

VOLUME: 1

ISSUE: 2

OCTOBER 2014

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

# Agriculture News

## Dallam and Hartley Counties

 **JOIN US** 

**TSCRA RANCH GATHERING**  
**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2014**  
**6:00 PM TO 8:00 PM**  
**RITA BLANCA COLISEUM - DALHART, TX**


**PLEASE JOIN US FOR A RANCH GATHERING FEATURING AN  
UPDATE ON TSCRA ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES AFFECTING RANCHERS**

A free beef dinner will be served



*Special Thanks to our Premier Sponsors!*  
**Novartis Animal Health and Texas Farm Credit**

PLEASE RSVP TO 800-242-7820 EXT 192 OR [RSVP@TSCRA.ORG](mailto:RSVP@TSCRA.ORG)



★ ★ ★ ★ ★


WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT,



**RANCH  
LIFE**

AS WE KNOW IT COULD

**VANISH**

FOREVER



 **TO HONOR AND PROTECT THE RANCHING WAY OF LIFE** 

[tsra.org](http://tsra.org)



**Make plans to be at...**



Friona, TX  
(Driving direction on back)

*Hosted by: Gingg Family & Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service*

**Wednesday, October 8, 2014 ♦ 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**DEL RIO TOURS**

- Del Rio Dairy – 3,800 milking cows
  - Saudi-style cow barn
  - Double-45 parallel parlor
- Del Rio Heifer Operation
  - Open-dry lot
  - 2,850 heifers, 5 mo. to calving
- Latest in cow comfort and cooling
- Special needs facilities with Double-8 parallel parlor
- Composting operation

**BOOTH EXHIBITS**

- Allied industry displaying their products and latest technology

**DEMONSTRATIONS (2 DOPA CEUs)**

- Composting manure solids and their nutrient composition
- Efficient irrigation strategies
- Manure application/calibration

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

- Free lunch
- Product sampling

*A day filled with activities the whole family can enjoy!*

*Lunch Courtesy of:*



*For more information contact Sharon Harris at (972) 952-9201*

*Email at [srharris@aq.tamu.edu](mailto:srharris@aq.tamu.edu) or visit our website at <http://texasdairymatters.org>*

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION

# Weaning Techniques for Beef Calves

Dr. Ron Gill, Professor and Livestock Specialist; Associate Department Head for Extension, Texas A&M, Kleberg Center, College Station and Dr. Bruce Carpenter, Associate Professor and Livestock Specialist, Texas AgriLife Center, Ft. Stockton

Weaning is the most stressful time a calf will experience. It has been well documented that health problems such as bovine respiratory disease (pneumonia, “shipping fever” etc.) usually begins with stress at weaning. For this reason, all preconditioning programs begin with attempts to minimize stress at weaning. Regardless of whether or not you implement a complete preconditioning program (vaccinations, feed, 45 day weaning period, etc.) low-stress weaning techniques will pay off with healthier and likely even heavier calves. Montana and Canadian researchers reported that calves-weaned by low stress methods bawled 98% less, spent 78% less time walking, 23% more time eating and 24% more time resting. Post-weaning weight gain was not affected in this particular study. However, University of California researchers reported improved weight gain in fence-line weaned calves. At 2 weeks post-weaning calves in that study averaged 24 lbs. heavier and at 10 weeks were 26 lbs. heavier than any of the other three treatments which involved total separation from their mothers.

So what is low-stress weaning? It is probably anything that is an improvement over this: gathering cows and calves, sorting, and shipping calves that day (i.e. “weaned on the road”); or this: gathered, sorted, weaned and mothers driven off to a far pasture that day. Obviously either scenario is extremely stressful for both the calf and the cow. In contrast, the idea of low-stress weaning is to implement techniques where neither the cow nor calf really knows what is happening. This is done by allowing calves and their mothers to voluntarily remain in contact, but without suckling. The calf quickly gets used to eating on his own, and over a few days time, the calf will get used to not being with his mother. Usually within a few days to a week calves are completely weaned.

First, let’s discuss some things that can cause stress and quite often leads to sickness in calves. Dust, bawling and dehydration are three things that are all highly irritating to animals (and people too); and singly or in combination, they can all injure delicate membranes in the calves’ respiratory tract and may contribute to extra weight loss if calves are walking and bawling looking for their mothers.

