

Central California Livestock

**University of California**

Agriculture and Natural Resources | Cooperative Extension

Livestock & Natural Resources Newsletter - Mariposa, Merced, & Madera Counties Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2016**UCCE Mariposa County Office**5009 Fairgrounds Road
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Tips for more profitable ranching

Livestock producers deal with some challenges including, invasive weeds, laws and regulations, livestock and wildlife conflict, drought, animal health, and profitability. Ultimately Profitability is what determines if a ranchers can stay in business doing what s/he wants in the long-term or not. So the question that many have asked is what are some of the things that can be done to improve profitability of these livestock enterprises so we can keep our livelihoods going?

Improve Gross Margins: To increase profits, one would need to reduce production cost and increase income. Income can be increased by increasing the number of animals sold (more conception rates and less calf mortality); increase weaning weight and getting the best prices for your animals, while minimizing cost of production on feeds, supplements and veterinary costs. Below are some strategies that can be used to increase profit margins.

Grass vs Hay: Grazing is cheaper than feeding hay, so management that improves production or removing animals when forage is low will likely improve profitability. It is however important to note that this does not quite apply to your breeding herd. Some ways of improving forage production or forage availability is by grass banking, leaving the recommended amount of residual dry matter (RDM), and managing for more diverse vegetation.

Increase carrying capacity: Carrying capacity is the amount of animal a ranch/pasture or area can support for a grazing season without compromising future productivity, or in other words in a sustainable manner. Carrying capacity depends on how the grazing management practices either promote forage production or compromise it. Good grazing management depends *timing of grazing, stocking rates; grazing period; and type of animal grazed*. Higher forage production reduces the need to feed hay, therefore cutting costs. It is also important to match forage quality and availability with herd nutritional requirements e.g. calving at a time when forage quality and quantity are high. Protein supplementation when livestock are grazing low quality forage can be used to avoid loss of condition for the animals, especially in calf or breeding cows. Rangeland improvement by planting legumes is another option as well as nitrogen fertilization. Other strategies include improving soil health, water points distributed across the ranch and pasture sizes that improve more uniform utilization across the pasture.

Genetics: Genetics of your herd limit the potential levels of your livestock. Genetically poor cows that are fed well will never perform at the same level as their superior counterpart. So bull selection is critical, because it affects the quality of future replacement heifers, calving ease and quality of steers. A good culling program enhances uniformity among calves which increases sale value at the market. It is also very critical to ensure that the herd is adapted to the ranch conditions.

Diversify enterprises: Diversification can be in terms of the diversity of economic activities/enterprises or markets. Diversity in terms of enterprises can be achieved by having livestock-crop mix systems; livestock and wildlife mix (bees); different types of livestock (cows, poultry, goats etc.). Some people can do tourism type projects e.g. agro-tourism, nature-based tourism, organized farm tours or farm/ranch stays. The hidden advantage of letting the public visit and experience your lifestyle is you may gain some allies from people because this is also an opportunity to educate them about the benefits of working rangeland not only to the ranching family but to the environment and the public as a whole.

Ecosystem Services Payments: Rangeland provides a lot of ecosystem services *food, water, open space, carbon sequestration, recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat among others*. One opportunity that so far has not been capitalized on is due in part to difficulty in problems with finding reliable ways of valuing these ecosystems services and willing payers.

Toolbox of methods for Medusahead (Mh) control

As the rain starts coming down in the fall, so will medusahead (*Taeniatherum caput-medusae*) start germinating. If Mh is one of the invasive weeds you are dealing with and are trying to figure out where to start, I have a few tips for you, and a table with different methods to choose from. Of course there are so many methods that can be used to control this very invasive weed, some more effective than others. The most important thing is to start somewhere, and keep at it for 2-5 years to set this weed back. The first consideration to make in deciding what method or tools to use is what resources you have, how much of the weed is growing on your property, the size of area invaded and the kind of terrain. The table below is a list of options you can choose from. Ideally using different methods along the way - the integrated weed management approach - tends to be more effective in controlling weed populations as well as being cost effective. So pick and choose which methods to add to your medusahead toolbox and have at it and within a few years you will start seeing a difference. If you need any help deciding which methods to go with feel free to contact me on fmashir@ucanr.edu.

