CORNELL Cooperative Extension
of Oneida County

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Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County
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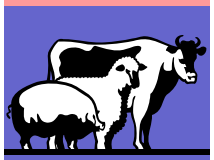


CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ONEIDA COUNTY

The Livestock Extension

BEEF

To Do in Spring

- ☑ Plan spring fertilizer needs. Mid-to late April is a great time to apply nitrogen to grass. See the article on page _____ for more information.
- ☑ Prepare for pasture season. How will you control flies this year: tags, pour-ons, rubbers? It is not recommended to use insecticides furnished in feed or minerals.
- ☑ Get ready for breeding season:
  - ⇒ If you use A.I. order semen and check your equipment. Be sure breeding corral is in working order.
  - ⇒ If breeding naturally, make sure you have enough bulls: 10-15 cows per yearling bull; 20-25 cows per 2-year old bull; 30-35 cows per mature bull.
  - ⇒ Have phosphorus source in form of free-choice mineral mix; phosphorus is important for maximum fertility.
  - ⇒ Yearling British heifers should weigh a minimum of 700 lbs. and continental heifers a minimum of 750 lbs. before being bred.
  - ⇒ If lactating cows are thin and not cycling, feed more energy.
  - ⇒ Vaccinate open cows for IBR, BVD, PI_3, BRSV, Leptospirosis, and Haemophilus using modified live vaccines. Consult your veterinarian for additional health information.
- ☑ Vaccinating cows for IBR, BVD, BRSV, PI3, and Leptospirosis is an important part of an effective herd health program. Consult with your veterinarian about using modified live vaccines on open cows prior to breeding your cowherd.
- ☑ Breed heifers one heat period before the cows. This provides extra time for heifers to recover to calve with the cowherd the following year
- ☑ Take advantage of early summer grass. Turn cows in when grass is 4-6 inches tall, graze intensely for 7 days and then rotate to another field. Pasture should be rested 25-40 days before grazing again.
- ☑ Is hay making equipment ready? For highest quality, first

cutting should be started by end of May to early June, depending on species and location.

- ☑ After first cutting or grazing, consider fertilizing with nitrogen to maximize aftermath growth.
- ☑ If you vaccinate for pinkeye, do so six weeks prior to fly season. In other words, it's probably too late to get effective pinkeye control through vaccination.
- ☑ Continue to monitor body condition of first and second calf heifers. If they drop below 4.5, they should receive supplemental nutrition.
- ☑ The breeding season should last no more than 60 days. Make plans for keeping bull separate before and after the 60 day breeding season.

Effect of Corn Processing on Feedlot Performance

One of the most often asked questions is whether corn should be fed whole or cracked. Dr. Dan Loy, Feedlot Specialist, Iowa State University answered that question with certainty (see table below). Speaking at the New York Feeders Conference in Corning, Loy presented data that showed no advantage to processing corn in ADG, dry matter intake or feed efficiency. While seeing corn kernels in the manure is a concern of the feeder, it is obviously not a concern to the steer.

Therefore, if the price of corn is increased by processing, cattle feeders are throwing their money away. In rations with low levels of forage (<15%), processing may actually decrease performance due to the effects of increased starch digestion and resulting acidosis.

While seeing corn kernels in the manure is a concern of the feeder, it is obviously not a concern to the steer.

Comparison of corn processing systems

	Dry rolled	Whole shelled	Flaked	HM or reconst.
ADG. Lb	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
DMI	19.0	18.9	17.4	18.3
F/G	6.91	6.87	6.33	6.44
DM efficiency	0	0	8.4%	6.8%
Corn efficiency	0	0	11.4%	8.5%

Hale & Prouty (1980) 50 trial summary

Mark Your Calendars...

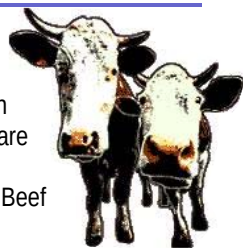
April 29 & 30. 2-Day Hands-On Meats Workshop. Dutchess County Fairgrounds with off-site visits for meat fabrication. Presenters include: Denny Shaw, Animal Science, Cornell University; Mike Baker, Beef Cattle Extension Specialist, Cornell University; Tom Schneller , Culinary Institute of America; Ridge Shinn, Bakewell Reproductive Center. Topics on: Introduction to Grading, Carcass Quality and Points to Ponder (How handling of live animals can affect carcass quality), Cuts of meat (what can and can't be done), The use and usefulness of Ultrasound on live animals, Short Tour of the available facilities at Deer's End Custom Cutting, Visual inspection of Different carcasses (lamb, beef and hog), Measuring of backfat and rib sections, Actual Cutting and preparing of carcass for the consumer, Markets and Available Marketing Opportunities for livestock meat producers, Why or why not Grass fed, Rotation, Live Animal Evaluation, Animal Identification, Animal Handling and animal movement, Ultrasound, Grass Finished markets and Field evaluation of cattle. Contact Jennifer Fimble or Nancy Halas - 845-677-8223 x 115.

