

**\*\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*\***

**\*\*\* NEW LOCATION\*\*\***

**DISTRICT 8 FARM AND RANCH SEMINAR**  
**New County Office Building 222 East College Street**  
**December 14, 2023**  
**(Multi-county CEU event)**

A multi-county Farm and Ranch Seminar for farmers and ranchers conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in District 8 is scheduled for December 14, 2023.

Private Applicators License holders must obtain 15 hours of CEUs every five years to renew/recertify their license; including two hours of Laws and Regulations, two hours of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and any mix of these and General hours to equal the required 15 hours of CEUs. Licensed commercial and non-commercial applicators are required to recertify every year by obtaining five continuing education credits with one credit each from two of the following categories: laws and regulations, integrated pest management or drift minimization.

The December 14th seminar will be held at the [New County Office Building 222 East College Street](#) and provide participants with the opportunity to receive CEUs.

Program registration cost is \$50, which includes lunch, breaks and handout materials. Registration will begin at 7AM with presentations starting at 7:30AM and running till 4:00PM. Please pre-register by contacting Erath Extension Office at (254)965-1460 or email: [erath-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:erath-tx@tamu.edu).

Mark your calendars and more information will be coming with CEU breakdown and topics!

## **ERATH PASTURE TO PACKER**

We are kicking off a new year of Pasture to Packer with ten youth. We are going into our twelfth year and still going strong. I could not be prouder of the current and past participants. All the youth have gained valuable information that will help them in the ag industry and college.

What is the Erath Pasture to Packer Program? The program, offered through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Erath County and Erath 4-H, is designed to teach youth the economic and production facets of an agricultural project, while also teaching them valuable leadership skills. Each participant will apply in September and complete a face-to-face orientation. After acceptance to the program, the participants begin working with one of the sponsors, Lone Star Ag Credit, to request their loan for their animal cost and

feed. During the loan application process and interview, they learn the proper way to fill out a loan application, work through a projected cash flow, and understand the record book requirements. In October, participants select steers from a pre-sorted group of commercial calves weighing between 750-800 pounds. After selection, they learn about chute-side manner, vaccination protocols, animal health and diseases, and participate in processing their calf before taking it home to begin the feeding process.

The participants will have their calves on feed for 175 days. During this process, the youth will have to keep records on feed performance and cost associated with the project. Each participant will have a check-in and weigh-in on the project at various times throughout the feeding period. The cattle are cared for, and records are kept, just as a commercial producer would do. During the feeding period, the group will participate in several educational seminars focusing on marketing, nutrition, animal husbandry and meat science.

We have partnered with Tarleton meat department to harvest the cattle in March/April 2024. The youth will bring their animals together for a live evaluation at the conclusion of the feeding program. After the cattle are harvested, the participants will learn about carcass quality, grading and cuts of meat. They will then be responsible for marketing their carcass. This program gives the participants full responsibility from the purchasing decision to the marketing. The proceeds of the carcass sales will be used to pay back the loan.

In April, there will be an awards banquet where the youth, sponsors, and volunteers are recognized. In addition, special awards will be presented, as well as the results of the feeding program. This program is not designed to benefit the child a great deal in a monetary sense. It is designed to give them a very valuable hands-on, learning experience---from interviews and bank visits, to daily care of their cattle, combined with the marketing side and industry knowledge of where and how our food is processed.

## Proper winter supplemental feeding can optimize future breeding.

Getting or keeping cows in proper body condition throughout the winter can optimize pregnancy rates the following season, said a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert.

Dr. Jason Banta, beef cattle specialist, Overton, said cows with proper body condition scores at calving are more likely to breed back and produce healthy calves in the future. Proper nutrition and supplementation are two keys to keeping cows in decent shape.

Banta said 2-and 3-year-old cows should have a body condition score of 6 or better at calving. Cows 4-years-old and older should be in a body condition score of 5 or greater at calving.

Cows with a body condition score of 5 should display abundant muscle tissue. Ribs are noticeable but overall fat cover is lacking. Hooks and pins are less obvious, and hips and backbone are slightly rounded versus a sharp appearance, according to the AgriLife Extension overviews.

A body condition score of 6 represents cows that are ideal at calving. Ribs are covered completely with fat and beginning to cover the rump, and muscle tissue is at its greatest.

For more body score information go to: <http://bit.ly/2hpHOWl> .

Hay should be evaluated for nutritional quality, which will give producers the necessary information to help determine supplementation requirements, Banta said. Any supplementation plan should be based on three primary criteria – the nutrient requirements of the animal, the quality of available hay or roughage, and the current condition of the cows.

Winter supplementation will depend on what stage of production the cow is in, Banta said. Lactating cows require different amounts of supplementation than dry cows, those pregnant but not nursing a calf.

“When evaluating pasture or hay, consider the nutrient requirements of the cow,” Banta said.

For example, to maintain its body condition, a lactating cow would require hay that is about 11.5 percent protein and 62-63 percent total digestible nutrients, or TDN. A dry cow in late gestation would need about 8 percent protein and 55 percent TDN.

Producers should select supplements based on the cost per unit of nutrient needed, Banta said. Cubes are a common supplement used by many producers.

If both energy and protein supplementation are needed, a 20 percent cube would be most cost effective, he said. However, if only a protein supplement is needed, then a 40 percent cube is more cost effective.

Banta said producers should start slowly and build up with supplements, such as concentrates and grains, because cows are designed to consume grass. It is also

important to feed them supplements consistently each day to avoid digestive problems such as acidosis, which can lead to founder, foot abscesses, damage to the rumen lining damage, or death.

He recommends starting with no more than 2 pounds of supplement per cow per day and slowly building up from there.

Banta said producers should watch manure patties to monitor cows' protein intake.

"If patties look like they are stacking up and are firm, that tells us we need more protein supplement," Banta said.

A 40 percent cube is a good, concentrated supplement source of protein, he said. Generally speaking, if cows are in good condition, then 1-1.5 pounds of a 40 percent cube or something similar is a good place to start for dry cows; 2-3 pounds per day would likely be needed for wet cows, Banta said. If cows also need energy, then something like a 20 percent cube could be a good option. With average quality hay, a common feeding rate for dry cows would be about 2-3 pounds per day per cow or 4-6 pounds for wet cows.

"Feeding amounts really depend on hay quality and other factors, so for more information I recommend visiting with a nutritionist or an AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist," Banta said.

### **BQA Tip**

Cattle identification ear tags can be a particularly useful management tool. However, in some situations after tagging an infection may develop around the point of insertion especially in young calves. To help reduce the risk of infection try to keep hands clean and disinfect ear tags (focus on the part that will touch or penetrate the ear) and the end of the applicator that holds the tag with alcohol or another disinfectant. Watch for any ears that are drooping and signs of infection. With calves it may be necessary to temporarily remove the tag to allow for healing.