

Beef News

The cows are safely back on the cow side of the farm and finishing off some nice pasture paddocks before we start feeding them round bales and baleage for the winter. The calves are growing like crazy. We will be taking out the clean up bull soon and pregnancy checking and vaccinating the cows.

There will be a meeting featuring information on handling facilities on Thursday evening December 1 at the Extension Learning Farm classroom. Mike Baker will be in town to do farm visits during the day and speak at the meeting at 7:00 pm. Amy Thompson, DVM, will talk about handling facilities from a vet's point of view. Corey Hayes will present an example of a beef farm business summary as well. The cost is \$5.00 per person and registration is with the Extension office at 379-9192.

Several of us are trying to organize a Beef Quality Assurance program for Saturday December 3rd with the cowside training at Windy Hill Angus in Potsdam. Here is your chance to get the training and tour Windy Hill as well. We are still working on the details but let me know if you are interested (bmf9@cornell.edu).

A few months back I mentioned bale grazing and a grant we wrote to look at the effects on soil fertility. Unfortunately, we did not get the grant but there were many questions about bale grazing.

What is bale grazing anyways? Bale grazing is putting your round bales out in a field in a pattern that allows you to feed them a few at a time over the winter. Fencing of some kind is used to ration out the bales. Since the cattle leave a ring of wasted hay, manure and urine around each bale site, the field can actually be renovated this process. One plus is that you don't have to start the tractor during those cold winter days. You do all the work ahead of time and then just move the fence along as you portion out more bales.

Where is the best place to bale graze? Someplace easy to monitor, with an existing perimeter fence and not too far from where the bales were made is ideal. A field with an established perennial forage that needs renovating is best.

So how exactly do you move fencing when the ground is frozen? There are several creative solutions to this problem. Put up all the fence dividers ahead of time and just take the wires down as you go and leave the step in posts. If you have to put in posts in the winter, a cordless drill with a masonry bit can work or a pilot rod driven in and pulled out will work. Another version uses the step in posts sticking out of the actual bales. One farmer even used old folding chairs sitting on top of the snow. In the right situation tumble wheels will work well. Your charger will work better if you can use the one in the barn plugged into an outlet.

Pete Hagar, a beef farmer and educator from Clinton County CCE has practical experience bale grazing at his farm. You can contact him at pjh7@cornell.edu.

There is a great reference called "Bale Grazing and the Bale Grazing Calculator" at the following website:

<http://www.agrireseau.qc.ca/bovinsboucherie/documents/adxGetMedia%20.pdf>

The information is out of Saskatchewan and is very complete with lots of helpful suggestions.