April 30 – May 1. 9AM to 4PM daily. NYS Farmstead and Artisan Cheese Makers Guild Cheese Making Workshop. The Craft of Artisan Cheese Making: Focus on the Balkans. Sprout Creek Farm near Poughkeepsie, NY. Taught by Vermont cheese maker and dairy foods consultant Peter Dixon. Saturday evening it will feature a special Balkan dinner for cheese enthusiasts and a slide show on the instructor's experience as a cheese making consultant in Macedonia and Armenia. Workshop open to all, regardless of background or aspirations. Limited to 12 people. To register or for more info, contact Tracy Frisch, Cheese Guild Organizer, 518/692-8242 or tracy@farmandfood.org.

June 1. Growing the Northeast Dairy Industry Conference. Holiday Inn in Liverpool, New York. Presentations from processors looking to expand in the Northeast region, producers who have successfully grown their operations, and agribusiness partners who can help make growth happen. Geared toward increasing the potential for dairy farmer profitability through progressive and innovative approaches going forward. A mix of nationally and regionally prominent speakers will be featured including: successful Midwest dairyman Mike McCloskey; Ernie Yates, Director of Milk Procurement at Dean Foods Company and representatives from the agricultural lending community. Topics will include: Dynamics of the NE dairy industry, The role of government, Private initiatives, Producers perspectives, Different approaches to managing a profitable farm business. There is no conference registration fee. Hotel accommodations are the responsibility of the attendee and can be made by calling the Holiday Inn directly at (315) 457-1122. To be included on the invitation mailing list or for more information, contact Monica Coleman at 1-800-654-8838 extension 5596.

June 18, August 20, November 12. 9am to 3pm. Cornell Sheep Farm Field Days. See how a highly productive sheep system is managed and ask questions of sheep specialists about management and marketing of sheep. Topics covered vary with the season. Registration is required, contact Brian Magee, at bhm5@cornell.edu or 607-844-8367. For more information about the field days and other events and sheep farming information, visit the Cornell Sheep Program web site: http://www.sheep.cornell.edu/.

Beef Marketing Opportunities



Cornell Feedlot and Carcass Value Discovery Program

Purpose: Teach cow/calf producers the value of their calves based on performance in the feedlot and on through the packing plant. Calves are accepted in November and fed till their most optimal profit potential during March-July. For more information contact Mike Baker, Cornell Beef Specialist mjb28@cornell.edu, 607-255-5923.

Empire Heifer Development Program

Purpose: A management and marketing program for cow/calf producers to evaluate replacement heifer prospects and offer a marketing opportunity for quality heifers. Calves are accepted in December. Heifers can be bred artificially at the heifer rearing facility, or returned home for breeding. Eligible heifers can be sold in April. For more information, contact Martha Wright, Extension Associate, Cornell Department of Animal Science, maw32@cornell.edu, 585-770-4664.

New York Pooled Weaning and Marketing Program

Purpose: Provide a uniformly managed group of feeder calves, commingled from several producers, in a truck load lot, which can be marketed at optimum value. Calves are accepted in October and marketed in late November or December. For more information contact Mike Baker, Cornell Beef Specialist mjb28@cornell.edu, 607-255-5923.

NY Beef Producers Central Bull Test and Sale

Purpose: To 1) compare individual performance of potential herd sires, 2) provide an opportunity for seedstock producers to market individual bulls, 3) provide a source of bulls for commercial and seedstock herds and 4) provide an educational opportunity for sellers and buyers alike. Bulls are accepted in November. Eligible bulls are sold in April. For more information contact Bull Test Managers Jason TenEyck at 315-539-8031 or Jim Brown at 315-549-8318.

