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Inside This Edition:

Late Rain And High Temps Affecting Harvest

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Late Rain And High Temperatures Affecting This Year's Harvest



By Anna Dragseth

This year's harvest has been challenging for many farmers across the MonDak region. "It was a tough year from the outset - farmers were either struggling to get into the fields to get planted, or they got planted and things just dried out really quickly," stated Dr. Clair Keene, who is the Area Extension Specialist/Cropping Systems at the NDSU Williston Research Extension Center.

Keene explained that it has been an abnormal year for growers because of how the weather has been throughout the season. "At the beginning of the spring the ground was actually quite wet because we had seven to nine inches of rain in September, and then the ground froze so all that water was still there in the spring, so some folks were able to start planting very early around mid-April, but if it was a wetter field they might not have been able to get in mid-May. The tough thing was if you planted in mid-April, we didn't get rain until Memorial Day, so that crop went six weeks without rain and then waited another four weeks until we got more rain the last week of June," stated Keene.

Late summer weather has been really dry, which means that the crops are maturing earlier than average. Keene said, "Growers started to harvest early-planted peas and winter wheat around the beginning of August, which is pretty darn early. In the second week of August or last week of July, growers started harvesting very-early-planted spring wheat and durum. Lately, people have been ramping up harvest on spring wheat and durum, and I expect that to go full throttle through

the end of August, which is also somewhat early."

Keene also explained that many farmers have had trouble deciding when to harvest their wheat and durum crops. "Right now the main tillers (stems that develop off of the main shoot of the plant) are dry and ready to harvest because those came through the drought and matured very early. However, if a field got rain from those thunderstorms we had in late July, that could cause the plants to put up new tillers, which can increase yields, but it is bad because farmers now have these mature heads that are ready to harvest and those green heads that are not going to be ready for another two or three weeks. So the farmer has a tough decision to make. If they try to harvest when the young tillers aren't ripe, they will have all this green stuff that is pretty wet, and then they will have to dry that grain and hope it does not spoil the good quality/mature grain. So some growers are just choosing to wait to let those green heads dry down. It is really a tough decision- it is the downside of when rain comes too late," stated Keene.

Due to the dry conditions and hot temperatures, the potential for combine and field fires dramatically increases. Keene added, "I am very concerned about combine fires. I strongly encourage farmers to have a fire extinguisher in the cab of the combine and an extra one in their truck. If harvesting a really dry crop, I recommend having a water truck or tank handy somewhere because it won't take much to start a fire in a field with how the weather conditions have been lately."

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Early Weaning, A Management Tool

Early Weaning Can Help Reduce Pressure On Native Pastures Extend Forage Supplies For Adult Beef Cows



Early weaning can help reduce pressure on native pastures and extend forage supplies for adult beef cows. (NDSU photo)

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Rainfall ranks as one of the most important factors that influence ranchers' management decisions, according to North Dakota State University Extension specialists.

This year is no different. Parts of North Dakota are experiencing severe dry weather while others have adequate to plentiful moisture. This situation drives management of native pasture, crop residue and cover crop acres.

Typically, even with good moisture at this time of the year, the nutritional value of native pasture is in decline. This decline is accelerated under dry conditions.

"Early weaning is one of the management decisions that can help reduce pressure on native pastures and extend forage supplies for adult beef cows," says Janna Block, NDSU's Hettinger Research Extension Center Extension livestock systems specialist.

"Early weaning simply means weaning calves at an earlier age to reduce forage usage, while not compromising calf health and performance," she adds.

Dairy calves often are weaned as early as 8 weeks of age. This is achieved through proper nutrition with feeds that promote rumen development. These feeds enhance the development of the rumen so calves can survive very well without the nursing milk diet.

"From the standpoint of feed efficiency, it is more efficient to feed calves directly than to feed cows to sustain milk production," Block says.

Beef calves can be early weaned successfully from 60-150 days of age.

Most producers will notice that nursing calves also will consume forage, whether through grazing or being fed harvested forages. Research shows that early weaned cows will consume as much as 35%-45% less forage than normally weaned cow-calf pairs.

Early weaning typically results in improved body condition of dams due to decreased nutrient requirements. A cow weighing 1,400 lbs would require about

16 lbs of total digestible nutrients (TDN) and 2.5 lbs of crude protein (CP) on a daily basis in late lactation. This same cow's requirements would decrease to 12 lbs of TDN and 1.7 lbs of protein after weaning. In addition, water requirements would decrease by about 55%-60%.

