All of us at Northeast Texas Farmers Co-op wish you a healthy and profitable New Year.
Challenges we faced in 2019 will roll into 2020 and hopefully become opportunities.
We started off last January with our Newsletter informing you of challenges our Cooperative has in maintaining rail service via our Shortline railroad connecting our Feed Mills to the UP Railroad in Mount Pleasant. We want to keep our focus on the task as a Board, Management, and members to sustain our rail feed ingredient origination from the Midwest. Below was our assessment…..and it still holds true heading into 2020.

If you live in Titus, Franklin, Hopkins, Hunt, Collin, or Delta counties, you may be aware of our Short Line railroad that connects Mount Pleasant to Greenville. It’s the old SP/UP that was abandoned in 1994. These 6 Counties Commissioner Courts then formed the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) to preserve the line. The District owns the rail right of way, ties, and rail. The Commissioner Court appointed Board is responsible for maintaining an Operator, who is currently Blacklands Railroad, who is responsible for the railcar service to customers along the Short Line Railroad. Our Cooperative Feed Mills source feed ingredients from Midwest UP Railroad origins, UP delivers to Mount Pleasant, then Blacklands Railroad picks up cars and delivers to our Feed Mills.
The future of this railroad is AT RISK without specific action to secure our Operator beyond 2 years, source funds for railroad repair, and seek partnerships to secure the future. The alternative facing these counties is another Railroad abandonment that could mean pulling the ties & rail leaving us with no UP rail service available for ingredients to make feed. Our increased costs for sourcing Truck ingredients versus Rail was conservatively estimated at our last Northeast Texas Farmers Co-op Board meeting to be at least $55,000/month.

What can you do? Talk with your County Commissioners about the status of the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX). Ask who your county appointees are and discuss the status with them. Ask your Economic Development Corp (EDC) what it would mean to your community if we lost the railroad.
Our Cooperative has 6,200 active members that would be directly impacted. There are avenues that can help secure our Rail future including TxDot, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, State Reps & Senators, local EDCs, Federal Grants, and effective transparent leadership & planning by the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX).

Happy New Year. Thank for your patronage. Let’s take challenges and create opportunities.
January is the month that our hay will start showing us what it has in it. Probably if you had easy keepers for dry cows, they are looking okay, but if they have a calf or about to have a calf, things are going to go down hill fast if your hay quality is not meeting the basic needs. Most of our first cutting hay from last spring is both low in protein and energy. Below is a guide for the average TDN and Protein needed in the total diet of different types of cattle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Cattle</th>
<th>TDN</th>
<th>Protein %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First calf PG heifers</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second calf PG heifers</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Cows</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average milking cows</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior milking cows</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We found a lot of hay testing in the low 50's for TDN and averaging 5 to 6 percent for protein. I seen some hay samples test in the 40’s for TDN and below 4% protein. And the hay looked good.

Mature cattle will normally consume between 2.0 and 3% of their body weight. On the poor hay, they will probably eat as low as 1.5% of their body weight, because it will take the rumen longer to digest it. This lower consumption will make meeting their daily needs of energy and protein even harder.

On this poor hay which is low in both TDN and Protein we could have some compaction problems. This is where the cow is trying to meet her energy needs by keeping on eating even though the rumen is full. Poor digestion is a result of not enough protein and inefficient amounts of phosphorus to aid the rumen bacteria to digest the hay. Just for proper fiber digestion 4 grams of supplemental phosphorus each day is needed for the rumen bacteria. However, the cow needs .7 grams of phosphorus total per 100 lbs of body weight for her whole system to function properly. So be sure the cattle are eating the proper amounts of mineral with both calcium and phosphorus in it. Beef Cow Mineral with Radex will help the digestive system to get more out of this poor hay.

How to figure how much protein is needed. Let’s take a 1200 lb dry cow eating 2.5% of her body weight for a total of 30 lbs per day. She needs 30 X 7.5% protein = 2.25 lbs of protein. The hay is testing 5% so the hay is supplying 1.5 lbs of protein, so the cow still needs .75 lbs of protein (2.25-1.5=.75). If we are feeding 20% cubes, we will need .75 divide by .20 = 3.75 lbs of 20% cubes each day. If we are feeding Profit Maker cubes, they are a 38% protein, we will need, .75 divide by .38 = 1.97 lbs per day of the Profit Maker cubes. Now here is the kicker, if the hay is short on TDN the cow may not get the extra energy she needs out of 1.97 lbs of the Profit Maker cubes but will come closer with the 20% cubes at 3.75 lbs per day.

A guide; 6% phosphorus mineral has 1.7 grams per ounce, a 8% phosphorus mineral has 2.27 grams per ounce and a 12% phosphorus mineral has 3.4 grams per ounce.