Resources Available For Small Farms

Check out **Cornell's Small Farms** website at:
www.smallfarms.cornell.edu

Beef Ration Rules of Thumb

This document is designed to guide producers through understanding a feed test. With a feed test in front of you, look at the following rules and compare to the feed test. Remember, these are rules of thumb, which means they hold true most of the time. Variations in management and cow type will affect the end result. These rules of thumb should not be a replacement for balancing rations, but rather an aid to understand the feed and where it fits in the management.

Always refer to the "dry matter" numbers. These have the moisture factored out and allow comparison of all feeds, from silage to grains.

Crude Protein.- *Beef Cow Rule of Thumb*. Protein is a building block - 7-9-11. An average mature beef cow requires a ration with crude protein of 7% in mid pregnancy, 9% in late pregnancy and 11% after calving. The method to monitor protein in terms of cow performance is to look at the manure - high levels of undigested fiber in the manure indicates low protein.

Crude Protein - *Feeder Calf Rule of Thumb*. - 14-12-10. A feeder calf from 550-800 lbs needs a ration of 14% protein, from 800-1050 lbs needs 12% protein, and from 1050 lbs to finish needs 10% protein. Implant programs will create variations to this rule.

Energy is the basis of the building blocks for growth and other productive purposes. Learn one of the 6 measures for energy and stick with it. Using *Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN)%, the Rule of Thumb* is 55-60-65. This rule says that for a mature beef cow to maintain her body condition score (BCS) through the winter, the ration must have a TDN energy reading of 55% in mid pregnancy, 60% in late pregnancy, and 65% after calving. Energy can be monitored in the beef cow by watching BCS; low energy rations result in a loss of BCS. Other energy units of measure include DE, ME, NEl, NEm, and NEg, and producers can develop their own rules for these measures if the need arises.

The *calcium to phosphorous ratio* (Ca:P) for a mature beef cow should be within the range of 2:1 and 7:1, assuming actual required grams of each are adequate. Using a feed test, the ratio is calculated by dividing the dry matter Ca (%) by the dry matter P (%). Ratios outside this range need to be addressed using feed blends or commercial minerals.

On an average feed analysis sheet, two other related minerals are reported—Magnesium (Mg) and Potassium (K). These two, in combination with calcium (Ca) make up the tetany ratio, which is K/(Mg + Ca). This ratio should not exceed 2.2:1. The combination of high K (*Rule of Thumb - over 1.75%*), and/or low Ca (*Rule of Thumb -under 0.6%*) and low Mg (*Rule of Thumb - under 0.3%*) can lead to animal performance issues. Because this ratio involves three different numbers, producers are encouraged to look at each of the three individually, and as a ratio, to determine if the need for caution exists.

With respect to commercial minerals, an average 25 kg bag of minerals will last about 1 week for 50 cows. Read label for specific feeding rates

On many feed analysis sheets, only Sodium (Na) is reported. *Rule of Thumb* says that Na x 2.5 equals NaCl (salt).

Salt Rule of Thumb - if the feed analysis shows that Na is over 0.1%, which equates to salt over 0.25%, livestock will receive all their salt requirements from the feed and therefore will not consume commercial minerals with added salt. High salt levels are very prevalent in cereal greenfeed and their associated feed analysis.

Once producers understand the quality of their individual feeds, the next step is to determine the quantity of feed required, both for individual animals per day, and for the herd for the winter. Several Rules of Thumb apply to feed quantity.

Rule of Thumb for Consumption - all beef cattle will consume approx 2.5% dry matter (DM) of their body weight per day. For example, a 1000 pound cow will eat 25 lbs of dry matter feed per day. Moisture and feed waste must be factored in further to this number. The following chart shows different consumption levels based on forage quality.

Forage Intake Guidelines for Beef Cattle

	Forage Quality		
	Poor	Medium	Excellent
Level of Production	% of Body Weight		
Growing and finishing cattle	1.0	1.8 to 2.0	2.5 to 3.0
Dry mature cows and bulls	1.4 to 1.6	1.8 to 2.0	2.3 to 2.6

With respect to feed wastage, the Rule of Thumb says that if you see it on the ground, you have 15%. Many operations have over 20% feed waste every winter, and don't realize that this costs in excess of $40/cow.

By Trevor Yurchak, Alberta Agriculture Food & Rural Development and Dr. Erasmus Okine, University of Alberta

Beef Demand Strengthened in 2004, But Likely to Slow This year

March 9, 2005 U.S. beef demand continued to climb in 2004, but after several strong years, growth in domestic demand is likely to slow this year, a Kansas State University (K-State) agricultural economist said.