Distinguishing between early weaning and creep feeding is important, based on goals of each strategy. Creep feeding is providing supplemental feed to nursing calves. The primary goal of creep feeding is to increase weaning weight of calves.

"While creep feeding may result in some substitution of forage for creep feed, it does not reduce nursing pressure on cows. Therefore, this practice will not provide the same forage savings and increases in cow condition that can be gained from early weaning," Block says.

Early weaning should not compromise calf health, and performance should be enhanced.

"The key to successful early weaning is to treat groups of calves as unique," says Gerald Stokka, NDSU Extension veterinarian and livestock stewardship specialist. "Weaning by pasture group is preferred, with no commingling of other groups after weaning for at least 45 days. Even though all calves have been born and raised on the same ranch, the pasture group is the stable unit as it relates to shared organisms and social pecking order."

If weaning includes commingling all pasture groups at the same time into a common weaning pen or pasture, be prepared to begin treating calves for respiratory disease 10-14 days postweaning. Alternatively, make provisions to bring all cows and calves together so the social order and shared organisms of calves can be re-established prior to the stress of weaning. The more space that is provided (pasture weaning), the less the pressure on re-establishing social structure and the less transmission of organisms during this stressful time.

Other potential risk factors may influence health at this time as well.

(continued on page 15)



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MSU Beef Specialist Honored For Extension Work

By Reagan Colyer, MSU News Service

Bozeman - A Montana State University Extension specialist has been recognized for her outstanding community engagement efforts and youth programming by the American Society of Animal Science.

Megan Van Emon, MSU Extension beef cattle specialist, is based in Miles City. Van Emon serves the beef producers of the state by traveling to all 56 Montana counties. She meets ranchers and community members and tailors her research projects as an associate professor in the MSU College of Agriculture's Department of Animal and Range Sciences to meet their specific needs.

"If an Extension agent or a producer needs answers to any questions, I do the best I can in either answering them or finding the best person who can," said Van Emon. "Most of my research focuses on looking into those questions I receive, which varies based on the different regions of the state."

Van Emon arrived at Montana State in 2014 after receiving her doctorate from North Dakota State University and conducting postdoctoral research at Iowa State University. She focuses on questions of beef nutrition for producers in Montana. In the eastern part of the state, Van Emon said, that often takes the shape of examining the effects of water quality on cattle digestion, while in western Montana she often looks into small acreage production and maximizing production efficiency on smaller ranches.

Van Emon received the Animal Science Extension Award from the western section of the ASAS, which includes 12 western U.S. states as well as parts of western Canada and Mexico. The award was presented during the virtual section meeting last month.

"Just to be recognized as an outstanding member really meant a lot to me," Van Emon said. "Being recognized by my peers both here at the university who nominated me and the wider community of the section is really an honor."

Van Emon's programming also includes statewide engagement with Montana youth through 4-H and FFA programs. She helps lead the Montana Steer of Merit competition, an opportunity for students throughout the state to raise cattle and learn about various elements of beef quality. Students collect data on their steers each year at their county fair, such as weight, fat percentage and grade. Van Emon, in partnership with the Montana Stockgrowers Association, evaluates and grades the final animal statistics, selecting the top five highest-quality steers in the state.

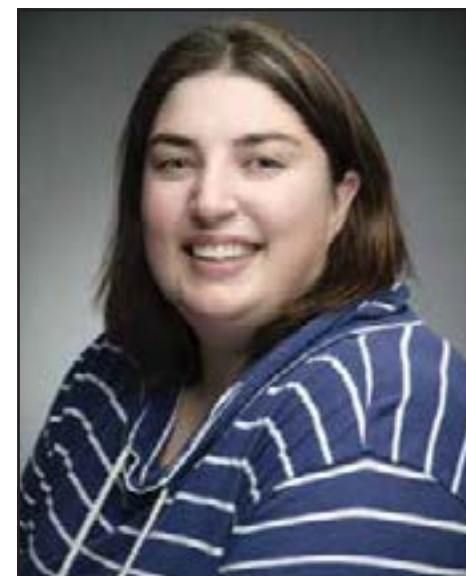
"We're very lucky to partner with MSGA for that program," said Van Emon. "It helps those 4-H and FFA students learn more about the impacts of what we feed our cattle and looking at the end product, how that's promoted for the beef industry and how that impacts the beef quality of the final product."

