

AG NOTES
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CONTROLLING COSTS

I got this information from Rebekah Norman, a coworker in Rutherford County. I'll share it, but in this day and time we need to look closely at where we can cut costs in all of our enterprises. Here are some tips for livestock folks.

In a podcast back in June, Dr. Dustin Pendell, Kansas State agricultural economist, was discussing strategies to control costs during this inflationary period. As he put it, 70% of the variable costs in a livestock operation were related to feeding the animals!

Some ideas he shared to get a handle on these variable costs included rotational grazing (all sorts of benefits to this). Another idea was to supplement strategically. This begins with knowing the nutrient content in the primary feed source (hay) and only supplementing what is needed.

Of course, we need an idea of what our livestock need nutritionally speaking, and our office can assist you with that process. Our office can assist in testing hay to know what you are starting with. And in addition to controlling costs, this may be the year to explore new marketing options. (These ideas are for all grazing livestock, not just cattle.)

SPEAKING OF PODCASTS

If you enjoy podcasts, here is one you may want to check out. Kansas State offers a weekly podcast entitled "Cattle Chat." I can share the link, just email me.

I've never been one to listen to podcasts, but there are some good ones out there that can offer up some good advice. I would tend to listen to those that are research based.

FARM MEDICINE CHANGES

I saw this in the current Drovers' Journal, and I need to share. This has been mentioned before, and I'll be bringing it up more and more.

On June 11, 2023, the FDA's new directive, "Guidance for the Industry #263," is slated for implementation, meaning that over-the-counter (OTC) antibiotics will no longer be available through traditional retail channels. Instead, these antibiotics will now require a prescription from a licensed veterinarian.

While livestock producers are continuously working to practice judicious antibiotic usage, no longer having the ability to purchase commonly used antibiotics, such as penicillin, can throw ranchers a curveball.

There are some things to do now to prepare for this big change. It is suggested that you know what you are using now and how often. There may be some alternatives that you can switch to. Know what you are treating. Have a diagnosis, and not just a guess. Part of judicious use of antibiotics is to know diseases affecting your animals, and then what to use to treat for them.

Work harder to prevent issues. The old saying of 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' is really applicable here. Healthy and well-maintained animals and bio-security will prevent a lot of problems.

You've got to know a veterinarian and have a working relationship with him or her. Like it or not, it's the same relationship that you now have to have with your physician. You can't get certain meds without a doctor prescribing it, and now this will be the case with our livestock. And you need to have all

of your family or farm workers on board with this. They may have to be the one to attend to a sick animal, and they'll have to know what to do.

Why is this all happening? There are seven antibiotics that are common to human and livestock treatment, and there is concern for lack of effectiveness or allergic reactions by humans. We have to do our share of protecting our human customers and family members. The medical profession has a responsibility to do the same and we'll do our part on the farm.

THE RIVER

I was in Arkansas a few weeks ago, and I had heard the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers were low, but I saw it for myself. It's bad. And I saw some low rivers and lakes in East Tennessee this past week.

Barges can't pass safely if at all in many points. This is affecting the hauling of grain and other materials we depend on. Now the river is causing some effect on the markets.

This is all happening as the majority of the continental U.S. is in drought status. We've had some showers, but nothing like it'll take to get our rivers and lakes full.

THE KIDS

I spent a few days last week catching up on football, baseball and school activities. Hank's last football game was last week. And his team won that one 16-15. He's learning and enjoys it.

Then we had baseball tournaments for both boys, and they both had wins and losses. A mixed bag, but they enjoyed it. And they got grades last week, and so far, Meme owes them money for the all A's and B's. It's a little incentive program on her part as a retired teacher.

Piper had the letter P for show and tell, and her mother and dad got one of the ponies cleaned up and took her to school along with Piper for the Kindergarten classes to see, pet, and love on. They had a great time. Pretty neat way to teach kids about the letter P!