

A Newsletter about Livestock, Pastures and Rangeland

Edited by John M. Harper, Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor, Mendocino & Lake Counties

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John Harper's Livestock & Natural Resources Blog Updates January 31— June 4, 2012

From time to time **The Grazer's Gazette** will reprint articles from John Harper's on-line blogs and postings to Facebook and Twitter. If you are not already on John's email distribution list and would like to get this information when it is posted, please contact the UC Cooperative Extension at 707-463-4495 or email cemendocino@ucdavis.edu with your current email address. Also, be sure to notify us of email or address changes so that you continue to receive timely information. You can also subscribe to John's Blog by going to our website at <http://cemendocino.ucdavis.edu>. Scroll down to one of the blogs. At the end, click on the RSS feed icon (see sample here) to subscribe.



UCD's Alison Van Eenennaam in Animal Science News January 31, 2012

The recommended reading below is an interesting post from the American Society of Animal Science's "Taking Stock" newsletter. UCD's Alison Van Eenennaam talks about the genetics and the public's perception of genetically engineered salmon and other animals in the hope that people will better understand the science. Alison's guest lecture on this topic at Oregon State University can be seen on YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=cN1w7EionA4

Recommended reading: Forget "Frankenfish." UC Davis scientist explains the real benefits of genetically engineered animals at <http://www.asas.org/takingstock/?p=2408>

FAQ-E. Coli: Good, Bad & Deadly

February 28, 2012

The American Academy of Microbiology has just released an excellent report as part of their FAQ series entitled "*E. coli: good, bad, & deadly*". The FAQ series provides science-based information about important topics in which microbes play an important role. The full report is in pdf form and can be downloaded at: <http://academy.asm.org/images/stories/documents/EColi.pdf>.



It's a very short and easy to understand report and is valuable for anyone in food production. It's also great if you're a consumer who is concerned about food safety and water quality. They've done a great job in translating the science. Take 15 minutes of your day to read it. You'll be glad you did!

US Department of Labor Withdraws Proposal on Minors Working on Farms

April 27, 2012

Good news! Just in from the US Labor Department.

"The decision to withdraw the proposal was made in response to thousands of comments expressing concerns about the effect of the proposed rules on small family-owned farms," the Labor Department said in a written statement. "To be clear, this regulation will not be pursued for the duration of the Obama administration." As you'll recall, The proposed rules would have barred children under the age of 16 from operating tractors or heavy farm equipment on non-family farms. They would not have applied to children working on their own family farms.

ASAS Series on The Future of Hunger

April 26, 2012

The following article came via the American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) "Taking Stock" newsletter and it is well worth passing on. Reading the full series will give you some important information on what animal science has done and is doing to maintain the world's food security.



"Over the last few months, ASAS has released segments of a feature article called *The future of hunger*. This series explored the ways that animal scientists can help feed the world's growing population. Through advances in areas like feed efficiency and breeding, scientists and producers can improve animal agriculture. A complete pdf of the article is now available at: <http://www.asas.org/takingstock/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/the-future-of-hunger.pdf>

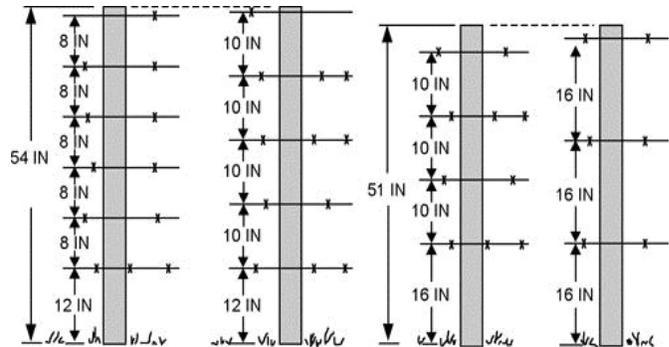
Livestock Fencing Thoughts

March 1, 2012

Livestock fencing requirements vary by grazing/farming management objectives, species, age and sex of animals contained, topography, climate conditions, predation control, ecological restoration requirements, maintenance issues, aesthetic concerns and cost. In general, livestock fencing occurs as one of three types: 1) Boundary or perimeter fencing – used to keep livestock on site, with predation protection, and define a management unit that is spatially unique from other units; 2) Cross-fencing or paddock fencing – used to control livestock distribution and achieve grazing management objectives by controlling the space, density and duration of grazing; and 3) Enclosure fencing – used to protect temporarily or permanently resources that might be damaged by grazing or for monitoring by compare and contrast methods. Adequate perimeter fencing to contain livestock is also required by California law (Food & Ag Code 17121) as Mendocino or Lake Counties are not considered as “free-range” counties.