Toolbox for Control

Method	Timing	Effect	Advantages	Disadvantages
Fire	Dry enough to carry fire Before seeds drop	Removes whole plants and seeds	Removes seeds And thatch	Some desirable plants also affected Less forage production following year
Herbicide: Milestone	Pre-emergency Spring	Prevents germination Reduce seed viability	Selective effect Low spring rates	Affects forbs Expensive Timing easy to miss
Herbicide: Glyphosate	Spring application	Kills all herbaceous plants	Kills plants To prepare for seeding	Non-selective Lower production year after
Grazing	Before it heads out (awns)	Removes forage and seeds	No need for additional equipment but cow	Narrow window Needed density very high Loss of animal condition
Mowing	Before seeds mature	Removes forage and seeds	Longer window than grazing	Not feasible in large areas or rough terrain
Seeding	Weed control early Fall seeding	Remove weeds Competition	Improves production New desirable species	Expensive Low establishment rates

UPCOMING EVENTS

UCCE Mariposa County

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Niche Marketing/Grass-Fed Beef Meeting

Sponsored by: **Fadzayi Mashiri, PhD.**, Mariposa County Director and Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor Mariposa, & Merced Counties
Rebecca Ozeran, Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor Fresno & Madera Counties

Featuring: **Tara Schiff**, Mariposa County Community Development / Grant Coordinator

Thursday, November 10, 2016

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

McCay Hall

2820 Highway 140

Catheys Valley, CA 95306

Tara Schiff will give a presentation about lessons learned from the “Made in Mariposa” campaign and discuss how a similar approach can be used to market niche products at regional level.

Goal: To discuss ways and benefits that ranchers can add value to their products and work together as a group to supply grass-fed beef and other niche products to the market year round. Plan next steps: e.g.; regional grant application, group structure, leadership, etc.

Anyone interested in this topic is welcome to attend this meeting. Target region: **Mariposa, Merced, Madera, & Fresno Counties.**

Participation is FREE.

Registration required. For on-line registration go to: cemariposa.ucanr.edu or register by phone, by calling: 209-966-2417



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Solutions for California

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hot Topics in Forest Pest Management

- 8:00 am Registration – Photo ID Required
- 8:30 am Welcome / Introductions - *Fadzayi Mashiri Ph.D., UCCE Mariposa County Director / Advisor*
- 8:45 am Continuing Education Requirements
QAL/QAC/PAC forms - *Cathi Boze, Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner / Sealer of Weights & Measures*
- 9:00 am Worker Protection Standards Changes in Worker Safety Regulations
Laws & Regulations on Licensing Requirements and Updates on Categories - *Brandi Martin, Environmental Scientist, California Department of Pesticide Regulation; Enforcement Branch, Central Regional Office: Clovis*
- 9:45 am Respirator Safety - Gloves and Glove Selection - *Sarah Risorto, PSEP Community Educator, UC ANR: Integrated Pest Management and Maria Alfaro, Pesticide Coordination Assistant, UC ANR: Integrated Pest Management*
- 10:45 am Break
- 11:00 am Identification and Management of Forest Insects Associated with Recent Tree Mortality in the Sierra Nevada - *Beverly Bulaon, Forest Entomologist, USDA Forest Service, Stanislaus National Forest, Forest Health Protection*
- 11:30 am Emerging Forest Pest Issues in California - *Tom Smith, Forest Health Specialist, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection*
- 12:00 pm Lunch Catered by BB's Catering
- 12:45 pm Forensic Entomology and Fire - *Robert Kimsey, Ph.D., Associate Adjunct Professor Entomology, UC Davis*
- 1:30 pm Identification and Biology of Ticks Commonly Encountered in California - *Robert Kimsey, Ph.D., Associate Adjunct Professor Entomology, UC Davis*
- 2:00 pm Break
- 2:15 pm The Status of Sudden Oak Death Control in California - *Tom Smith, Forest Health Specialist, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Forest Pest Management*
- 3:00 pm Herbicide Usage on Fuel Breaks for Noxious Weeds and Fire Ecology - *Michael Beaudoin, Executive Director, Mariposa County Fire Safe Council*
- 3:30 pm Questions & Answers, Evaluations, & Closing Remarks



