



Ag Pesticide Container Recycling Set

PIERRE — The South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA) encourages all ag producers and businesses to take advantage of the free pesticide container recycling collection from Monday, July 14, through Wednesday, Sept. 10, in 37 locations around the state.

There are two accepted methods of pesticide container disposal. Pesticides may be disposed of at a solid waste landfill or turned over for recycling. With either of these methods, containers must be triple or pressure rinsed to remove contaminants.

Recycling is the preferred way of disposing pesticide containers because containers are removed from the solid waste stream and the discarded materials can be reused. Many solid waste facilities do not take pesticide containers because they do not have enough staff to ensure containers are properly prepared for disposal. Recycling is a NO-COST option and all containers that previously contained crop protection chemicals are accepted.

South Dakota state law prohibits open burning practices that create a nuisance or a hazard to public health. Open burning of plastics releases chemicals to the atmosphere that are considered to be hazardous air pollutants.

"When you consider the health risks associated with open burning plastic containers and the fact that state law prohibits the practice, choosing to take advantage of the Pesticide Container Recycling Program should be an easy decision," said Tom Gere, SDDA fertilizer and pesticide specialist.

If you are a large quantity generator of containers, have Waste Pesticide for disposal or have no collections in your area it may be possible to have SDDA staff come directly to your location and collect containers.

For a full schedule of container pick up times and locations, please visit <http://sdda.sd.gov/ag-services/pesticide-program/pesticide-collection-program/> and click on "2014 Pesticide Container Recycling Collection Schedule."

For more information on these collections, contact local Cooperative Extension offices or SDDA at 605-773-4432.

HR Training For Dairy Producers Offered

BROOKINGS — With the cultural and technological landscape of today's rapidly changing dairy operations, producers must effectively educate, train and communicate across a diverse workforce to ensure maximum efficiency.

To aid with this challenge, SDSU Extension has developed a set of Agricultural Human Resource Management Training Modules targeting dairy producers.

"From defining standard operating procedures, to communicating with Hispanic workers, these interactive modules are designed to expand the skillsets of producers, employees and the dairy support industries to help ensure the continued success of your dairy operation," said Tracey Erickson, SDSU Extension dairy field specialist.

Erickson helped develop the web-based modules which include short training videos with corresponding tests.

To learn more, or view the web-based, interactive video training modules, visit <http://igrow.org/livestock/dairy/agricultural-human-resource-management-training-modules/>.



PHOTO: RITA BRHEL
This cattle pasture shows a mix of native prairie grass indicative of a well-managed pasture. Overgrazed pastures don't recover well and are often taken over by invasive or non-native weeds/grasses.

Pasture Planning

Using Cover Crops To Improve Pastures: Managing Pastures Not A One-Size-Fits-All Approach

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second of a two-part series on improving pasture land.

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

Pasture management cannot be a cookie-cutter approach.

That's according to Matt Poore, a beef specialist with the North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension Service in Raleigh, N.C., whose research led to the creation of the Amazing Grazing program, housed within North Carolina State University's Center for Environmental Farming, which provides education and support to landowners, grazing managers and professionals who work with them, like Extension educators, veterinarians and conservationists.

Poore emphasized the need for flexibility for each case of pasture management, outlining four principles of "amazing grazing":

1. Understand that pasture land is a complex ecosystem.
2. Understand the animal's requirements for a desired level of performance.
3. Understand the growth nature of various pasture regions.
4. Develop a management style that meets production goals while minimizing cost and improving the resource base.

"This is not mob grazing," Poore said to prove his point that there are no one-size-fits-all approaches to well-managed pasture. Some of the education Poore focus on could be referred to as alternative topics, like monitoring earthworms and dung beetles, such as that dung beetles can move fecal material down as much as 18 inches into the soil. He also

promotes all pasture managers to carry with them a shovel as part of their everyday tools and to be as hands-on involved in land management as possible.

"This is honorable work," Poore said. "This is good exercise. This will get you on the ground with your cattle. This is so different from managing from the cab of your pickup truck, and people like it if they just get out and do it."

Another management tool that Poore wants to bring over from the cropping side of agricultural production is precision nutrient mapping. Through precision farming, crop managers can get detailed soil maps showing what types of soil and nutrients levels are in any part of their field. They can then specifically address any problem areas.

The same principles can also apply to pasture land management. For example, Poore described using precision nutrient mapping to show one producer how his method of feeding winter hay in the pasture was accumulating phosphorus, through concentration of manure, in that one area while the remainder of the pasture was left deficient. In addition, the area around the winter hay feeder was compacted and bare during the growing season.

"If we can get people to think about this nutrient picture and their winter activity, we can promote better management decisions," Poore added.

Other management changes that promote better pastures are fall calving, fertilizing in late summer, providing supplemental feed to calves, planting an appropriate cover crop mix, selecting cattle that are genetically proven to perform well on pasture and realizing that lasting change often takes years.

Research is continually pouring out about better grazing management, but Poore said there is still relatively little data about formulating specific cover crop mixes for pastures.

The research that has been done points to the importance of combining root types, which generally fall into fibrous or tap root, and also plant type: Grasses have fibrous roots, which build good soil structure; forbs have tap roots, which compete well with weeds; and legumes can half tap or fibrous roots but their main benefit is the ability to fixate nitrogen.