Traditional livestock fencing materials have included barbed, woven, mesh and electrified wire plus combinations of these materials. Different types of posts include treated wood, metal and fiberglass.

Barbed wire is the most commonly used material for cattle, but it can also be used for sheep and goats if properly spaced and will deter some predators. For sheep and goats the bottom spacing must be closer with the first wire no more than 6 inches off the ground and the second wire 6 inches up from that. If predators are a problem, the first barbed wire is placed practically on the ground (0 to 2 inches) to discourage coyotes or domestic dogs from burrowing under the fence. The remaining wires that follow will need to be spaced 8 inches apart. Typically sheep fences are only 4 feet high, but goats will need the same height as cattle. A drawback of barbed wire for sheep and angora goats is that their fleece often gets caught on the barbs. Barbed wire consists of two or more strands of smooth, galvanized wire twisted together with two or four sharp barbs spaced every 4 to 5 inches. Standard barbed wire fences usually have three to five strands of barbed wire stretched between posts. Typical fence height is either 51 or 54 inches. Spacing between wires depends on the number of line wires and fence height (Figure 2). Line posts are usually spaced 12 to 20 feet apart.



Suspension barbed wire fences consist of four to six strands of 12 1/2-gauge barbed wire stretched taut so no more than 3 inches of sag exists between posts. The wire strands are held apart by twisted wire stays or plastic battens or droppers spaced 16 feet apart. Line posts are usually spaced 80 to 120 feet apart.

Woven wire is more often used for sheep and goats as it is a tighter fence that prevents young lambs or kids from getting out. Heavy or extra heavyweight woven wire fences are excellent for non-horned sheep and goats. Fence height should be at least 48 inches high to prevent animals from climbing over the fence. Woven wire fence can be used with cattle provided there are several strands of barbed top wires used to prevent the cattle from rubbing the woven wire down.

Woven wire fences consist of smooth horizontal (line) wires held apart by vertical (stay) wires. Spacing between line wires may vary from 1 1/2 inches at the bottom for small animals to 9 inches at the top for large animals. Wire spacing generally increases with fence height.

Generally, where coyote predation is not a concern, stay wires should be spaced 6 inches apart for sheep and goats and 12 inches apart for large animals. Coyotes, however, can pass through openings as small as 4 1/2 inches, so if predation is a concern, woven wire fences with stay wires spaced close together will prevent predators from entering fenced-in areas. Some manufacturers produce fencing with bottom openings of 6 inch by 3 inch for predator control and 3 inch by 3 inch for predator proofing. Using one strand of barbed wire at ground level with woven wire above and two to three

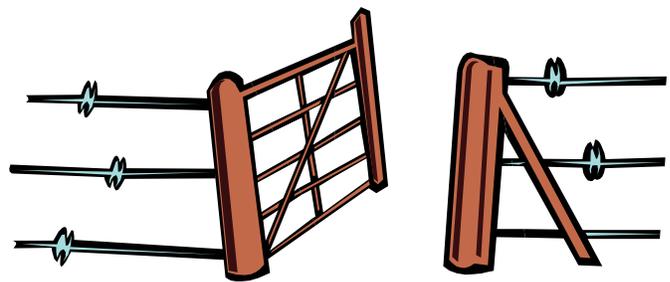
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strands of barbed wire on top is the best non-electrified fence for sheep and goats.

If wildlife-friendly fences are required, typically the top most barbed wire is replaced with a smooth wire of similar gauge. Wildlife-friendly fences are not recommended if predation is a problem.

Fencing within many North Coast areas, such as the Little Lake Valley in Mendocino County for example, presents some unique challenges due to high water flows in the winter and because of wildlife migration patterns. Electric fences will not work there as the elk will walk through it. In addition East/West fences cannot be woven wire or barbed with very close spacing as the high water flows will fill these fences with debris and eventually take them out creating a maintenance nightmare. East/West fences in this area should probably use the minimum number of barbed wires to contain livestock. For cattle this could be as few as three strands. For sheep or goats four or five strands should suffice. North/South fences and most of the perimeter fence in this example can be either a combination of woven wire and barbed wire or more closely spaced barbed wire as in Figure 2. Always consider the unique environment that fences must accommodate and build accordingly.