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Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Cathi Boze, Agricultural Commissioner /
Sealer of Weights and Measures

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UCCE Mariposa County
Fadzayi Mashiri, County Director / Advisor

**Thursday,
November 17, 2016**

Time: 8:00 am to 3:30 pm

McCay Hall

2820 Highway 140

Catheys Valley, California 95306

5.5 Hours of Continuing Education Including
2.0 Hours Laws & Regulations
M-1161-16

Course Fee \$35
Includes Materials, Breaks, and Lunch

Now Available
Register and pay on-line
@

<http://cemariposa.ucanr.edu>

Register by: Monday November 14, 2016

For More Information Contact:
UCCE Mariposa County Office
5009 Fairgrounds Road
Mariposa, CA 95338
209-966-2417 Phone
209-966-5321 Fax

dswass@ucanr.edu
agcomm@mariposacounty.org

Photo ID Required for Admittance

Bring a chair cushion for your comfort
Register Early; Limited Seating

If you have special needs that limit your participation in this event, please contact our office at least one week in advance.

Speakers may be subject to change

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

I am interested in participating in the Ranch to Rail Program, please contact me.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Email: _____

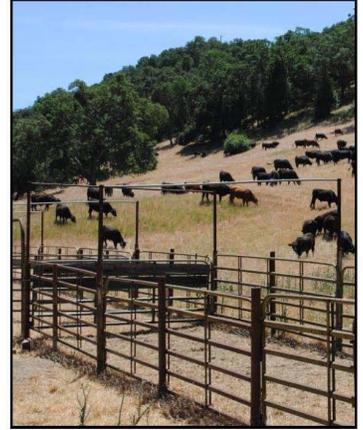
I would consider selling _____ head of steers during the month of: _____ January _____ February _____ March
_____ April _____ May _____ June _____ July _____ August _____ September _____ October _____ November _____ December
Mail this to:

Questions? Contact James Moller, One Shields Ave., Davis CA 95616 (530) 752-1200 or jrmoller@ucdavis.edu
Contact Larry Forero, 1851 Hartnell Ave., Redding CA 96002 (530) 224-4900 or lforero@ucanr.edu

UCCE Shasta County
1851 Hartnell Avenue
Redding CA 96002

Or current Resident

University of California Ranch to Rail Program



UC Davis Dept. of Animal Science,
UC Cooperative Extension and
California Beef Cattle
Improvement Association



UC DAVIS
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCE



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Overview of the Program



The UC Davis Animal Science Department, UC Cooperative Extension and California Beef Cattle Improvement Association have developed an educational program that will improve California beef cattle producers' understanding of feeding and carcass attributes as well as the health of their own cattle.

The program will engage individual producers with the results anonymously extended to producers across the state.

