

Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Hopkins Dairy Notes



Drug residues training and TCAAA award for Extension Dairy Programs! Dr. Mario Villarino Texas AgriLife Extension Service– Hopkins County

Special points of interest:

- Updates
- Drug Residues
- Predator Damage
- Andale
- Using drought stress forages
- Coming Up!



It am extremely concerned about the current drought situation in our county. Although much better that 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.

This year the Texas Association of Dairy men recognized my work in Extension dairy programs. I would like to share this recognition with you. It was nice to see Ken Miller and received the prize from him on behalf of TAD. We have worked intensively during the last couple of years and I hope that our work is leading us into the correct direction. In August, we have planned a lunch session in Quitman to discuss drug residues in milk and meat scheduled for August 10th at the Wood County Extension Office (See Coming UP!).

Predator Damage Continues

A received a telephone call from a producer losing young livestock to predators. She mentioned the loss of several head of cattle. You must be aware that predators like coyotes can kill young stock. In recent years, there has been a surge of interest in the use of guard animals to protect livestock from predators. Several species have been used, including dogs, donkeys, ostriches, emus, llamas, and mules. Re-

searchers and producers agree that guard dogs can effectively prevent livestock losses to coyotes. According to a 1986 survey, 71 percent of those polled, 81 percent of the producers considered their dogs to be an economic asset to livestock production. There is testimonial evidence that donkeys and mules also decrease coyote predation on livestock. At this time, there is insufficient evidence to determine the guarding abilities of other animals such as ostriches, emus, and llamas.

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Andale!



The most critical aspect of dairy management is the change in role from worker to manager. Jobs descriptions, employee handbooks, operating procedures and organizational charts for the dairy operation should help. Finding, training and motivating employees to satisfy the increasing labor needs of the dairy is a challenge. Managing employees in a way that causes them to follow proper milking procedures, maintain a sound animal health program, and emphasize milk quality can contribute substantially to the bottom.

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.



Coming UP!:

- **Antibiotics Residues in Meat and Milk, August 10, 2011** Wood County Extension Office, 618 South Main, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Quitman Texas. Free. Lunch provided.
- **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.**