



Pickens County
Cattlemen's
Association

222 West Main St., Pickens, SC 29671

Newsletter

Volume 13

April 1, 2017

Soil Samples Are A Cost Saver

by RD Morrison

Area Livestock Agent Lindsey Craig spoke on soil samples at the February 21st meeting of the PCCA. After a good meal, catered by the Smokin' Pig in LaFrance, she started discussing the way to take a soil sample. One sample bag headed for the lab requires multiple samples taken in the field. One sample bag will cover a ten acre field, but like areas should be sampled separately (i.e., bottom land vs. hills). The sample fee is \$6 - the best \$6 you can spend. The results will tell the producer what fertilizer the soil needs, when to apply it and how much to apply.

One aspect of the results is to indicate the soils pH - very important as most grasses grow at a pH of 5.8 to 6.5. High pH reduces micronutrient availability. She showed several sample soil test results and explained the comment section of the report. The comments for fescue, for example, state that the Nitrogen (N) should be split between spring and fall applications with Nitrogen only in the spring and the needed blend (N, P, K) containing the remainder of the nitrogen in the fall. It is important to list the right grass that you have so that a proper nitrogen recommendation can be made. The soil lab does not test for nitrogen but recommendations are based on what the type of grass would need. Phosphorous (P) is not easily removed from

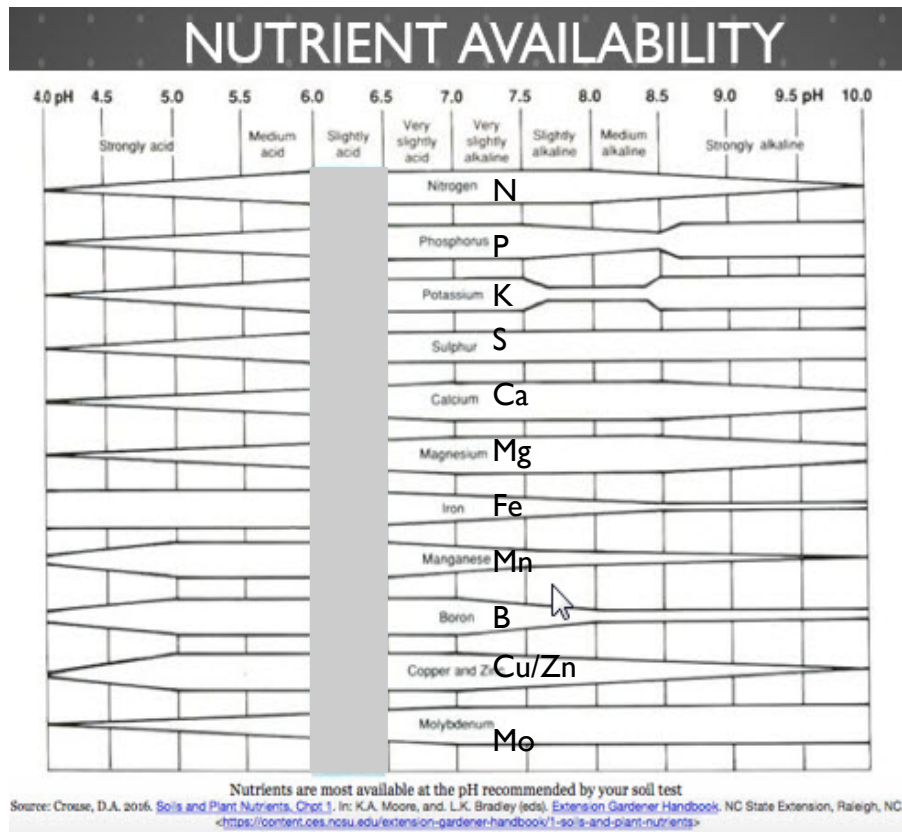
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the soil. It does not leach out or get washed away. Cutting hay and removing it to the barn will remove P. Potassium (K) can leach into the subsoil. If too much is added to soil, it can tie up magnesium (Mg) where levels are already low.

The pH of your soil determines the availability of nutrients. pH is on a 1 - 14 scale with 7 being neutral. Most soils are slightly on the acidic side and lime is the best option to correct this. Remember, the soil did not get acidic overnight and applying 2 tons of lime will not fix it overnight. Lime can take from six months to a year to fully work. She showed a chart (see picture) showing the nutrient availability for many elements at various pH values.

Thanks, Lindsey, for a really informative meeting.