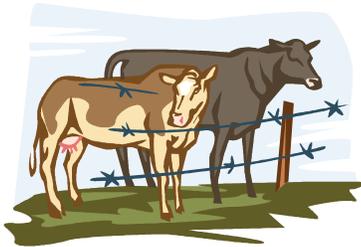
End posts with H-braces made of 2 inch steel set in concrete will be stronger and last longer than wooden posts. Steel T-posts should be used for all line posts. Gates should be 16 feet wide made of 2 inch tubular steel for field equipment and for lime, hay or gravel trucks. For sheep or goats, the gates should have welded mesh wire welded to the tubular steel. This size will also allow adequate access for fire suppression equipment. When planning fences for the ranch's management units remember to include a gathering, sorting and loading corral each individual management unit. Size and shape will depend on the kind of livestock that the grazer will be running. Finally, remember the old saying, "good fences make for good neighbors".



California Beef Council Advisory: USDA BSE Update April 27, 2012

For all cattle producers, it's especially important to pass this on to your friends, customers, and families not in the business. The following came via Dr. Jim Oltjen, UCD and from Janel Fisher, California Beef Council:

"In an update issued late yesterday, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced additional findings in its ongoing epidemiological investigation into the case of BSE detected earlier this week in central California.



The animal in question was 10 years and 7 months old and came from a dairy farm in Tulare County, California. The animal was humanely euthanized after it developed lameness and became recumbent. The animal's carcass will be destroyed. The cow was tested as part of targeted BSE surveillance at rendering facilities. The USDA is continuing its epidemiological investigation and will provide additional information as it is available. The California Beef Council (CBC) will provide updates to producers as we receive them from the USDA and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA).

It is important to reiterate that this animal was never presented for slaughter for human consumption, did not

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enter food supply channels, and at no time presented any risk to human health."

In addition, the UCD School of Vet Med has provided the following links with the latest information and encourages you to use these references to answer questions. The Vet Med site will be updated regularly.

Vet Med: <http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/whatsnew/article.cfm?id=2533>

CDFA: http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/BSE_Info.html

USDA: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdamediafb?contentid=2012/04/0132.xml&printable=true&contentonly=true>

FDA statement on safety of milk: <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm301850.htm>

If you have questions about UC's role in the BSE investigation, please contact Lynn Narlesky in the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine Office of the Dean, (530) 752-5257, lnarlesky@ucdavis.edu.

Rangeland Watershed Management Wins Award for Excellence

May 8, 2012

The UC Agriculture and Natural Resources - Rangeland Watershed Program has received the 2012 Western



Extension Directors Association Award of Excellence for its outstanding work with water quality and grazing issues on California's rangelands.

"The Rangeland Management Program has been a tremendous help in protecting the open space, habitat for plants and wildlife, and healthy watersheds that California's rangelands provide," said Tracy Schohr, director of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition "They educate land

managers and provide the objective, accurate information we need."

UC Cooperative Extension Specialist Melvin George with the UC Davis Department of Plant Sciences started the program in the 1990s, collaborating with the range livestock industry, the Environmental Protection Agency, and several state and federal natural resources agencies and associations.

Rangeland Watershed Specialist Ken Tate with the UC Davis Department of Plant Sciences and John Harper, livestock and natural resources advisor with Mendocino County UC Cooperative Extension, will accept the Award of Excellence on behalf of the program on July 12 during a ceremony in Park City, Utah.

UC-Hopland Research & Extension Center BLOG

This BLOG post is an almost daily submission by HREC staff. It consists of a photograph somehow related to UC-HREC and a short one-to-three paragraph explanation. You can sign up to receive an email notice of each new submission by:

- Go to: <http://ucanr.org/blogs/Hopland/>
- Once you are to the BLOG, from the right hand menu select "SUBSCRIBE"
- Enter your email and cryptic numbers and submit
- You will receive email notification

CAST Commentary Released: The Direct Relationship between Animal Health and Food Safety Outcomes

May 11, 2012

The Council of Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) recently released a commentary paper on the direct relationship between animal health and food safety outcomes. It is an informative read for livestock producers and consumers. The following is from the paper's introduction and objectives:

