

The Year Of The Scours

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

I don't put much of any stock in the zodiac, omens, and other signs but do find it interesting that 2010, according to Chinese astrology, as the Year of the Tiger, is predicted to be full of social upheaval, volatility, and change. And, being only three months into the year, we've already seen two devastating — including one of the historically strongest on record — earthquakes; a continued economic recession not only in the United States but many other countries; and some wild winter weather.



Rita Brhel

Certainly a coincidence, but still. Here in Nebraska, livestock producers are identifying more with the Year of the Scours. We have seen scours in everything from calves to lambs to goats. Anything born this later winter/early spring is bound to have a problem with the potentially deadly diarrheal illness. A local veterinarian commented that all she's seen in terms of large-animal care so far in 2010 is related to scours. On the family ranch, we've lost a lot of lambs from scours and are going to what we call extraordinary measures to save calves — pumping \$200-300 in some animals beyond the normal scours treatment.

At home, I have four goat kids and their moms locked up inside the barn. The lots are so mucky that I'm nervous they'll get scours as soon as they step out the door. This arrangement doesn't prevent problems: I'm now dealing with mastitis in one of the does — the one we had been trying to milk. Plus, it's not a large barn, and there are three adult goats and four babies, so the mess is piling up fast.

Everyone is so sick of weather, just in general. We'd all like to just see the sun come out for a few weeks and everything dry out. This winter was so hard, and everyone in this area ran out of alfalfa hay. My husband was driving two hours away to get average-quality hay that is worth more than gold is, I think. I know of several producers with larger operations who couldn't find enough hay, even low-quality grass, and had to reduce their herds. And then, just as suddenly as it began, winter seemed to stop — turning instead into cool, damp days with rain in the forecast for the next week and flood watches posted for the next three days. I never really minded mud until I moved back to the farm. Now, as my mom always said, it's just so gross!

Especially when scours are involved.

On another note, our chickens started laying in the middle of February. That was a nice surprise, as it was still rather chilly when we found the first egg and they are kept in a dark part of the barn. We bought them a light and took in a little, bantam rooster — and those leghorn hens do seem to really enjoy their home. The nine of them are giving us four to six eggs a day, which I think is pretty good.

The sheep just seem to be hanging out. It's time to shear them, but that's one of those things that has to wait on the weather. One of the ewes is really quite comical, as she frolics like a little lamb, running after the other sheep and the less-than-enthusiastic and confused-looking llama before launching herself out of the feeder. The sheep are all due to lamb in the middle of April.

We are done with our first wave of kidding. We got four doelings: two all white, one all white except for a dark nose, and one looks like a reverse skunk, having a tan body with a black stripe down the back, black socks, and black on the face and a white spot right on the top of the head. We had been trying to milk one of these early-kidding does, but she has tiny teats and it's not been going well — and now she's the one with mastitis, which means our milking trial is done for now. We do have another wave of goats kidding in early April, and these are older does so their teats are bigger and more conducive to milking. Hopefully it'll work better than it is now.

And hopefully, we can avoid those nasty scours, too.

Johanns Presses Japanese Ambassador To Lift Beef Ban

WASHINGTON — In a meeting recently with Japanese Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki, Sen. Mike Johanns pushed for Japan to lift its partial ban on U.S. beef. Johanns highlighted the inconsistency between Japan's continued ban on safe U.S. beef and beef products compared to America's fair treatment of Japan after reports of faulty Toyota vehicles and parts.

"The Japanese ban on U.S. beef has devastated our beef industry and many producers throughout Nebraska for almost seven years," Johanns said. "Japan's position, for which there is absolutely no scientific justification, has cost American producers billions of dollars and created a double standard that defies rationalization. I am not suggesting any sort of ban on Japanese products; I am asserting that the Japanese ban on American beef is entirely unfair, without merit, and should be lifted immediately."

"Japan's position...has cost American producers billions of dollars."

SEN. MIKE JOHANNNS

BACKGROUND:

- Japan originally closed its borders to all American beef products in 2003 over Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) concerns.
- Japan currently limits its imports of U.S. beef to only boneless beef from cattle aged 20 months and younger.

- Before the ban, Japan was the largest market for U.S. beef, with exports valued at \$1.4 billion.
- Since the ban was enacted, from 2004-2009, U.S. beef exports to Japan averaged approximately \$196 million, less than 15 percent of 2003 level.
- According to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Japan's ban on U.S. beef results in approximately \$1 billion in lost exports annually for American producers.
- The internationally recognized authority, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), has classified the United States as a controlled risk country for BSE, which means that U.S. beef is safe for export and consumption.