Other circumstances that can cause undue stress at weaning occur when calves are worked or processed on the day they are weaned. Sometimes a full regimen of shots are given, horns may be tipped, branding may occur, and bull calves are sometimes castrated. These things are obviously necessary and a part of normal management, but they are best done at least 30 days prior to weaning, when calves are still with their mothers and nursing. Even if you routinely work calves at a younger age (which is the recommended practice), there may be some that get missed and need to be worked at a later date.

With low-stress weaning, a couple of methods can be employed to stop the suckling process while still allowing calves to have contact with their mothers. Probably the easiest and most common is **fence-line weaning**. Calves are simply placed in small pasture or trap adjacent to their mothers. If possible calves should have access to grazing. If grass is short, then plan on plenty of good quality hay. Calves as young as 3 months can be weaned this way, as their rumens are fully developed and are able to digest roughage. You may want to include some type of supplement (concentrate or creep feed). Of course, access to clean water is also important.

Obviously the key to fence-line weaning is a good fence. Calves shouldn’t be able to crawl under or between wires or nurse through the fence. Net wire is preferable but even an offset hot wire can help a questionable barb-wire fence become functional. In this situation calves remain in visual and vocal contact with their mothers, and if they are on pasture, dust is minimized. Also they don’t walk or bawl nearly as much. If you don’t have pastures or traps available, fence line weaning can also be used with corral fences. It is probably preferable to pen and feed the cows and place the calves on the outside. This minimizes dust for calves and gives them an opportunity to graze and get used to ranging out and being away from their mothers.

Another key element in low-stress weaning and fence line weaning is in the physical management of the cows and calves the day of weaning. There should not be any other management practices carried out on the day of separation. Any vaccinations should be done prior to separation day and any management needed for the cows should be done either prior to weaning or at least two to three weeks after weaning. The only thing that should be done the day of separation is the actual separation of dam from calf.

The best way to do that is to ease the herd into the pasture where the calves will be kept for the weaning period and allow the cows to leave or easily push the cows back out of the weaning area into an adjacent area. This entire process needs to be as quiet as possible.

Another method of low-stress weaning is to actually keep cows and calves together in the same pasture, but to place weaning nose ring flaps in the calf’s nose. The design of the flaps allow the calf to graze but not suckle. After a week or two the cow dries up and the calf is weaned and ranging away from his mother all on his own. Realize that this method does require a few extras like purchase of nose flaps. Calves must be worked through the chute twice: one to install the rings and again to remove them. Occasionally a calf may lose his nose flap before he is weaned.

## UPCOMING FARM BILL TRAININGS

### Dairy/farm bill meetings set Oct. 24 in Hereford, Hartley

Writer: Kay Ledbetter, 806-677-5608, [skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu)  
Contact: Dr. Steve Amosson, 806-677-5600, [samosson@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:samosson@ag.tamu.edu)

AMARILLO - The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will conduct two educational programs on the 2014 farm bill's dairy provisions Oct. 24 in Hereford and Hartley.

The first meeting will be from 9 a.m.-noon in the AgriLife Extension office for Deaf Smith County, 903 14th St. in Hereford; and the second will be from 2-5 p.m. in the Hartley Community Building, 815 Central Ave. in Hartley.

Dr. Steve Amosson, AgriLife Extension economist at Amarillo and meeting coordinator, said the meetings are free and open to the public. Dr. David Anderson, AgriLife Extension Economist-Livestock Marketing from College Station, and Kelly Adkins, Regional FSA Director, will be the programs' main speakers.

Adkins will discuss the dairy provisions in the farm bill and Anderson will provide some analysis of the Margin Protection Program options and demonstrate a decision-aid tool developed to help dairy producers understand the details and make decisions about the choices to be made.

"The Dairy Margin Protection Program is the centerpiece of the Farm Bill with respect to Dairy. It is a new and unique safety net program meant to provide dairy producers with indemnity payments when a composite U.S. dairy margin falls below the margin coverage levels the producer chooses on an annual basis," Amosson said. "In my opinion the choice to enroll is a no brainer for dairy producers, the real questions center around enrollment details and determining the level of protection and these are the issues that will be addressed in these meetings."

**Sign up for the Margin Protection Program is currently underway with a final date to enroll of November 28. For more information, contact Amosson at Amarillo at 806-677-5600 or [samosson@tamu.edu](mailto:samosson@tamu.edu) .**

.....