Beef demand index calculations indicate U.S. beef demand during 2004 increased 7.6% above demand in 2003, said James Mintert, livestock marketing specialist with Kstate Research and Extension. Since 1998, when domestic beef demand bottomed out,

Choice [grade] retail beef demand has increased approximately 25%.

MARKETING

Ag Innovation Center Offers Services to NYS Farmers

Capturing consumer demand and dollars is one of the goals of the NY Ag Innovation Center. Other goals include increasing the profits of all farms, converting farm waste to energy, and building business plans and properly structuring businesses for value-added farming enterprises. The Center is an initiative of the New York Farm Viability Institute.

Farmers work one-on-one with NY Ag Innovation center consultants, many of whom are Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension researchers and educators with expertise in fruit and vegetable processing, integrated pest management and computerized software tracking, production techniques for commercial recipe development, cost-efficient and environmentally-sound solutions for dealing with farm waste, and business planning.

NY Ag Innovation Center projects help farmers adding value to their crops and in turn add to New York States economy through the development of new farm-based enterprises, agricultural and food processing facilities, and jobs. Current projects range from specialty cheese production and enhancing food product shelf life to implementing manure treatment solutions to create heat and energy to power greenhouses and other value-added farm enterprises.

Michael P. Hoffmann, Associate Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, and William H. Lesser, Chair of the Cornell University Department of Applied Economics and Management, are co-directors of the NY Ag Innovation Center.

The Center is supported by a grant from the USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service, with additional support from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the Cornell University Experiment Station, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Cooperative Extension.

For more information on the New York Ag Innovation Center at Cornell University, visit http://nyaic.cornell.edu, email nyaic@cornell.edu or call (607)255-7215. For more information about the NY Farm Viability Institute contact Dave Smith, (607)255-7286.

Have a question? Need some assistance?
Have a question? Need some assistance?
Give Us A Call!

In The News...

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in New York State and Oneida County

Here are some excerpts from a fact sheet on Chronic Wasting Disease provided by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

What is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)?

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is found in some deer and elk populations in North America. CWD belongs to a family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. Although CWD is in the same family of diseases as bovine spongiform encephalopathy in cattle, and scrapie in sheep, it is a distinct disease that has only been found in deer and elk. The specific cause of the disease is believed to be a type of prion (protein infectious particle) that is found in the brain, central nervous system and some lymphoid tissues of infected animals.

How is CWD transmitted?

Research indicates that infected deer and elk transmit the disease through animal to animal contact, maternal transmission (mother animal to fetus), and feed or water sources contaminated with bodily excretions. The transmission may be enhanced when deer and elk are congregated around man-made feed and water stations.

How soon after CWD exposure do signs of infection appear?

The incubation period of CWD is variable, ranging form 16 months to several years. Outward signs of the disease do not occur until the animal reaches the last stages of the disease, which may be several years after first exposure.

Are domestic animals at risk for CWD?

There is no indication to date that CWD is a threat to domestic animals or livestock other than deer or elk, and there have been no reports of CWD in dogs or cats.

Is CWD transmissible to humans?

There is currently no evidence that CWD is linked to disease in humans. There has been considerable research on this issue, and research is ongoing.

For DEC's full fact sheet on Chronic Wasting Disease, as well as other factual information and resources, check out the following websites:

www.dec.state.ny.us
www.agmkt.state.ny.us
www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/zoonoses/cwd.htm
www.cwd-info.org

Mintert attributed shoppers hearty appetites for beef since the late 1990s to such factors as growth in consumer income; the introduction of new, high-quality beef products that meet the needs of time-strapped consumers; and less emphasis on negative health information as it relates to beef consumption.

It's become increasingly clear that consumer interest in low-carbohydrate diets also provided a welcome boost to beef demand in recent years, he said. Some survey data suggest, however, that interest in low-carbohydrate diets has peaked and is actually starting to wane.

Mintert said that 2004 beef demand growth was strongest in the first nine months of the year, with demand for Choice beef up 10.9%, 9.3% and 8.9% in the first, second and third quarters, respectively.

The strong year-to- year growth during the first nine months of 2004 was a continuation of the extraordinary demand growth that took place during the last six months of 2003, the economist said. It's difficult to sustain dramatic demand growth like what we saw during late 2003 and the first three quarters of 2004. Sure enough, domestic beef demand growth slowed appreciably during the fall (2004).

