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News Release
Contact: Denise Schwab, ISU Extension Beef Specialist, 319-472-4739.
Pasture Walk Focuses on Flexibility

New Hampton - Pasture improvement and rotational grazing are key topics for many beef and dairy producers, but one of the big challenges is balancing pasture subdivision, fencing, and watering systems for multiple pastures and cow herds. These topics will be discussed at a pasture walk at the farm of Garth Griffin on Wednesday, August 1, at 6:00 pm. This pasture walk is co-sponsored by ISU Extension & Outreach, the Iowa Beef Center, Southern Iowa Forage & Livestock Committee, and the Northeast Iowa Grazers.

Griffin described his pasture management as ‘a little of everything’ focusing on flexibility for multiple cow groups, a variety of pastures and settings, but trying to optimize each individual situation. Griffin’s cow herd is primarily purebred Red Angus focused on producing seedstock, but also includes a few commercial cows used as embryo recipients. One group of cows is strictly AI bred requiring close monitoring at breeding so they rotate through pastures but water at a building site to facilitate heat detection and insemination. Other cow groups water from streams but also rotate through paddocks. Griffin also mows and bales much of the pastures as hay first, then rotates into the grazing process.

Griffin says he has the same challenges as other producers, in particular reducing heat stress, supplementing on pasture if the drought continues, and creep feeding calves to reduce cow stress and facilitate early weaning. The Griffin pasture is located at 1899 Mission Ave, just north of New Hampton, IA. From the south on Hwy 63, the Jct. of Hwy 63 & Mission Ave. is about 1 mile north of New Hampton, then turn right (east) onto Mission Ave. and travel about 0.7 mile to the farm. If coming from the north, Mission Ave is at Hwy 63 mile marker 206, then left (east).

Pasture walks are informal educational programs designed to demonstrate one or two key areas of pasture management, as well as answer any questions you might have. Each has a slightly different focus and producers are invited to attend any that are of interest to improving their own pasture management.

All producers who are dependent on forage production are invited to attend. If you have questions, or need detailed directions to the farm location, contact Denise Schwab at 319-472-4739.
News Release
Contact: Jennifer Bentley, Extension Specialist, 563-382-2949, jbentley@iastate.edu

Pasture Walk Focuses on Quality Pasture and Fly Control Measures

Decorah - Pasture quality and fly control measures are key topics for many beef and dairy producers. The Peakes will talk about their grass-based organic dairy farm and how they are seeking to improve profitability through reducing their reliance on purchased inputs such as hay and grain. They will also discuss fly control measures implemented, including a walk-through fly trap and a wiper to apply an organic oil-based fly repellent. In addition, Jeremy will talk about using a Yeoman plow and keyline plowing methods.

A pasture walk will be held at the Jeremy and Jodi Peake farm near Waukon on Saturday, August 4, from 1-4 pm. The Peakes have a 30-head grass-based organic dairy and have been farming for 11 years. In addition to the dairy, there is an apple orchard on the farm with 1,000 trees. Marketing is done on-farm and to the surrounding area. The Peake farm can be located from the intersection of Hwys 51 and 9 (southeast of Decorah or southwest of Waukon), go north on Apple Rd (gravel). Turn right at the first intersection and the farm is the first place on the right. This event is sponsored by Practical Farmers of Iowa, tamsyn@practicalfarmers.org or 515-232-5661. For more information please contact Jennifer Bentley at 563-382-2949 or email at jbentley@iastate.edu.

The Northeast Iowa Graziers plan monthly walks to local farms to help producers learn how better pasture management can result in both healthier profits and a healthier environment. The walks are organized by area graziers and supported by Iowa State University Extension, Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Northeast Iowa Community Based Foundation.

Pasture walks are informal educational programs designed to demonstrate one or two key areas of pasture management, as well as answer any questions you might have. Each has a slightly different focus and all producers who are dependent on forage production are invited to attend any that are of interest to improving their own pasture management. For the full 2012 Pasture walk schedule, visit www.extension.iastate.edu/winneshiek.

News Release
Contact: Jennifer Bentley, Extension Specialist, 563-382-2949, jbentley@iastate.edu

Cooling Strategies in the Dairy Barn
Are your cooling strategies in the dairy barn geared up for summer? Prepare your dairy facilities for the negative effects of heat stress to avoid losses in milk production, feed intake and reproductive performance.

Dairy cows respond to heat in different ways. In addition to lost milk, heat stress increases veterinary costs, increases mastitis incidence, causes rumen acidosis and jeopardizes reproduction. In fact, typical pregnancy rates on Iowa dairies don’t return to Spring levels until late November or early December. Consequently, heat stress is an incredible costly issue even for Iowa and Midwest Dairy Producers.

Heat stress on dairy farms can be alleviated by a number of on-farm management practices and heat-abatement systems. Heat-abatement systems such as fans, sprinklers and shades are commonly used to reduce the negative effects of heat stress on the lactating cow. Here are some systems to consider.

Know the temperature. Heat stress is a product of both temperature and humidity (THI). If you haven’t already done so, buy a thermometer that gives you both temperature and humidity and place it in a location near you and the cows. Current research shows modern high producing cows begin to experience heat stress at a THI of 65-68, much lower than the traditional 72.

Fans. Make sure fans are functional by cleaning fan blades and grills, repairing damage, checking fan alignment and orientation, and calibrating thermostat. Poorly maintained fans can reduce fan efficiency by more than 40 percent.
**Access to water.** During heat stress, cows will consume 25-40 gallons/day. Almost 60% of this water will be consumed after exiting the parlor. Keep water troughs clean and enough space (3”-4”/cow) for all the cows exiting the parlor to drink. Adequate water space is also needed in the freestall barn.

**Sprinklers.** If you can’t install both fans and soakers/sprinklers this year, start with sprinklers. Soaking frequency should be increased when water is used without fans. Each cycle should wet the back and allow the water to evaporate before another cycle begins. Make the holding pen your number one priority for sprinklers. The holding pen creates the most heat stress and body temperatures rise rapidly.

**Herd Management.** In warm weather, reduce the walking distance for cows. Reduce the time in holding pen and be sure to ventilate and cool the area. Consider exit lane cooling. Feed cows early in the morning and late in the night and don’t “lock up” during the mid-day. Push up feed often and remove old feed. Consult with your nutritionist on dietary changes that need to be made during the summer months. Don’t forget about the dry cows. Make sure they have access to shade. Having a cooling system maintained and installed now will reap benefits in milk production and reproduction in the months to follow. Work with your local ISU Extension and industry partners to put a cooling system into place.