What about mineral? This mature first cutting hay will be low in minerals as well. So, do we feed the trace mineral block? This brown or red trace mineral block is not much better than the white salt block. Neither one of them have any phosphorus or calcium, nor any vitamins which this hay will be short in. Plus, in Northeast Texas region the iron ore we have in our soils, copper is tied up so extra copper is needed for our cattle. That trace mineral block does not come close to meeting the extra need for copper. Copper is needed for the for good immunity. Calcium and phosphorus are needed in a 2 to 1 ratio to get good absorption of both minerals into the blood stream and together they help to get the cows breed back. Beef Cow Mineral with Radex is the mineral of choice for dry hay, especially this year as the Radex or Sodium Formate helps the rumen digest the mature fiber better. Make sure the cattle are eating one ounce per every 300 lbs of body weight. The second-choice mineral is the 7-7 hi phos cooked tub. If you feed this tub, be sure to feed a white salt block along with it, as the salt content is low. This tub has the Sodium Formate as well. And no mineral feeder is needed, which is a big cost factor. Cattle seem to destroy mineral feeders for fun. Plus, with the tub mineral there is no waste. Why Sodium Formate? It goes to work in the rumen to break down that tough over mature hay we have. Which means the cattle will get more out of it. We can see a difference in the stools in about 4 days as the rumen bacteria get to perking from the Sodium Formate. There is no need to feed the Sodium Formate on green growing forages.
Later this month if you have a lot of green coming up in your hay meadows, apply a quart of a 41% Glyphosate like Round Up per acre in late January or early February. Glyphosate works well if we apply it before the Bermuda grass greens up. This can be done for about $5 an acre. If grass burrs are a problem use Prowl H20 for about $10 an acre. And to really boost your coastal Bermuda grass yields this summer apply a couple hundred pounds of potash in February or March. This will thicken your stand, have less weeds later and you will produce more grass come July and August. A thick stand of Coastal Bermuda grass will help choke out the grass burrs.

If you got ryegrass up and growing, make sure you have at least 40 lbs of nitrogen per acre. With lots of moisture 60 pounds of nitrogen per acre is optimum. If the soil test is showing that you 30 lbs, then add another 30 lbs of nitrogen. If for some reason the ryegrass is not growing, it is not dormant and you have plenty of soil moisture, you may need to give it what I call a kick start by making sure you have 100 lbs of Nitrogen per acre. In this case I have had producers report back to me that the ryegrass just kind of exploded into growth. We should have plenty of moisture so the above recommendations should help you get off that poor quality hay and stop feeding so much protein.

Which brings up another point. That poor-quality hay would work well if made available to the cattle while on ryegrass or other lush green growing winter pasture. What I mean by poor quality hay, just low in nutrient value, but not moldy or spoiled, we need the cattle to eat just enough to help to control bloat and keep the stools from becoming too loose. If it is not palatable, they will not eat it. They will not overeat, as they will prefer the lush green pasture. This will provide the scratch factor the rumen needs. Be sure to be feeding at Beef Cow Plus mineral to keep the rumen perking. Beef Cow Mineral with Radex is not needed on green pastures.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR PATRONS!

CANTON FARM & RANCH CENTER
By Dan Fintel
903 567 5223       903 567 6636

As we exit 2019 and move into 2020 the challenges for producers are numerous, from hay quality and hay quantities, The Co-op has you covered with the Hudson and Ragland Protein tubs and variety of minerals. All feeds including Ranch Hand Cubes are currently in good supply with no limits, Salts on the other hand are challenging to keep in stock.

All fencing and bunks, feeders ect.... are in good supply as deliveries keep coming in.

In the store don't forget to check our specials on the Georgia and Rocky boot lines we carry. The Canton Store is going to start Saturday Jan 11th with what we call "Demo Days", we will have various company Reps set up with products from Hudson Tubs, Ragland Tubs / Minerals, Primrose Lubrication to name just a few. We will have a different Rep on the Saturdays that fit their schedule, they will help any questions the producers have. As the seasons change so will the Reps and the topics and products.

From everyone at the Canton Farm and Ranch Center we want to thank each and every one of you for your continued business.

Come see us at 24662 St Hwy 64 Canton TX, behind Goodwill.
What's Your Strategy For Winter?

Certainly, been the warmest winter that I can remember but we are just beginning winter as well. The warm weather has been easier on our cow herds so far and knocking on wood, be that way. If you seem to see the stools from elephants and don’t have elephants in your pasture, your cattle are probably candidates to use some of our products the contain sodium formate. This product will help cattle better digest a poor-quality forage. We have several products that have sodium formate- Hudson baked 20 and 30 percent tubs, 7:7 Extra Phos tubs and Beef Cow mineral with Radex. You will soon see the difference once the cattle begin consuming one of these products. Give it a try.

NORTHEAST TEXAS FARMERS CO-OP WISHES YOU A VERY HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR! WE ARE NOT JUST A FARM STORE, COME SEE US IN THE NEW YEAR AND SEE WHAT WE HAVE!