Weed Control Addressed at March 21 Meeting

By RD Morrison

The March 21st meeting of the PCCA was held at the Career Center (PCCT&C). A really good crowd of members attended and enjoyed the brisket from the Smokin' Pig.

Vice President Eddie Evans introduced Area Livestock Agent Lindsey Craig. Lindsey gave the four steps to weed control. The first step is **EVALUATE**. Look at all your pastures and grazing areas. Consider your feeding patterns, stocking density, forage growth and type, and the weather patterns. With the drought that we have been experiencing, many pastures are overgrazed. A dry lot in which to feed hay may be a good sacrifice to let the other pastures recover.

INVENTORY your fields to determine which pastures need weed control. Pigweed will flourish around a round bale feeder and bird droppings tend to place weeds underneath fences.

IDENTIFY the weeds of most concern to determine when they grow, at what stage of their growth are they most easily killed and what will kill it. For example, the thistle is fairly easily controlled in the rosette stage (early growth) but when there is a flower, it is too late to spray. Don't know what this weed is? If it (live plant or good pictures) is brought to the extension office, they will help identify it.

CONTROL is accomplished by Chemical or Manual or Cultural methods. Identify the best chemical to spray, when to spray and how much to spray to control the identified weeds.. Manual control is accomplished with a mower

(or a hoe) but when is the best time to remove them? The weed problem may be a Cultural issue such as soil infertility, overgrazing or a heavy use area (round bale feeding area).

Here are some tips. Spraying should be done when the weed is actively growing (identify) and the correct herbicide should be used. FOLLOW ALL LABEL DIRECTIONS. The label will have the brand name, chemical name, active ingredients, warnings and hazard statements, and directions for use, storage, and disposal. It, also, has first aid information. Don't spray during times of stress (drought) as the plant will go into survival mode and not take in the herbicide. Don't spray when the temperature is less than 50 degrees F. Mowing yields better results with broadleaf weeds than grasses. Mowing should be done to prevent seed production and movement. Some weeds can root from stem pieces and mowing would just spread them. Consider the price of fuel / time vs. cost of spraying.

PLAN your weed control. Change practices to limit weed growth. Plant forages that will compete with weeds and nurture that forage. Scout pastures and hayfields early to stop a small problem from becoming a big problem.

Sprayer calibration is the key to good results. Here is Linsey's example (way better than I could explain).

So how much Herbicide do I use?

- Depends on your calibration:
- **For example:** Assume you have a **30 ft.** sprayer that holds **500 gallons**, and you want to apply an herbicide at **3 pounds** of active ingredient per acre. The product comes as an **80% wettable** powder. You calibrate your sprayer on a **300 foot** course and apply **4 gallons** of spray to the course.

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Time for some math....

$$\frac{\text{lb AI/acre}}{\text{conc.}} = \frac{3 \text{ lb/acre}}{0.80} = 3.75 \text{ lb/acre}$$

← How much product you need per acre

$$\frac{4 \text{ gal/test} \times 43560}{300 \text{ ft} \times 30 \text{ ft}} = 19.4 \text{ gal/acre}$$

← How many gallons your tank puts down per acre

$$\frac{\text{gal/tank}}{\text{gal/acre}} = \frac{500 \text{ gal}}{19.4 \text{ gal/acre}} = 25.8 \text{ acre/tank}$$

← How many acres your tank can cover at one time

$$3.75 \text{ lb/acre} \times 25.8 \text{ acre/tank} = 96.8 \text{ lb/tank}$$

FYI: if you were only putting out 3 gallons/300ft, your active ingredient needs would be 129lbs - This is why we calibrate!

↑
Total amount of product to be placed in full tank



Thank you, Lindsey, for one of the best weed meetings ever. No pictures of weeds - just really good info on addressing the problem and the first ever calibration procedure at a meeting.

This, and other PCCA DVD's, are available to our members at Moore Balliew Oil Company on Shady Grove Rd., Pickens.

PCCA Advertisers Appreciation Dinner Coming Up

The annual advertisers appreciation dinner and mini trade show is coming up on April 25 at the Pickens County Career & Technology Center, located on Chastain Road, Liberty. Many of our supporters will be on hand with information on their products and services. The PCCA urges all of our members to attend and show our sponsors some appreciation. The Smokin' Pig will cater this meeting / mini trade show.

Call 864-878-1394 x 0 to RSVP. Thanks!

Don't Get Surprised at Market Time: Know Value of Gain

By Dan Childs

With permission of the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation

Value of gain (VOG) can be useful information for cattle producers who are contemplating purchasing cattle or making retained ownership or marketing decisions for currently owned cattle.