From this information, Poore designed what he dubs as "Ray's Crazy Mix," which includes corn, soybeans, cowpea, sorghum-sudan, pearl and foxtail millet, sunflower, hybrid brassica and radish planted at 18 plants per square foot. He claimed that calves gain 2 1/2 pounds per day on this mix.

But even a really good cover crop mix relies on other factors.

"The success of a mix is determined initially by plant population, conditions during establishment and competitiveness of the species in the mixture," Poore said. From his experience, producers tend to do better if planting mixes into an already non-competitive situation, perhaps by doing a glyphosate burn-down ahead of time. But, he emphasized, whatever management decision made need to fit with the goals.

"We got to be really careful about how we approach managing these and understand that we have a lot to learn about this," Poore said. "We can't make absolutes."

Commentary

Beware Of Labels And Being Uninformed

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

Do you remember "pink slime"?

Beef producers, or anybody involved in the beef industry, should be nodding your heads. This derogatory label for lean fine textured beef (LFTB), coined by journalists with little knowledge of the agricultural and food industry and apparently little interest in learning about it, sent shock waves through the beef processing sect in 2012.

How about this — remember Mad Cow disease? That infamous, scare tactic of a label for bovine spongiform encephalopathy that rattled the beef industry back in 2003 when a Canadian cow slaughtered in the United States tested positive for the disease.

As I get older and more with life in general, it's interesting to reflect back on my career as a journalist. As a new college graduate, I had this vision — as I'm sure many young journalists do — that I could help change the world for the better through my writing. It doesn't quite work that way. Though there perhaps have been articles through the



Rita BRHEL

years that have made a positive influence somewhere in some way, I learned quickly that journalists are part of the

larger whole and that the act of making a difference takes many people and much time.

However, a single journalist with even just a little carelessness and an attitude of "having something to prove" can make a difference very quickly and completely by him- or herself, but this difference tends not to be positive — which gets us back to pink slime and Mad Cow disease.

Take pink slime, for instance, since it was in the less distant past: LFTB is just meat, that's all. It was developed by Beef Products, Inc., in Dakota Dunes as a way to be more sustainable and less wasteful by utilizing the trimmings not used by traditional meat cuts. LFTB is extremely lean and was being used with ground beef,

which didn't add anything to the meat except for cost savings. But then ABC News, distracted by LFTB's appearance being a new texture of beef, changed the household name to "pink slime" and single-handedly misled consumers into creating a Stop Pink Slime movement based on less-than-stellar journalism. LFTB processing was halted, and that added to other such industry stressors as drought to raise beef prices substantially.

I strive to be responsible as a journalist, but no one is perfect and we all have our off days. Yet, I feel the true mark of a responsible journalist, even on the off days, is to be able to own up to his or her downfalls, apologize and be on guard against those attitudes that got him or her in trouble in the first place. I don't recall ABC News doing this, and I suppose it's a matter of a difference in opinion of what responsible journalism is, but I see it as getting all the facts about an issue and being able to write a balanced story from all sides of the issue. So they really

should've gotten an agricultural journalist to report on LFTB instead of Diane Sawyer.

But I digress.

I recently read a June 29 editorial from the Lincoln Journal Star warning readers — probably more so the agricultural industry rather than consumers — that the same fate is about to happen to GMOs (genetically modified organisms). According to editorial, GMO technology employs naturally occurring plant traits to enhance a crop's ability to grow in certain environments. And that food safety research — 1,700-plus studies, if you're counting — overwhelming shows that foods made from GMOs are safe to eat. In addition, research is finding that GMO crops use less water and fewer pesticides while producing a higher yield. In my own journalistic work, I have found the same to be true: the research supports continued GMO use, not only in the field but by food processors.

But there are many consumers who don't like the idea of GMOs in their food.

And that's OK, if their choice to rally against GMO use is because they don't like the idea. However, it's not OK if GMOs are misrepresented as something that they aren't as way to scare consumers into helping to turn the tide — though in this case, as the Lincoln Journal Star pointed out, GMOs already have the scary label: Who wants to eat something that has been genetically modified? Interestingly, one study decided to refer to GMOs with a new name instead — ERIs (Environmentally Reduced Impact) — and consumers were much more positive.

I always think it's important for everyone, consumers and journalists alike, to be informed on what they're reading or writing or talking about and to do their homework in really learning about a topic, including getting into the head of the opponent so to speak. Just something to keep in mind.

Ag Instagram Contest Is Now Under Way

PIERRE — The South Dakota Department of Agriculture is hosting an Instagram photo contest to celebrate South Dakota's 125th year of statehood through Friday, Aug. 8.

To enter, use the Instagram or Twitter applications on your smartphone to post photos of South Dakota families working in agriculture. Use the following hashtag: #SDAgProud

Two winners will be randomly selected weekly through Aug. 8. Weekly prizes include 125 years of South Dakota statehood lapel pins. The grand prize of two tickets to a South Dakota State Fair concert or event will be distributed the last week of the contest.

Winning photos will be displayed at Dakotafest and the South Dakota State Fair in Huron. Rules can be found at <http://sdda.sd.gov/office-of-the-secretary/outreach-programs/>.

For questions about the contest, email Jamie Crew at jamie.crew@state.sd.us/.

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