Mintert noted that beef demand held strong even as news circulated of a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in late 2003.

In fact, strong domestic demand particularly during the first half of 2004 helped the beef industry weather the dramatic decline in export demand that occurred during 2004, he said.

Per capita retail beef consumption in the United States during 2004 totaled 66.1 pounds (lb.), an increase of 1.8% compared to 2003s total. The increase occurred despite declining domestic beef production of 6.4% from the prior year, he said.

The primary reason that domestic consumption increased at the same time that production declined was that U.S. beef exports during 2004 fell 82% below 2003, and beef imports rose 22% a situation brought about by the BSE case, Mintert said.

Part of the increase in imports were due to Canada's ability to export boxed beef from animals less than 30 months of age to the United States throughout 2004, compared to that country's partial access during 2003, he said.

Despite the modest rise in beef supplies for U.S. consumers, the inflation-adjusted price of Choice retail beef during 2004 was 5.7% higher than in 2003. Thus, because U.S. consumers were willing to both pay a higher price and to eat a larger quantity of beef, the figures for domestic beef demand increased, compared to 2003.

By Mary Lou Peter, K-State Research and Extension

Because U.S. consumers were willing to both pay a higher price and to eat a larger quantity of beef, the figures for domestic beef demand increased, compared to 2003.

McDonald's Debuts Beef Traceability Program

McDonald's Corp reportedly aims to have at least 10 percent of its U.S. beef purchases traceable from farm to table by year-end as an added assurance of food safety for its customers.

"Our target is 10 percent by the end of the year," John Hayes, senior director of U. S. supply for McDonald's, told *Reuters*.

"We believe it's an essential component of consumer confidence that when an issue develops, within a 48-hour time period ... we get the message to the consumer that we can contain the problem, we know where the animal came from, we're ready to deal with any of the ramifications of whatever that issue might be. We think an animal ID program is essential to being able to do that," Hayes told the wire service.

Hayes said McDonald's biggest emphasis now was on setting up traceability of beef to its source.

"We do have a captive supply of poultry. The animal ID program for us currently is most focused on cattle," he said.

"We'll continue over the next few years to increase the amount of traceable animal ID products that we can buy, and at some point in the not-too-distant future we'll draw a line in the sand and say that after a certain date, all of our animal products will be from animals that are under an animal ID program," Hayes said.

Hayes said McDonald's supported the Agriculture Department's cattle-testing efforts, but he added that he's concerned the cumulative effect of added costs for testing, as well as other commodity issues, will eventually cool consumer demand.

Source: Bill McDowell on 7/6/04 for www.meatingplace.com

Consumers Prefer Highly Marbled, Tender Beef

Consumers in Chicago and San Francisco were asked to evaluate beef steaks that were equally tender, but differed in marbling. Steaks were either high marbling (upper 2/3 USDA Choice) or low marbling (USDA Select). The consumers rated the beef on flavor, juiciness, tenderness and overall acceptability, and had the opportunity to participate in a silent, sealed-bid auction to purchase steaks from the same strip loin they had just sampled.

The authors concluded that overall, consumers found high marbled steaks to be more acceptable than low marbled steaks in flavor and overall acceptability when tenderness differences were minimized. Consumers were willing to pay more for their preference, whether that preference was for high marbled or low marbled steaks.

(*Source: Killinger, K. M., et al., 2004. Consumer sensory acceptance and value for beef steaks of similar tenderness, but different in marbling level. Journal of Animal Science: 82:3294-3301).*

Pasture Fertilization Recommendations

Fertilizer nutrients to be added (lbs./acre) (total through the entire season)