VOG can be defined in multiple ways. Some have defined it as the difference in the value (weight \times price) from the beginning of a growing period to the end of the growing period divided by the pounds gained. Another way to define it is as the amount of money the market is willing to pay for the next pound of weight a calf or yearling gains.

Know What to Purchase - Knowing the VOG between the various weight ranges can be used to determine which weight would be best to purchase. As long as a producer can purchase pounds for the same price or less than it costs to put pounds on, it makes economic sense to keep evaluating heavier cattle until the market is paying more than his or her cost of gain.

Know when to Sell - Once a producer has made the purchase or has calves at home, an important question is: at what weight should calves be sold? The answer can be obtained by calculating the total cost to put on a pound of gain and comparing that to the VOG as weight is added to the calf. Too often a producer is guilty of viewing a market report from their favorite point of sale and calculating what the market paid at that time for cattle of different weights. The time it takes to grow the calf to a heavier weight is overlooked. If a producer has five- or six-weight cattle and they are thinking about growing them to 800 pounds, a current market report is not the best information to use because the calf is not going to weigh 800 pounds until possibly 100 to 150 days into the future. Therefore, a future price for an 800-pound calf is a better indicator of what the market will pay for gain rather than using the price for an

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800-pounder from the current market report. What price is used for the future date? The only source available today is the cattle futures market. All the reasons why the futures market is not a good indicator could be debated for a lengthy time. A producer could argue they can forward a cash contract with an order buyer. But likely what the order buyer offers is based off the underlying feeder cattle contract for that future time period. Observing the feeder cattle contract for the closest month, but not before the time of planned sell date, then adjusting it for the market where the cattle will be sold is the only price a producer can lock in for the calf at the heavier weight. Therefore, this is the price producers should use in analyzing the retained ownership decision of how big to grow a calf.

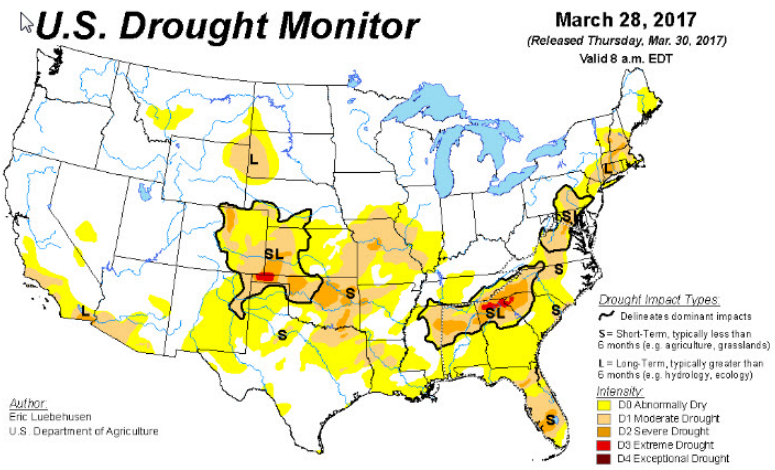
Example - Fall 2016 serves as a good example to illustrate the fallacy of using a current market report to determine VOG. Eight-weight cattle were priced such that the VOG from 500 pounds to 800 pounds was more than \$1 per pound. However, if a producer had a 500-pound weaned calf, it would likely be March 2017 before the calf would weigh 800 pounds. The March 2017 feeder cattle futures contract was discounted more than \$15 per hundred-weight to the October cash price, indicating a VOG less than 60 cents per pound. It would be quite a disappointing surprise for a producer to think the market was paying \$1 per pound to learn when the calf actually weighed 800 pounds, the market only paid 60 cents per pound or \$120 per head less than they thought the calf would be worth. Cow-calf and stocker producers alike can benefit from having a knowledge of their cost of gain and comparing their cost to what the market is paying for gain at the various weights as the calf grows. This knowledge is very powerful as marketing and risk management decisions are made for the operation.

ATV accidents from 2003 – 2011 resulted in

2,090 injuries **321 fatalities**

3 out of 5 ATV fatalities occurred in agriculture.

ATV & UTV Safety



The drought is still with us, although better that last week. Producers are reminded to plan and take advantage of what rain we do get in order to have any hay season at all.

Drought Management Strategies

RD Morrison

The January PCCA meeting was on drought management strategies and was presented by Dr. Matt Burns, Clemson Livestock and Forage Team Leader, and Lidsey Craig, Area Livestock Agent.

