

Views from VanDeWalle

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February 2, 2022

Building Farm and Ranch Resiliency in the Age of Financial Uncertainty

I'm excited to announce that the Farmers & Ranchers College committee will be completing its third program for the programming season. It will continue to provide high-quality programming to area producers and agribusiness professionals with 2021-22 programming. Farmers & Ranchers College will wrap up with an agricultural land management program on February 8th. This program is free, but pre-registration is appreciated for planning.

This workshop, "Building Farm and Ranch Resiliency in the Age of Financial Uncertainty" will cover cash rental rates, land values, leasing strategies, landlord-tenant communication, farm and ranch succession planning and an overview of farm programs for landowners. It will be presented by Nebraska Extension educators, who will help operators and landowners to understand financial trends to minimize shocks, develop strategies to facilitate transition, mitigate legal risks and utilize effective management practices to reduce uncertainty.

The program is set for February 8th with registration starting at 8:45 a.m. and the program starting at 9:00 a.m. and running for approximately 3 hours. It will take place at the Fillmore Co. Fairgrounds in Geneva, NE located at 641 N. 5th St.

For more information, call the Fillmore County Extension Office at (402) 759-3712 or view the website at fillmore.unl.edu.

Winter Hay Worries

Extension educator, Ben Beckmans shared an article on winter hay information. Grass tetany and nitrate poisoning are issues that we typically associate with animals grazing. However, both issues can be a problem in winter when animal diets are limited by what they are fed. Is your herd safe from possible hay worries?

Tetany occurs when an animal's diet doesn't have enough magnesium to meet nutritional needs. Complications with milk production and increased magnesium demand can make this imbalance even worse during lactation.

Grass, alfalfa, and cereal grains harvested for hay can all be low in magnesium. Getting a hay test with mineral analysis can easily show if this is an issue we need to worry about. If tests come back showing less than 0.15% magnesium, the hay is deficient. Other mineral interactions that can worsen tetany are low calcium (<0.40%) and high in potassium (>2.5%).

If your test comes back with issues, consider switching over to a high calcium and magnesium mineral. Most options use magnesium oxide, which is bitter tasting and can reduce animal consumption. Consider mixing with a protein or energy supplement or mixing with distillers' grain or soybean meal to improve consumption if it's not at target levels (for a 10-13% Magnesium mix, this is 4 oz. per head).

Another concern to keep an eye on is nitrates. Forages high in nitrate that were harvested for hay will not see a significant reduction in nitrate levels after curing. Any hay that we suspect being high in nitrate should be tested and if high, fed as a reduced portion of the diet to prevent an issue with toxicity.



Tetany and nitrates in the winter aren't problems that often jumps right to a producer's mind, but they can be a serious issue, especially when an animal's diet is limited to what they are fed. Properly testing hay and adjusting mineral and diets to minimize risk can keep your winter hay worries at bay.