

# Hopkins County Beef tips

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## Facing Drought, Challenge for 2011!

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It am extremely concerned about the current drought

situation in our county. Although much better than the rest of Texas, the heat and dry weather is certainly creating a negative impact in our crops. I got a chance to be earlier on the month in Wichita Falls for the TCAAA convention and the crop fields are certainly sad. The worst part is that there is not much we can do without rain, and we must be ready for a

even worst fall and winter with hay shortages. Be conservative and try to prepare yourself for the upcoming seasons.

I have got several phone calls from beef producers looking for hay. I know a few are looking for hay in other parts of the state and many more outside of Texas. The severity of the situation is certainly concerning many. In a recent meeting, I learned that the weather forecast is even worst, specially if "la nina" remains longer on the south. Some producers are looking into feeding alternative products

Milo, corn hay and other products are becoming an alternative for grass hay. Remember to consider your stocking rates and adjust accordingly. During drought, pastures get stressed and have the tendency to become toxic. Nitrates and prussic acid toxicity are also common. USDA does have several programs for assistance with livestock losses. Not only is financial assistance for grazing losses, but there is also an indemnity program for cattle deaths. The indemnity payments vary with the size of cattle (<400 lbs.; 400-799 lbs.; non-adult >800 lbs.; and adult cows and bulls). Please contact our local USDA Service Center for assistance (903-885-4433).

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## Commodities Futures and Options Seminar Series

This year the Hopkins County Extension Office have joined efforts with NETBIO and Texas A&M University in Commerce to present the seminar series: Commodity Futures and Options in the Beef Industry. The seminars will be conducted Fri-

day afternoons, 4:00 to 7:00 pm, August 12, 19 and 26, 2011 at the Sulphur Springs Livestock Sale Barn. The cost of the seminar series is \$60 all dinners included. NETBIO will sponsor the first 20 participants. The seminar series will focus in hedging

strategies, Options Markers and Futures conducted by Dr. Jose Lopez, agricultural economist in Commerce. Economic Decision Making in the Beef Industry will be presented by Dr. Jason Banta, Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Overton. Register by calling 903-885-3443.

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TIPS

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## Using drought-stressed forages

Normally plants reduce nitrates to ammonium ions and then assimilate them into amino acids and other proteins. This process, called nitrate reductase, occurs in the roots of some grasses such as bermudagrass, and in the leaves, stems and stalks of plants such as corn or sorghum. When plants are stressed (for example, by drought) this process slows or stops,

allowing nitrates to accumulate. If forage contains too much nitrate the animals cannot complete the conversion and nitrite levels build up. For forages grown under drought, proper management practices include testing for nitrates. Testing can be done both in the field and in the laboratory. Field methods include qualitative spot color methods and some

quantitative methods that use colorimeters and nitrate electrodes. However, field methods should be considered only as qualitative tools because it is difficult to obtain uniform samples and the tests are not precise enough to use the results for mixing feeds.

Contact the Hopkins County Extension Office for forage testing options by calling 903-885-3443.

## Up-Coming Events

- **Commodity Futures and Options. August 12, 19 and 26. Sulphur Springs Livestock Sale Barn. 4:00 to 7:00 pm. \$60 for series dinner included. First 20 participants free. Call 903-885-3443 for registration.**
- **Hopkins County Hay Show – September 1-15, 2011. Free Crude Protein Testing. Entries submitted to the Hopkins County Extension Office before September 15, 2011.**
- **Cattle brands renewal begin August 31, 2011 at the Hopkins County Clerk's Office, 128, Jefferson Street, Sulphur Springs, 903-438-4074.**
- **Tri-County Pesticide Applicator CEU's, November 2, 2011, Regional Civic Center, Sulphur Springs, Texas.**