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, like many, Van Emon has had to adjust her outreach programming and has turned to virtual means to do so. She maintains connections with Extension agents across the state through video conferencing, recorded presentations and social media. Her research continues with an ongoing project examining the impacts of high sulfate and high salt concentrations in cattle drinking water on digestion of forage crops, which are often a primary food source for beef cattle in the state.

"Megan's work is critical to all of the elements of our land-grant mission at Montana State: education, research and outreach," said Cody Stone, MSU Extension executive director. "She works incredibly hard to ensure that our producers and community members are able to get their questions answered using the most accurate and up-to-date information, even if that means conducting the research herself. We are so lucky to have her, and this honor is truly deserved."

While much of her in-person work has been put on hold since the spring, Van Emon hopes to continue her statewide travels this winter, which she says are her favorite part of her work.

"What's unique about Montana is that we have beef cattle all over the state, so the questions are changing all the time," she said. "I like the mix of everything that I get to do, meeting producers and learning about their operations. I love getting out and meeting people, learning how I can best help them."



Megan Van Emon

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AUCTIONEER'S NOTE: Jim and Terri are long time residents of Roosevelt County. Jim loved to collect old tractors. They recently had a fire on their property, however these items were protected and have no fire damage. This will not be an all-day auction. Please join us on September 19th!



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Richland County Fair Grand Champions

Richland County 4-H program held their livestock judging and virtual sale Friday, August 7, at the Richland County Fairgrounds and Sidney Livestock Market.



Brody Swigart had the grand champion market steer purchased by Gem City Motors.



Left: Cooper McNally had the grand champion market hog purchased by Craig's Meat Processing.

Below: Olivia Klein had the grand champion market lamb.



Left: Becca Deming had the grand champion market goat.



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Watford City FFA Members Recognized July 28



Outstanding and Star Awards, (L-R) Dominic Robertson, Kell Helmuth, Isabell Boekelman, Neil Dahl, Shayla Rolla, Savanna Olson and Jenna Mandler. (Submitted photo)



Ben Johnston Memorial Scholarship. (Submitted photo)

By Koen Helmuth, Chapter Reporter

The Watford City FFA Chapter held an awards picnic at the Kent Pelton Nature Park on Tuesday, July 28 to recognize member achievements for the past school year. Members were presented with proficiency awards for their Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) projects and leadership awards. The Watford City FFA Chapter continues to develop its members through premier leadership, personal growth and career success.

The STAR Discovery Award went to Dominic-Jordan E. Robertson. As a young member, Dominic has helped whenever needed. He has attended every meeting possible and helped throughout FFA week activities. He definitely has demonstrated at a young age what it means to live to serve. Dominic was a member of our agronomy team and greatly improved throughout the season. He has a great future in store for him and our chapter looks forward to what's to come in future years.

The 2020 STAR Greenhand was Savanna Olson. Her accomplishments this past year include showing sheep at the State Fair, competing in Employment Skills at District Leadership, and competing in Ag Sales this winter. She was our second high salesperson for the fruit and meat fundraiser. Savanna has helped out at several FFA events and has a great start to her SAE project.

This year's Star in Agriscience is Jenna Mandler. Jenna has served as both Historian and Sentinel this past year. She competed in quiz team, judged Greenhand Parliamentary Procedure, attended National FFA Convention, was a top salesperson, and competed in the ag sales CDE. She was the Star Greenhand last year and has been a valuable member over the past few years. She's had numerous SAE projects that include poultry production and small animal care.

This year's Star In Ag Placement is Connor Cross. Connor has been very involved in FFA over the past four years. He has competed in agronomy, livestock evaluation, meats evaluation, environmental & natural resources, parliamentary procedure, Greenhand Quiz, and Creed. His SAE involves working at both Cross Brothers Cattle and McKenzie County NRCS. Connor has taken every agriculture class possible and has demonstrated a strong work ethic. He has stepped up in FFA over the past few years, especially in filling officer positions when needed, serving as student advisor, sentinel and vice president. He attended the National FFA Convention twice.