Pasture:	Soil Mgmt. Group	Nitrogen: No manure	Nitrogen: manure	Phosphorus (P_2O_5) soil test levels: v. low	low	med.	high	v. high	Potassium (K_2O) soil test levels: v. low	low	med.	high	v. high
native grasses (two-cut system)	I	50 - 75	20 - 40	50	30	10	0	0	40	20	15	10	0
	II	50 - 75	20 - 40	50	30	10	0	0	45	20	15	10	0
	III	50 - 75	20 - 40	50	30	10	0	0	50	30	15	10	0
	IV	50 - 75	20 - 40	50	30	10	0	0	60	45	15	10	0
	V	50 - 75	20 - 40	50	30	10	0	0	75	50	25	10	0
primarily legumes or legume-grass stands	I	20 - 40	0	50	30	10	0	0	45	40	20	20	0
	II	20 - 40	0	50	30	10	0	0	50	40	20	20	0
	III	20 - 40	0	50	30	10	0	0	70	60	30	20	0
	IV	20 - 40	0	50	30	10	0	0	90	80	40	20	0
	V	20 - 40	0	50	30	10	0	0	100	80	60	20	0
Intensively managed grasses, rotational grazing (three-cut system)	I	125 - 150	80 - 100	50	30	10	0	0	45	40	20	20	0
	II	125 - 150	80 - 100	50	30	10	0	0	50	40	20	20	0
	III	125 - 150	80 - 100	50	30	10	0	0	70	60	30	20	0
	IV	125 - 150	80 - 100	50	30	10	0	0	90	80	40	20	0
	V	125 - 150	80 - 100	50	30	10	0	0	100	80	60	20	0

FORAGES & CROPS

Spring Fertilization of Pastures

by Kristen Stockin

Spring is almost here, and before we know it, those pastures will be greening up—time to start thinking about spring fertilization of pasture! Nitrogen can be applied in early spring when the grass first begins to green up to maximize growth. In simple terms, N increases top growth (leaves) of plants, which means more forage production per acre. Assuming other nutrients are not limiting, N can increase production, thicken stands and increase sward protein content.

Nitrogen (N) fertilizer is recommended when there is less than 25% legume in a mixed stand (4 alfalfa crowns/square foot or less). Up to 100 lbs/acre N can be topdressed at green-up. Try to time N fertilizer application just before a rainstorm to help incorporate the nitrogen and reduce volitalization losses. Remember, a soil test is the best guide for proper fertilization. If you have soil-tested your pastures, base P and K fertilizer and lime rates on the test results. If soil test results are not available, use educated estimates based on past fertilizer rates and manure applications.

But, is it cost-effective to put N on in spring when there is already a growth flush? That depends on your management system, and if you can efficiently utilize the extra growth. Plan ahead, and consider whether you have enough animals to use the additional forage, or if you can cut some pasture for hay to utilize the spring flush. Utilizing fertilizer isn't strictly to increase production, but can also be used as a management tool to meet specific goals.

If you consider your pastures to be a "two-cut" system, you might consider a lower rate of N fertilization. If your pasture management level more closely resembles a "three-cut" (more intensive) system, consider using a "staggered" approach to pasture fertilization. You can fertilize small quantities in strategic locations to manipulate the timing of pasture growth. Topdress ¼ of your pasture at green-up; this will jump-start the spring flush, and allow you to graze those paddocks just a little earlier. Rotate the animals through those paddocks first. By the time they've rotated through that ¼ a couple times, the rest of the pasture will have caught up in growth. Once they've rotated through another ¼ of the pasture system, topdress that ¼ when they rotate out of those paddocks. By the time they rotate back to those paddocks, there will be a nice flush of growth. In this system, you're letting the cows do the work to take advantage of that additional forage production.

See the table at right for more specific spring fertilizer recommendations.

Small Ruminants

State Offers Free Testing To Help Eradicate Scrapie in Sheep

New York State has 1,700 sheep farms with an inventory of approximately 75,000 sheep and lambs and 3,000 breeding rams, with a combined value of $9.5 million. Cash receipts from the sale of sheep and lambs in New York in 2003 totaled $2.5 million.

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets is now offering free genetic testing to any sheep owner to further advance the State's ongoing efforts to eradicate the ovine disease, scrapie. The free testing is made available through the New York Ram Project, a new plan aimed at enhancing flock resistance to scrapie in New York by conducting genetic testing on rams.

New York sheep producers who wish to have their rams tested should contact their local accredited veterinarian to schedule an appointment before September 15, 2005. The Department will reimburse veterinarians $25 to cover the cost of sampling and testing. Funding for this program is being provided by a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture's Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (USDA-APHIS-VS).

Funding is limited and offered on a first come first serve basis. Testing must be completed by September 15, 2005.

USDA's Ewe Lamb Program

The Ewe Lamb Program is designed to provide payments to sheep and lamb producers to encourage the replacement and retention of ewe lamb breeding stock which will help relieve economic injury suffered by the domestic lamb and sheep industry.

An estimated 66,800 sheep and lamb operations in the U.S. have experienced long-term poor market conditions, which has led to reduced incomes. Increased imports and extreme drought in domestic sheep producing areas have forced producers to decrease production and flock size.