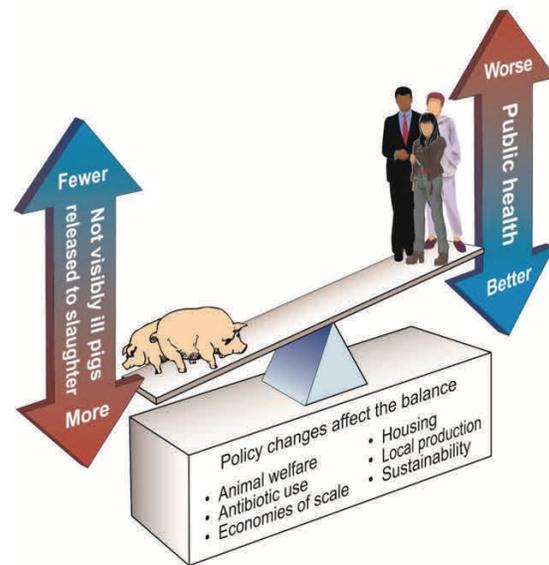
"Many groups in society, including politicians, activists, scientists, and stakeholders, are advocating significant changes to livestock production practices. These changes include modification of stocking densities, limitations on antimicrobial use, and requirements for outdoor "experiences." Such changes may affect animal health, productivity, and food quality. Simultaneously, many consumers are demanding virtually risk-free food at least cost, and they believe that food safety should be addressed on-farm as well as during processing. It is critical that decision makers understand the relationship between animal health and food safety, which is a complex association requiring careful evaluation of many variables.

The objectives of this paper are to (1) discuss the quantifiable impact animal health has on public health risk due to foodborne illness from meat, milk, eggs, and poultry; (2) identify the factors that impact animal health; and (3) highlight specific research needs. This paper will focus on direct and indirect impacts that

animal health may have on public health."

The entire paper, in pdf format, is available for free at: http://www.cast-science.org/publications/?the_direct_relationship_between_animal_health_and_food_safety_outcomes&show=product&productID=155971

Make sure you select Online/Downloadable in the drop-down to the right of the page on the link above.



USDA Launches Boxed Beef Dashboard

June 4, 2012



The following was posted on the several information sites but is worth including for those ranchers doing direct sales of boxed beef. It will help in pricing your cuts based on the wholesale and retail trades.

USDA has developed a new interactive Dashboard which allows users to view data for boxed beef markets in an easy-to-use, customizable way. The dashboard provides users with quick access to

volume and price information in the form of customizable graphs and tables, which complement the existing data available through the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Market News site. With the addition of boxed beef, the AMS Livestock Dashboard now provides weekly data on boxed beef, cattle, hogs and sheep covered by Livestock Mandatory Reporting. Users can access the boxed beef dashboard at: http://mpr.datamart.ams.usda.gov/amstdashboardboxed_beef [BoxedBeef Dashboard Option 1.html](#).

Adapted from National Meat Association's newsletter

UCD's Animal Science Video Wins ASAS Award!

June 4, 2012

A while back I encouraged you to watch and vote on the video *Were Those the Days, My Friend* produced by UC Davis Animal Scientist, Alison Van Eenennaam and her graduate student team. Thanks to all who voted, it won the American Society of Animal Science video competition. Below is the announcement reprinted from ASAS's Taking Stock.

UC Davis group wins ASAS Video Competition

by M. McCurrySchmidt

Congratulations to a team from UC Davis, whose video "Were Those the Days, My Friend" received the most votes in the first-ever ASAS Video Competition. Their video on the impact of production efficiency and biotechnology will be shown at the awards ceremony at the ASAS Joint Annual Meeting in Phoenix this July. The team will also receive the first place prize of \$1,250. This video was written and directed by UC Davis cooperative extension specialist Alison Van Eenennaam, with photos collected by UC Davis students Kristina Weber and Kevin Au. Vocals on a song cover were supplied by Ramona Swenson.

In second place was a group of students from New Mexico State University. Their video titled "How NMSU's Animal & Range Science Department is Feeding the World" highlighted the animal agriculture programs and

outreach at NMSU. They will receive \$750.

In third place was a group from Purdue University. Their video titled "Animals and Food Security in Haiti" featured stories from students who traveled to Haiti to help with animal agriculture programs. They will receive \$500.

Overall, the videos in the contest received 11,357 views during the one-month voting period. This was a great step toward the ASAS goal of sharing the importance of animal science with the public. Thank you to everyone who entered or took the time to vote. The videos are featured on the ASAS YouTube channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/videosforASAS/videos>



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Also check out John's Blog on our office website: <http://cemendocino.ucdavis.edu>

Published by
**University of California
Cooperative Extension
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