Winter Feeding Decisions for the Cow Herd

CALMAR -- During most Iowa winters, hay is an adequate choice to meet nutritional needs of gestating beef cows when fed free choice. However, this summer’s continual rain caused over-mature or otherwise damaged hay, resulting in decreased feed value.

Iowa State University (ISU) Extension beef specialist and Iowa Beef Center (IBC) interim director Dan Loy said the problem is widespread.

“Almost one-half of the forage samples submitted to date through our forage testing project are marginal in energy and nearly 20 percent are marginal in meeting the protein needs of a mature beef cow in late gestation,” Loy said. “It’s important to know the nutritional value of your available forages so you can make good feed and feeding decisions this winter.”

ISU Extension and IBC are hosting meetings in several Iowa locations this winter designed to help producers learn how to make these nutrition-based decisions. In addition to providing a current summary of the forage testing project and to-date results, ISU Extension beef program specialists will present information on allocating feed inventory, sample rations to meet cow nutrient needs and tools to control feed cost and waste.
“The specialists also will work through various ration examples using results from the forage test project and the Beef Ration and Nutrient Decision Software, or BRaNDS, from IBC,” Loy said. “The beef cow is an amazing animal that’s able to utilize almost any forage as long we know the nutrient content and balance it correctly. We’ll work with you to design the rations that meet the needs of your herd.”

In northeast Iowa, the meeting will be held at the NE IA Dairy Foundation Center on Dec. 13 at 7 pm. Please register by Dec. 9 by calling the ISU Extension office in Clayton County at 563-245-1451 or register online at www.extension.iastate.edu/clayton. There is a $5 fee for the program. For more information, visit www.iowabeefcenter.org.

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News Release
Contact:
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Risk and Margin Management Workshops for Cattle Feeders
NORTHERN IOWA -- Cattle feeders know that controlling cost is just as important as protecting revenue. The key is to protect a profitable gross margin because great revenues mean little when costs also are high.

A series of risk and margin management workshops for cattle feeders will be held in December across northern Iowa. Land O Lakes Purina Feeds dealers are sponsoring the workshop in cooperation with the Iowa Beef Center and Iowa State University Extension.

In this hands-on workshop, producers will practice their risk management skills in a market simulation where they make marketing choices along the way. Producers will learn how to calculate a gross margin and set benchmarks that satisfy their risk tolerance. The online ISU Margin Tracker can help identify opportunities in the coming year.

Three workshops will be held. The dates and locations in northeast Iowa are Dec. 13 at the Osage Coop Elevator and Dec. 17 at the NICC Center in Waukon. The Waukon workshop is co-sponsored by Innovative Ag Services. All workshops will be from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm.

Preregistration is required, however the $25 fee to cover meal, promotion and room expenses will be payable at the time of the workshop. A minimum of 8 people is needed to hold the workshop and space is limited. To preregister and reserve your meal, contact Russ Euken for the Osage site at 641-231-1711 or reuken@iastate.edu or Denise Schwab for the Waukon site at 319-721-9624 or dschwab@iastate.edu.

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News Release
Contact:
**Junior Holstein Convention Hosting a Luau**

DECORAH -- Grab your shirts and slip on your sandals and join Dairy enthusiasts for a fun-filled Hawaiian luau at this year’s annual Iowa Junior Holstein Convention on December 28-29 at the Bluffs Inn in Decorah.

Area youth ages 8-21 interested in dairy are invited to attend the convention. There will be fun quiz bowl and jeopardy competitions, mixer games, pizza and a dance. Contact Luke Rauen, Iowa Junior Holstein President at lrauen@iastate.edu or 563-451-7878 for more information.

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**News Release**

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**Pork Quality Assurance Training Session Offered**

FAYETTE -- The Iowa Pork Industry Center and Iowa State University (ISU) Extension are teaming up to provide training for pork producers and others who need certification in Pork Quality Assurance Plus® (PQA Plus®) and Transporter Quality Assurance (TQA). Programs are set for Thursday, December 16 in Fayette.

The programs will be held at the Fayette County Extension Office, 201 E. Clark, in Fayette. PQA Plus® will be offered 1-3 pm and the TQA® session will be from 3-5 pm. Attend one program or both, but pre-registration is required.