Subject to the availability of funds, producers will receive $18 for each qualifying ewe lamb retained or purchased for breeding purposes between August 1, 2003 and July 31, 2004. The qualifying ewe lambs must have been retained in the herd for at least one complete offspring lambing cycle. The producer must not have received funds under USDA's Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program for the same ewe lamb and be engaged in the business of producing and marketing agricultural products at the time of filing the application. In addition, during at least part of the base period (August 1, 2003 to July

31, 2004), qualifying ewe lambs must not have been older than 18 months and must not have produced an offspring.

Producers must apply for the program by completing for FSA-384, "Ewe Lamb Replacement/Retention Payment Program Application." This form is available at local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices and on the USDA's web site at: http:\\forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet.

For more information on this and any other Farm Service Agency Programs, contact your local USDA Service Center or FSA County offices or on FSA's web site at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Dairy Sheep & Goat Co-op Looking To Form In NYS

A steering committee has been established to investigate the feasibility of the formation of a goat and sheep dairy co-op to pool quality milk for regional processing facilities. We already gave processing facilities on board and are actively seeking additional markets. This being the case, we are actively seeking producers. If you are looking for a market for your goat or sheep milk, please contact us for more info.

Scott Burrington (518)993-3542, sburring@frontiernet.net

Or

Rich Zlattner, goatfarmerguy@earthlink.net

Meat Goat Market Continues to Grow

Meat goats are among the fastest growing sectors of the livestock industry, with demand fueled by Muslims and other ethnic populations, according to a Chicago Tribune article posted by The Billings Gazette. There are no taboos against eating goats, and the animals do well in many conditions. Several states are encouraging producers to start raising meat goats to tap into the growing market.

The Boer goat is a species that has been introduced specifically as a meat breed. Meanwhile in Texas, the state that produces the most meat goats in the U.S., researchers are working to improve genetics of Boer goats, says The North Texas E-News. The Boer Goat Improvement Network or "BGIN" is an effort initiated by the American Boer Goat Association and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station to help breeders evaluate a goat's genetic potential as a parent. The program aims to improve the genetics of the breed industry-wide by selecting for seven desirable traits.

Check the full article out on the web at:

http://www.billingsgazette.com/index.php?id=1&display=rednews/2004/12/12/build/business/65-meat-goats.inc.

To Do List: End of Lambing Through Weaning

End of Lambing to Weaning:

- ☑ Feed ewes according to number of lambs suckling. Ewes with twins and triplets should receive a higher plane of nutrition.
- ☑ Provide creep feed for lambs (especially those born during the winter and early spring.
- ☑ Vaccinate lambs for overeating at five weeks and seven weeks of age.

Weaning:

- ☑ Wean ewes from lambs not lambs from ewes. If possible, remove ewes from pen out of sight and sound of lambs. If lambs have to be moved to new quarters, leave a couple of ewes with them for a few days to lead the lambs to feed and water locations.

Wean ewes from lambs, not lambs from ewes.

- ☑ Lambs should be weaned between 50 and 60 days of age or when they weigh at least 40 pounds and are eating creep and drinking water. The advantage of early weaning is that the ewe's milk production drops off to almost nothing after eight weeks of lactation.
- ☑ Grain should be removed from the ewes diet at leas one week prior to weaning and low quality roughage should be fed. Restriction of hay and water to the ewe following weaning lessens the chance of mastitis to occur. Poorer quality roughage should be fed to the ewes for at least 10 to 14 days following weaning.
- ☑ Handle the ewes as little as possible for about 10 days following weaning. Tight udders bruise easily. If possible, bed the area where the ewes will rest heavily with straw to form a soft bed for the ewes to lay on.

Taken from "Sheep Pocket Guide"

Expanded Sheep & Goat Marketing Website

The Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Website was created several years ago by the Northeast Sheep & Goat Marketing Project, a USDA-funded project to improve the marketing infrastructure for sheep and goat producers in the twelve northeaster states. The website have now been redesigned as a national information resource for sheep and goat marketing, with special focus on the marketing of lamb and goat to the ethnic and religious markets. The new website is a joint project between the University of Maryland and Cornell University, with support from the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) program.

You can enter your own Market Inquiries, your own Calendar of Events, and your own Easter Listings. A searchable Producer Directory is in the works.

Check out the new website at: www.sheepgoatmarketing.info