This year's Star in Agribusiness is Isabell Boekelman. Isabell has been a leader of our chapter in serving as a chapter officer for the past two years as she has been reporter and secretary. She has competed in floriculture, ag communications, and parliamentary procedure. She attended FFA leadership conferences, National FFA Convention, and has been a very active member all through her high school career. Her SAE this past year has been working at Cornerstone Bank for CWE.

This year's Star Farmer & recipient of the Casey Johnson scholarship is Kell Helmuth. His SAE involves poultry production, which he is very proud of. He has been very involved in FFA all through high school. He has volunteered to help whenever needed and competed in numerous CDEs. He was our president this year and was secretary the previous



Right: American Degree Recipient, Cauly Hartel (Submitted photo)



Award Recipients, front (L-R) Tyler Leiseth, Carson Voll, Dominic Robertson, Jesse Crawford, Kristen Clark and Shayla Rolla; back, Clay Ceynar, Koen Helmuth, Neil Dahl, Alician Garcia, Laney Hartel, Isabell Boekelman, Kell Helmuth, Jenna Mandler, Savanna Elliot, Brendalyn Clark and Savanna Olson. (Submitted photo)

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Grazing/Harvesting Rule Change An Opportunity For Farmers, Ranchers

USDA Will Allow Producers To Graze, Hay Or Cut Cover Crops On Prevented-Planting Acres Beginning Sept. 1

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Changes in federal grazing and harvesting rules on prevented-planting acres could help North Dakota livestock producers in select counties replenish forage supplies, or at least offset shortages in perennial forage production, according to North Dakota State University Extension livestock specialists.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will allow producers to graze, hay or cut cover crops on prevented-planting acres beginning Sept. 1. Counties included in the change are: Barnes, Benson, Bottineau, Cass, Dickey, Eddy, Foster, Grand Forks, Griggs, Kidder, LaMoure, McIntosh, Nelson, Ramsey, Ransom, Rolette, Sargent, Sheridan, Steele, Stutsman, Towner, Traill and Wells.

Counties that qualify must have 15% or more acres classified as prevented plant. Additional counties may qualify when the USDA's Farm Service Agency has completed certifying acres.

Many livestock producers in the region are short on forage due to challenging harvest conditions last fall and drought during key times for forage production. Many ranchers are reporting reductions in hay and forage production due to the precipitation deficit.

"The change in the allowable harvesting or grazing date to Sept. 1 on prevented-planting acres gives livestock producers an opportunity to offset the shortage of forage supplies while adding flexibility to their grazing program," says Miranda Meehan, NDSU Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist.

Cover crops produce a high-quality forage and extend the grazing season while allowing rangeland and pastures adequate time to recover. Here are a few things ranchers should consider when grazing or harvesting cover crops for forage.

"Test forage to ensure the feed meets the nutritional requirements of your livestock class," says Kevin Sedivec, NDSU Extension rangeland management specialist. "This is especially important when grazing cover crops because quality can vary, depending on the forage species, varieties and maturity. Forage quality parameters to be most concerned with include crude protein, digestibility and fiber level, as well as minerals."

Brassicas, such as turnips and radish, often are incorporated into cover crops mixes as a high-quality forage. Research on species and variety of brassicas conducted at NDSU reported crude proteins of 14-27% and total digestible nutrients of 70-80%. In addition, brassicas can contain as much as 80% water, depending on the timing of grazing.

This combination of high protein and water content can disrupt rumen function if high-fiber plants such as millet, sorghum, sudangrass and corn are not included in the mix. Ranchers may need to provide low-quality supplemental fiber, such as low-quality hay or straw, to increase intake and maintain performance.

Many species of cover crops have the potential to be toxic to cattle. Producers must be aware of potentially toxic species, conditions that increase the risk of toxicity and grazing management practices that reduce the potential of cattle consuming toxic forage. The most common toxicities associated with cover crops include hydrocyanic acid (HCN), nitrate and sulfur.

Hydrocyanic Acid (HCN)

Forage sorghum, sudangrass and hybrids contain HCN in the leaves and



Producers will be able to graze, hay or cut cover crops on prevented-planting acres beginning Sept. 1. (NDSU photo)

stems. The concentration of HCN depends on the species, variety, maturity, plant injury and environmental damage (hail and frost). The concentrations of HCN decrease as the plant matures. Damage or injury to the plant from hail, insects, frost or harvest breaks cells and releases the toxins.