The first step is to prioritize to protect your forage resources and the body condition score of your cattle. Cull any 'unproductive cattle'. You cannot afford to feed free-loaders. The producer should be ready to capitalize on moisture when it comes. The ideal body condition score (BCS) is between 4 1/2 and 6 1/2 (leaning toward the 6 range) When BCS is low (i.e., 3), it could take as long as 400 days for the cow to breed back; whereas a BCS 6 cow should breed back in 345 days. That difference in days will cost the producer money. BCS is important because a BCS 3 cow will come into the first heat 89 days after calving and the BCS 6 cow will experience first heat 52 days after calving.

Another strategy is to wean calves early (45 - 60 days). The advantages to this strategy are (1) it lowers the nutrient requirements for cows, (2) it is especially beneficial to younger cows and (3) it allows more cows to be maintained on limited forage. The disadvantages to early weaning are (1) Calf nutrition and management are increased, (2) there is a loss of increased weaning weights from high milk production, and (3) calf feeding costs increases significantly.

Culling priorities include culling open cows first. It is important to have a defined breeding season with some form of pregnancy determination (preg check). Older cows are the second priority. They may still be productive, but nearing the end of their career. The younger cows, hopefully, will have better genetics. Lastly, low productive cows are culled.

The Clemson cow-calf budget for the upstate states that the variable costs for a cow to be carried a year is \$429.79 and the fixed cost is \$407.53, or a total of \$837.32

per year - 2.29 / day. This assumes that the producer has a fall calving season, a 90 day calving season and the calves are weaned / sold at 9 months. According to Clemson, the feed and pasture cost is 55 - 70% of your cost and winter feeding is \$2.16 / day. Stretch your hay by supplementing your cattle.

| Days on Feed | 30 | 60 | 90 | 120 | 150 |
|----------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Hay Cost (\$1.50/day*) | \$45 | \$90 | \$135 | \$180 | \$225 |
| (\$2.25/day**) | \$68 | \$135 | \$203 | \$270 | \$338 |
| *30 lb. hay/head/day @ \$100/ton | | | | | |
| **30 lb./head/day @ \$150/ton | | | | | |

| Feed Ingredient | As Fed | DM | DM Fed | CP | TDN |
|----------------------|--------|-------------|--------|------|------|
| Bermuda Grass Hay | 14.25 | 88.5 | 12.61 | 9.8 | 49 |
| Ground Corn | 3.3 | 89 | 2.96 | 10.1 | 90 |
| Soybean Hulls | 6.66 | 91 | 6.06 | 11.9 | 77 |
| Totals | | | 21.64 | 2.3 | 13.5 |
| Requirements for: | | | | | |
| 1100 lb cow avg milk | | | 21.6 | 2 | 12.1 |
| | | DIFFERENCE: | 0.04 | 0.26 | 1.4 |

This meeting, along with many others, is available at Moore Balliew Oil Company on Shady Grove Road in Pickens.

Thank you, Dr. Burns and Lindsey for a really informative meeting to help producers in Pickens County manage the drought situation.



The PCCA awarded \$500 to support the PCC&TC FFA at their annual award banquet March 30. Congratulations to Tyler Sowell, Michaela Gibson and Maddi Penson on their awards received at the banquet.

*Thoughts from the President -
Amy Finley Wilson*



Recently, some of our members attended the South Carolina Cattlemen's Association Annual Conference. Reviews were good and most said that it was one of the best. Only one complaint was spoken and that was that chicken was served at the dinner instead of beef.

As an organization, we promote beef as a better choice than other proteins, ideally, locally grown beef. As individuals and as a group, we should all do our part to promote the beef industry we are engaging in, whether part-time as a hobby or full-time as a career.

We are stewards of our land, improving our soils, and using Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) standards in how we treat our animals. As a group, we are constantly learning to improve what and how we do things. We should be proud of ourselves, our association, the beef we produce and choose to promote it at every opportunity.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| PCCA Synopsis Report | Sam's Club | \$45.00 |
| for period as of 3/30/17 - | Postage | \$81.00 |
| Balance : \$13420.00 | Printing | \$1425.24 |
| INCOME: \$9236.00 | Azalea Festival | \$35.00 |
| Ads \$5915.00 | Meals | \$1373.27 |
| Dues \$1165.00 | Website | \$620.00 |
| Reimbursed \$1600.00 | Raffle | \$224.27 |
| Raffle/ contributions | Repairs | \$87.95 |
| \$561.00 | Tax | \$19.55 |
| EXPENSES: \$5364.37 | | |
| SCCA dues \$900.00 | | |
| Donation \$540.25 | | |



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