Cattle Acquisition and Protocol

The UC Davis feedlot will purchase 10-15 steers from two cooperating producers every month. Over a 12 month period 24 producers will have the opportunity to participate. All interested producers will preferably be recommended by UC Farm Advisors, and scheduled several months in advance. The cattle participating in the program need to represent a producer's breeding program, be weaned a minimum of 30 days, and have backgrounding and vaccination information available. The producers will deliver the cattle to the UC Davis Feedlot. Acquired steers will weigh between 800 and 900 lb. and will be Bos taurus. No Holsteins, Brahman-cross or Mexican type cattle will be considered. Producers will be asked to fill out a background information sheet including a

vaccination history of the cattle. Cattle will be purchased based upon the current average price received for similar weight cattle. Upon arriving at the feedlot, cattle will be immediately weighed, and pay weight will be actual weight across the scale at delivery. The producer will receive the mid-price for the weight class of cattle sold that week. Price will be agreed prior to delivery. UC Davis retains the right of refusal to accept cattle that are unhealthy or do not meet specifications. On the day of delivery, participants will be given a tour of the Department of Animal Science Facilities on the Davis Campus (feedlot, processing plant, etc.).

Deliverables to Cooperating Ranches

Each producer will receive the performance and carcass data associated with the cattle they sold. This data will include average daily gain, feed intake (pen basis), cost of gain, carcass data, and any other pertinent info that is collected regularly by UCD staff. The producer will also have the option to purchase up to two of their animals either live or on a carcass basis from the UCD Meat Lab. If a producer chooses to buy back one or two steers, a nonrefundable deposit will be charged prior to slaughter.

Participants in the program are providing an important component of student education as the animals sold to the UC Davis Feedlot will be used for teaching and research purposes. These cattle will provide an invaluable learning opportunity for students to receive, process, feed and monitor feedlot cattle, and analyze performance data.



Educational Opportunities

The data derived from this project will be presented to beef cattle producers across the state at the CCA meeting in 2015, and into the future. Identities of producers/ranches will not be included in educational outreach materials. Producers who participate in the program will receive incentives and recognition for their efforts.

Details

All cattle owned by UC Davis Animal Science will be sold as carcass beef or live. The UC Davis Meat Lab and Los Banos Abattoir are expected to be the primary outlets. Any cattle not needed by the UC Davis Meat Lab will be sold to Los Banos Abattoir on a carcass index basis. For producers buying back one or two of their steers, they will be killed under USDA inspection and must be picked up within 10 days of kill. Cost will be hot carcass weight times the carcass price based on the current USDA Carlot Meat Report. Cattle killed at the Meat Lab will not be cut there. The producer must arrange for cut and wrap of the carcass at another plant of their choice.

Legals and Legalities

Any participant interested in selling cattle to UCD will need to complete a Business Information Form and provide a signed and dated W-9 form. This information is required to set the producer up as a UC vendor and to be paid. If you choose to participate in this program, you will be provided with a Business Information Form and a W-9.

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University of California Cooperative Extension Wild Pig Damage Survey

In managed rangelands and agricultural areas, feral or wild pigs are a significant pest species. However, estimates of total damaged area occurring on these lands are ill-defined and subject to a high degree of variability. Wild pigs can be important vectors of disease, can cause forage and crop loss and set up sites for erosion affecting water quality and allow invasive plant species to establish. They can also prey on livestock. The geographical extent of wild pig damage in California is currently unknown making it difficult to mitigate and manage losses, and estimate the economic impact on private landowners and public lands.

UCCE Livestock and Range Advisors and Wildlife Specialists need your help by filling out a short statewide survey on wild pig damage found at:

<http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=16522>.

It should only take about 15 minutes to complete. Individual identities and survey responses will be kept confidential. Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary.

In conjunction with the survey we have developed a smart phone or tablet app that will help landowners and managers identify and record feral pig damage so that we can estimate the land area and economic impacts of feral pig damage over a longer time period. If you are interested in participating in data collection using our mobile application, please fill out the survey and indicate your interest at the end.

If you have questions about the survey or would like a paper copy, please contact either UCCE Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor, John Harper, at 707-463-4495 or jmharper@ucanr.edu or UCCE Wildlife Specialist, Roger Baldwin, at (530) 752-4551 or rabaldwin@ucdavis.edu.

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