These grazing management strategies reduce the potential for HCN toxicity:

- Delay grazing livestock until forage is 18- 24 inches tall.
- Avoid grazing regrowth under 12 inches.
- Do not graze following hail or a light frost. Grazing after a killing frost is safe because the HCN dissipates quickly after the plant dies.

Nitrates

Nitrates can accumulate in small-grain forages (wheat, oats, rye, triticale and barley), sorghum, sudangrass and corn. When plants encounter stressful growing conditions, photosynthesis is inhibited and the potential for accumulation of nitrates is increased. Elevated nitrate levels commonly are associated with drought stress, but nitrate also can accumulate during prolonged periods of cool, cloudy weather.

These strategies can help reduce the risk of nitrate poisoning when grazing:

- Do not move hungry cows.
- Provide cattle with roughage to reduce the amount of nitrate ingested.
- Do not overstock pastures when grazing high-nitrate forages. Overstocking increases the amount of high-nitrate plant parts (stems and stalks) that cows consume.

(continued on next page)

Farm Bureau Supports Meat Packing Acts To Help State Agriculture

Submitted by Rebecca Colnar, Ag NewsWire

The Montana Farm Bureau applauds Congressman Gianforte (R-MT) for his co-sponsoring of two important bills for livestock producers: The Requiring Assistance to Meat Processors for Upgrading Plants (RAMP-UP Act) and the Direct Interstate Retail Exemption for Certain Transactions (DIRECT) Act. MFBF has been actively pursuing legislation and other actions that will improve cattle markets for producers in Montana and the rest of the country.

"One huge problem in Montana is a lack of livestock processing capacity," stated MFBF National Affairs Director Nicole Rolf. "Plants across the state are significantly backed up so when a rancher gets ready to bring in a beef for processing, it may be months, or even next year, before they can get an appointment. Hogs and lambs are affected as well. This was a problem before the pandemic and it has been exacerbated by all the issues that have arisen since the coronavirus hit. Consumers got worried when they noticed store shelves getting a little bare so they started looking to buy in bulk or to buy local, which is great, but now we need to be able to deliver. There are a variety of complicating factors here, but these two bills will help fix some of the challenges."

The RAMP-UP Act, H.R. 7490, provides grants for small custom meat processors to become USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspected. This would allow more small meat processing plants to become federally inspected and the meat sold commercially.

"Montana has a mix of USDA-inspected, state inspected and custom exempt processing plants. The custom exempt plants or state-inspected plants are great for personal-use processing, such as when a rancher takes in a beef or a hunter has a deer cut for their own consumption," noted Rolf. "However, state and federal law places some restrictions on

the sale of meat killed at these plants. If the RAMP-UP Act bill were to pass, more of the state-inspected and custom plants may be able to take advantage of grant money to upgrade to FSIS inspections, allowing them to sell meat across state lines. This would give Montana ranchers more outlets for their cattle."

The DIRECT Act, HR 7425, would allow state inspected meat to be sold across state lines via internet sales.

"We believe this legislation allows new flexibilities and marketing opportunities while protecting food safety, recall ability, and trade market access with regard to equivalency agreements," said Rolf. "While we recognize the importance of FSIS inspection in interstate commerce and international trade, this bill is narrowly crafted and only allows the meat to be sold through e-commerce, alleviating traceability concerns."

Rolf added, "We thank Congressman Gianforte for his support of these bills. They will help Montana's smaller meat processing facilities provide meat for sale to consumers in Montana and beyond, which will, in turn, benefit our state's cattle ranchers."

Grazing/Harvesting...

(continued from previous page)

"If you are planning to harvest cover crops as a hay, it is important that the cover crop does not include or is low on brassicas," says Janna Block, NDSU's Hettinger Research Extension Center Extension livestock systems specialist. "Brassicas have a high water content and will not dry down enough to make a high-quality hay. Monocultures or mixes of cereal grains and warm-season grasses will be able to cure, producing a high-quality forage."

Producers planning to harvest as silage/haylage have a bit more flexibility because drying to an acceptable level for curing isn't as critical. Harvesting before a freeze is important to achieve silage because desired moisture conditions need to be 65- 70% for a bunker and 60-68% for silo bags.