Certification will cost $25 per person for one program or $30 per person for both programs. To preregister, contact the Fayette County Extension office at (563) 425-3331. Questions may be directed to Mark Storlie by phone at (563) 425-3331 or mstorlie@iastate.edu.

To learn more about PQA Plus™ please see the National Pork Board Web site at http://www.pork.org/Producers/PQAP.aspx

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**News Release**

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**Organic Grain and Livestock Outlook Meetings Scheduled**
TRIPOLI -- Organic production has grown nationally at a rate of nearly 20 percent per year for the last seven years. Industry experts continue to forecast a slowing but steady growth for organic production. However, weather patterns and the volatility of organic markets and prices the past few years have affected both profitability and stability for organic growers.

Five organic outlook meetings planned for mid-December are an excellent opportunity to learn more about market demand and managing risk in organic operations. The meetings are sponsored by the Iowa State University Extension Value Added Agriculture Program and the Iowa Organic Association.

The meetings will include a presentation by Catherine Greene, USDA Economic Research Service, that offers a historic look at national organic markets and an outlook of organic markets for 2011 and beyond. The buyers' perspective will be shared by grain merchandising companies and organic cooperatives. Joe Ward, president of the Iowa Organic Association and a livestock nutritionist, will give an overview of the recent changes to the National Organic Program’s pasture rule and how it affects organic producers.

Each meeting will have a producer panel discussing how to manage risk with the use of enterprise mix, crop rotation, crop insurance and government programs. Panel members also will share their marketing strategies for organics.

The meeting for northeast Iowa is scheduled for Dec. 10 from 9 am – 3 pm at the ISU Extension - Bremer County office in Tripoli. All meetings are scheduled for 1 to 4 p.m. There is no charge for the meetings and pre-registration is not required. For more information, contact Joe Ward at JWard722@aol.com, 319-447-1188 or 319-361-3047 or Margaret Smith at mrgsmith@iastate.edu or 515-290-4456.

News Release

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Buying Local Includes Christmas Trees

NORTHEAST IOWA -- Local food doesn't travel far to reach the consumer, but this holiday season, neither do Christmas trees. Real Christmas trees are an all-American product, grown in all 50 states.

"When you buy from an independent, locally-owned Christmas tree farm, your money is used to make purchases from other local businesses, continuing to strengthen the economic base of the community," said Teresa Wiemerslage, Iowa State University Extension Program Coordinator in northeast Iowa.

There are more than 15,000 Christmas tree growers in the United States, and more than 100,000 people employed full or part-time in the industry.

Christmas tree farms stabilize soil, protect water supplies and provide refuge for wildlife while creating scenic green belts, Wiemerslage said. Often, Christmas trees are grown on soils that could not support other crops.
Real Christmas trees absorb carbon dioxide and other gases, emitting fresh oxygen -- a benefit to the atmosphere, Wiemerslage continued. This helps prevent the earth-warming "greenhouse effect." One acre of Christmas trees produces the daily oxygen requirement for 18 people. With approximately 1 million acres producing Christmas trees in the United States, that translates into oxygen for 18 million people every day. For every real Christmas tree harvested, three seedlings are planted in its place.

To find a local Christmas tree farm, visit the Iowa Christmas Tree Growers Association website at www.iowachristmastrees.com or the Christmas Tree Farm Network at www.christmas-tree.com/real.

For additional resources on buying local, visit the Upper Iowa Buy Fresh Buy Local website at www.iowafreshfood.com. This site lists producers who market food directly to consumers and is part of the NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative--a partner of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food & Community program.

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Other Releases

Ask the ISU Extension Garden Expert About: Poinsettias
Poinsettias are available in a wide range of colors; with proper selection and care they will retain their attractiveness through the holiday season and beyond.

Cost/Benefit Analysis of Forage Testing is Favorable
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/news/2010/nov/151901.htm
Participating in a cost-share forage testing project offered through the Iowa Beef Center adds high value benefits at low cost to producers.

This information has been sent to you by Teresa Wiemerslage, Regional Communications Coordinator for Region 4 ISU Extension, wiemer@iastate.edu, 563-794-0599.

For information about local Extension events and programs, contact:

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Fayette: Kathy Steege, 563-425-3331, ksteege@iastate.edu
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