occur when soybeans are harvested ‘too dry’.

The next question is ‘what can you do about it’? Of course, the answer is nothing. You cannot add moisture after harvest – either legally or logistically – so that is out of the question. The real answer is that you have to live with it.

There are things like harvesting a little earlier in the season – like when soybeans first reach 13% moisture. Beginning harvest a little earlier in the morning and going a little later in the night may help. There are other things that may help, like planting fuller season varieties. But the reality is that you cannot do much about this problem.

Drying soybeans is an operation that most farmers would rather not think about. I can only think of two years in my career when soybeans were dried; 1985 and 2009. Therefore, the need to dry soybeans is fairly rare. If we do get a fall where soybeans do need drying, consider the following. Soybeans in storage have about 25% more airflow than corn. Fans sized for corn will have greater airflow in soybeans and will result in faster drying.

Limit drying temperatures to 130-140 degrees F for commercial soybeans and 100-110 degrees F for seed soybeans. Natural air drying should dry soybeans to about 13% moisture with ‘normal’ fall weather. Fans should be sized to deliver about 1.0 cfm per bushel of air flow. Aeration fans that deliver about 0.1 cfm/bushel will do very little drying of the soybeans.

Aeration of soybeans in storage is necessary for long term storage. Operate aeration fans until the soybeans are cooled to 35 degrees F. Fans that deliver 0.1 CFM per bushel will take about a week of operation to cool the entire bin to the average outside air temperature.

Grain moisture content for safe storage:

- Soybeans – sold by spring 14.0 %
- Soybeans – stored up to one year 13.0 %

Soybean harvest losses – rules of thumb:

- 4 soybeans per square foot equal one bu/acre loss
- Be sure to include soybeans lost in uncut stubble

Hidden Yield Loss When Soybeans Are Harvested Too Dry

| Yield level | Harvest moisture level of soybeans | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----------------|
| | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | rule of thumb |
| 60 bu/a | 4.1 | 3.4 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 0 | 0.7 bu/A/point |
| 50 bu/a | 3.4 | 2.8 | 2.2 | 1.6 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 0 | 0.6 bu/A/point |
| 40 bu/a | 2.7 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.5 bu/A/point |
| 30 bu/a | 2.1 | 1.7 | 1.4 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 0 | 0.3 bu/A/point |