A hard freeze will reduce the moisture content dramatically within 24-48 hours. Haylage can be put up at a lower moisture level (40-60%), so harvesting in late September to early October is possible.

If haylage will be your final feed produced, eliminate the brassicas in the mixture because they will be difficult to dry down to less than 60% before mid-October and the other plants in the mixture will be too dry following a hard frost.

Crop producers who planted cover crops on prevented-planting acres to suppress weeds and enhance soil health have an opportunity to market this forage to livestock producers. The NDSU Feedlist (<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/feedlist/>) can connect crop producers who have forage with livestock producers who need it.

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Johnston, Doneen, Helmuth & Pedersen Receive Recognition from FFA Chapter



Above left: Honorary Degree Recipient Marlai Johnston with president Shayla Rolla and vice president Laney Hartel. Above right: Honorary Degree Recipient Samantha Doneen with president Shayla Rolla and vice president Laney Hartel. Bottom right: Award of Appreciation Recipient Keith Helmuth with president Shayla Rolla and vice president Laney Hartel. (All submitted photos)

Submitted by Scott Wisness

The Watford City FFA Chapter held an awards picnic on Tuesday, July 28 at the Kent Pelton Nature Park. Every year, the chapter honors local people who support the FFA by presenting Honorary FFA degrees. This year's recipients were Samantha Doneen and Marlai Johnston. Members also decided at a chapter meeting this year to recognize the following two individuals with awards of appreciation. The Chapter decided at a meeting this year to recognize two individuals with an Award of Appreciation. These recipients were Dr. Bruce Pedersen & Keith Helmuth.

Keith Helmuth has served on our Agriculture Advisory Committee over the past five years and has been very actively involved in our program. He has been a very supportive parent as both his sons are involved in our chapter. His oldest son, Kell has served as president this past year and younger son, Koen will be our Reporter. Our chapter greatly appreciates his support and am very pleased to provide him with this recognition.

Dr. Bruce Pedersen has been a great partner for our Agriculture program. As Watford City Veterinary Center Veterinarian, Pedersen and his team have provided a valuable work experience for our students through the CWE program. They have also provided tours for our students on many occasions. Their partnership is greatly appreciated and he is very deserving of an Award of Appreciation.

Samantha Doneen is the agriculture teacher and FFA advisor for Watford City High School. This has been Doneen's first year teaching and she has been very valuable for our FFA Chapter. Her blue and gold shines through as she was very involved in her home state of Idaho. Doneen stepped right in last summer and created a land judging team, which is a first for our chapter. Throughout the year, she has been encouraging members to get involved and has been an outstanding advisor for our chapter. She is greatly appreciated and deserving of this recognition.

Marlai Johnston is an alumni of the Watford City FFA Chapter and has always been a strong supporter. Our chapter especially appreciates the support over the past few years as she and her family have established a scholarship in memory of her son Ben, who was also a member of the Watford City FFA Chapter. She



has provided for scholarships for two of our members each of the past two years and has also used funds to provide FFA jackets for members in need. Our chapter appreciates Marlai's involvement and is very honored to present her with an Honorary Degree.

"Honorary membership" - farmers, school superintendents, principals, members of boards of education, chapter advisors, teachers, business people, and others who are helping to advance Agricultural Education and the FFA, and who have rendered outstanding service, may be elected to honorary membership by a majority vote of the members present at any regular meetings or convention.

Early Weaning...

(continued from page 4)

"Lack of passive immunity, temperature fluctuations, heat stress, nutritional stress prior to weaning, dusty pens and handling stress may negatively impact the healthy transition to weaning," Stokka says. "The lack of adequate passive transfer of immunity from the birth mother to the calf increases the risk of post-weaning morbidity."

Temperature fluctuations may compromise the normal respiratory defense mechanisms, as do heat stress and dusty pen conditions. Dry conditions may result in nutritional stress prior to weaning, so make sure to provide appropriate protein, energy and mineral supplements prior to and after weaning.

"If calves need processing, such as vaccination, deworming etc., do so in the early morning hours or delay processing until the temperatures moderate," Stokka says. "Processing can be done at the time of weaning; however, only products that benefit the animal at weaning and do not compromise the immune response should be used. Processing done at least three weeks prior to early weaning is preferred and provides the opportunity to administer booster doses postweaning if necessary."