### New wheat disease notification tool offered to producers this season

Writer: Kay Ledbetter, 806-677-5608, [skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu)  
Contact: Dr. Charlie Rush, 806-354-5804, [crush@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:crush@ag.tamu.edu)  
Jacob Price, 806-677-5600, [japrice@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:japrice@ag.tamu.edu)

AMARILLO – Multiple wheat viral pathogens affect wheat grown in the Texas High Plains and cause devastating losses to wheat production, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Research experts.

This year, however, a system has been developed to give producers a "heads up" on advancing disease outbreaks and advice on management, according to Dr. Charlie Rush, AgriLife Research plant pathologist in Amarillo, and senior research associate Jacob Price.

The devastating diseases wheat producers could face each year include those caused by the mite-transmitted viruses of wheat streak mosaic virus, triticum mosaic virus and wheat mosaic virus or High Plains virus, and barley yellow dwarf virus, which is transmitted by aphids, Rush said.

"In many cases, the diseases caused by these pathogens look very similar to drought stress or nutrient deficiency, therefore they are not identified until costly irrigation and fertilizer applications have been applied," he said.

Until recently, no system has existed to alert producers to the detection of these wheat viruses during the growing season or to the onset of disease epidemics throughout the Texas Panhandle, Price said.

But in the past year, the AgriLife Research plant pathology program in Amarillo has developed a "Wheat Virus Early Detection System" to alert AgriLife Extension agents, crop consultants and producers to disease identification throughout the High Plains, he said. The system will provide results of pathogens detected during testing at the Plant Disease Clinic at the Amarillo center.

"When wheat viral diseases are first identified within individual counties, an alert email will be sent to members on the wheat virus email list," Price said. "Included in the alert will be a website link that will contain information on counties and dates where the viral diseases have been identified, diagnostics and visual identification information, and management options."

Those interested in signing up for the group email notifications can go to <http://bit.ly/1sVKFfA> .

Both Rush and Price assured potential members that no specific information, such as name or address of the submitter/producer, will be included. Anyone can become a member of the email list and all personal information, including email addresses, will be kept confidential. For more information, contact Price at 806-677-5600 or

[japrice@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:japrice@ag.tamu.edu) .



## Upcoming Farm Bill Training

Many of you have also asked about the second round of Farm Bill Educational meetings for producers. The current plan is to conduct these meetings between the dates of November 17 and December 19. As soon as we have confirmation on the dates we will let you know.

## Comparison of Bubble and Spray Pre- canopy

### Bubble Mode



### Spray Mode



This year Dallam & Hartley AgriLife Extension and North Plains Groundwater Conservation District along with Hartley County Cooperator & Producer, Curtis Lockhart have conducted a Irrigation Demonstration in Corn comparing LEPA Spray vs Bubble. Utilizing the following technology to compare the irrigation delivery;

- Pivot Trac Monitoring web based link to field

- Gypsum Blocks, monitoring specific 1, 2, 3 & 4 foot zones spans 6 & 7

- Aqua Spy, capacitor probes monitoring 4 to 60 inch soil profile spans 6 & 7

- Aqua Planner, daily soil moisture report and satellite data

We are comparing the entire spans of span 6 and 7 and hope to collect harvest data soon to complete this demonstration. Preliminary data does point to an advantage in water savings looking at both gypsum meter readings and capacitor probe readings. How this impacts yield will be determined at harvest. With applied water for irrigation and rainfall being equal, yield, will be the best way to measure any efficiency difference.





Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Dallam & Hartley Counties  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
401 Denrock, Dalhart, TX 79022  
Tel. 806.244.4434 | Fax. 806.244.7434 | dallam@ag.tamu.edu

Dallam and Hartley Counties  
Extension Office  
401 Denrock  
Dalhart, TX, 79022  
Phone: 806-244-4434  
Fax: 806-244-7434

**TEXAS A&M**  
**AGRI LIFE**  
**EXTENSION**

Mike Bragg Dallam & Hartley County CEA-Agriculture and National Resources	Kay Rogers Dallam & Hartley County CEA-Family and Consumer Sciences	Shelby Campbell Dallam & Hartley County CEA-4-H & Youth Development	Janet Harrison Dallam & Hartley County Program Assistant	Marsha Hightower Dallam & Hartley County Administrative Assistant
---	---	---	--	---