



Meadowlark Extension District Weekly Agent News Articles

Fenceline

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Livestock-Natural Resources

Grazing School 16 in the Books!

We had a very successful Grazing School in Perry. Of course, we hit the hottest week in September. We hosted the workshop at the Highland Community College Center in Perry. We were met with such great hospitality and cooperation. That is a great resource for the City of Perry.

We did our pasture allocation exercise at Barrett Cattle Company. Gene was most accommodating! The farm tour at Mel and Joyce Williams was very interesting, looking at their various water systems. Of course the most sought out resource on the tour was shade!

Trees in pastures have been a controversy forever! I've fought locust and hedge for three decades. But, cattle really appreciate it on days like we had last week. Especially black hided cattle, their temperature at hide level can be 10 to 15 degrees warmer, than a cow with red or white hide.

A quick review of research on pasture shade in Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky and Missouri showed these advantages:

Arkansas -- 20% higher gains for stocker cattle with shade than for those without.

Florida -- Cows with shade had conception rates of 44.4%, compared with 25.3% for cattle without shade.

Kentucky -- Animals with adequate shade gained at these rates over those without.

Cows - 1.2 pounds per day, Calves - 0.4 pounds per day, Steers - 0.9 pounds per day

[Two single-year studies](#) of shade at University of Missouri's Southwest Research Center in Mt. Vernon suggest better values, Eldon Cole, University of Missouri Animal Scientist conducted this research.

In 2000 Cole tested a group of spring-calving cows, comparing some with access to portable manmade, metal-roof shade measuring 8 ft. x 12 ft. with no shade. The trial was done on both endophyte-infected and endophyte-free fescue

In his comments, Cole did not mention that endophyte-free fescue, as a high-nitrogen, cool-season grass, can still leave cattle in a state of alkalosis, which aggravates heat stress.

He said the greatest difference showed up on the infected fescue where the shaded cows outgained the others by 0.72 pound per day for 84 days. The calves nursing the shaded cows also made slightly better gains, 0.17 lb. per day, but that was not significant. The trial ran from July 3 to September 25 and the animals were all black.

He added that the overall pregnancy rate was 87.5 percent for the cows given shade, versus only 50 percent for cows with no shade.

In 2001, the same trial was conducted at the Southwest Center using 550-pound steers. The shaded steers gained 0.2 pound more per day for 84 days than the unshaded ones. Like with the cows, when the comparison was made on the "hot" fescue pasture the difference increased up to 0.35 pound per day.

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