Facilities may need some remodeling if weaning calves are significantly smaller than normal. Calves become adept at finding ways to return to their dams or at least escaping from the weaning facility. Because smaller and younger calves may have difficulty competing for feed and water, sorting calves into several pen groups based on size and age may be a good idea.

"Early weaning is a management tool that can significantly reduce forage and water demand," Block says. "In addition, with proper preparation, calf health and performance are not compromised."

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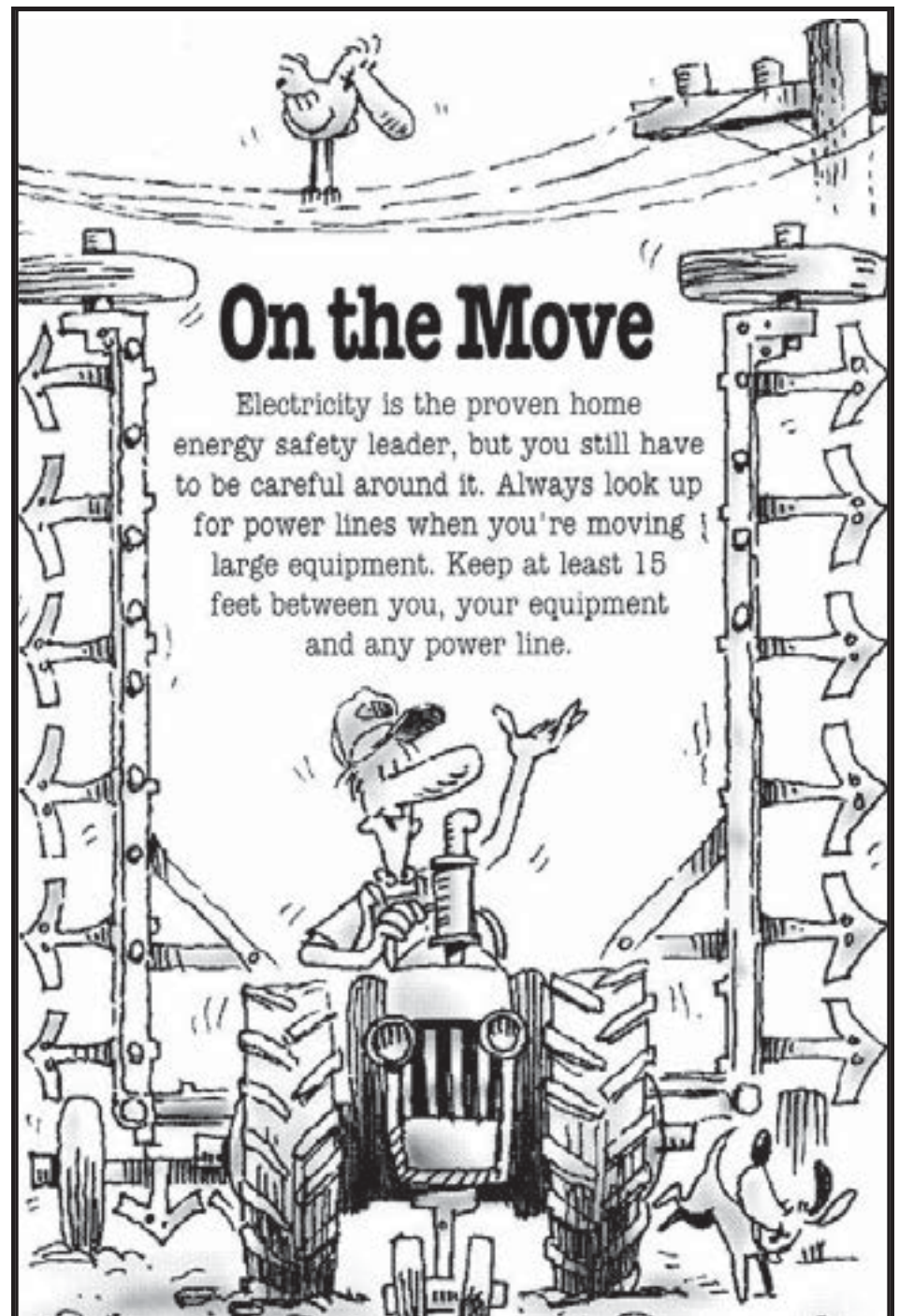
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