MARKET INSIDER

10 Steps To Better Marketing

BY BRIAN HOOPS
Yankton



Brian Hoops

FINALIZE 2010 EXPENSES

- Crop Insurance — file claim on 2009 crop.
- Marketing Expense — budget for price insurance.
- Fuels, fertilizers, herbicides — expenses are down for 2010-lock in.
- Machinery repairs/upgrades

2. RECOGNIZE THE FUNDAMENTAL/TECHNICAL TRENDS

- Are prices moving higher/lower? — currently sideways to lower.
- Where does the trend change occur? — find trendlines.
- What action will I take when a change occurs? — sell cash, sell futures, buy puts, sell calls, etc.
- Are supplies getting larger or smaller? — supplies are currently shrinking.
- DEVELOP MARKETING PLAN
 - Price objectives — projections, retracements, stops.
 - Trigger points - date, price, basis etc.
 - Location — elevator, ethanol plant, private sale.
 - Type of sale - options, hedge, cash.
 - Risk management - price insurance, crop insurance, contracts.
 - Write it down — eliminate the

- emotion.
- FIND SOMEONE TO HELP WITH PLAN
 - Independent 3rd party
 - Wife, Partner, Banker, Broker/Analyst
- DIVERSIFY

Ecclesiastes 11:1 and 11:2 states "cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again. Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land."

Use a combination of puts, calls, cash sales, hedges, basis contracts.

Use more than one elevator, ethanol plant, private buyer/seller.

- DON'T PICK TOPS OR BOTTOMS
 - No one can do it.
 - Chances of success are minimal.

- TAKE RESPONSIBILITY
 - It is your farm operation. You have to live with the results.
 - Seek good advice, make great decisions.

FARM TO MAKE A PROFIT

- Recognize opportunities — market moves to new highs, large price swings.
- Goal is to be profitable, not sell on the highs.
- Be willing to spend money to make money - options, insurance, etc.

EMBRACE CHANGES

- Overnight Trading — nearly 24 hours/day.
- Electronic Trading.
- Increased Volatility.
- Increased Speculative Influence.

RECOGNIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES

- Better marketing opportunities.
- Capitalize on opportunities. More price risk.
- Manage risk.

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YOUR VIEWS

Green Going Rural

BY JOHN CRABTREE
Center for Rural Affairs

Renewable energy development serves the common good by addressing very real threats of reduced crop production, extreme weather damage and lives lost from climate change. Despite consensus among leading climate scientists that fossil-fuel emissions are causing climate change, there are a few skeptics and they are right about one thing, we won't know with 100 percent certainty until it's too late. That makes commonsense steps — like investing in wind energy — even more urgent.

A Bush Department of Energy study concluded that the cost of new turbines and transmission lines could be paid with savings in fuel costs, plus about 50 cents per U.S. household per month. That's a small price to pay for addressing climate change and making significant progress in revitalizing rural America. And passage of renewable energy legislation could bring real economic opportunity to rural America — \$782 million in annual lease payments to farmers and ranchers with turbines as well as nearly 1.2 million mostly rural jobs — but only if the bill isn't too watered down.

The American Clean Energy Leadership Act is awaiting Senate action, but it would only require a modest 12 percent of the nation's electricity come from wind and other renewable sources by 2025. We can do better than this. Rural America, especially the wind rich Midwest and Great Plains, have a huge economic stake in raising the renewable electricity standard to 20 percent when the bill comes before the full Senate.

Food Safety's Final Mile

BY SHELLEY A. HEARNE AND ROBERT E. BRACKETT
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The last mile of a race is always the longest. Years of work have culminated in the recent approval of sweeping food-safety legislation by the U.S. House of Representatives and by a key U.S. Senate committee, and now the finish line is in sight.

There have been too many outbreaks of food-borne illness in recent years; many have been linked to otherwise healthy foods like spinach, peppers and peanut butter products. These contamination problems not only harm consumers, they also result in reduced consumer confidence in the safety of the food supply and the loss of millions of dollars due to recalls and lost sales.

Legislation that would help prevent these frequent outbreaks could soon be on the president's desk, but only if Senate lawmakers make it a priority to pass this legislation. The Senate bill will strengthen our nation's food system by making prevention a central element and by providing the U.S. Food and Drug Administration with the resources and authorities it needs to adequately fulfill its food-safety mission.

FDA is responsible for safeguarding the nation's food supply and for protecting consumers from dangerous contaminants. However, inadequate budgets, limited enforcement authorities and outdated laws have hindered the agency's ability to do what is needed to help prevent outbreaks.

This legislation represents a significant opportunity to modernize our food-oversight system and restore the public's faith in the safety and security of the food supply.

Agritourism Course Graduates 30

Thirty individuals from across western South Dakota celebrated the completion of a five week Agritourism business planning course at South Dakota Stockgrowers Association office on Monday evening. Graduates of the course, Agritourism: "Your Next Cash Crop," received certificates, and announced the creation and expansion of twelve agritourism businesses.

Jan Jantzen who facilitated the course said, "Each of the graduates have spent twenty hours in class, thinking about the type of experiences they can provide, how they want to package, price and market that experience, and how to do it in a way that makes sense for their ranching operations. They are as ready as they'll ever be to start their businesses and I'm confident that we'll see great things from this group."

Bill and Cecilia Steen of Scenic attended the course to explore how they could expand their existing hunting business into a working-ranch vacation destination. "We know what we had on our ranch, and we knew what we needed for a business, but just didn't know how to start. This

course put us over the first hill." Bill said, "Taking the class gave us the confidence to know that we can do this, and helped us to develop our ideas into a business plan."

Twelve of the families attending the course announced new or expanding businesses ranging from trail rides and corporate retreats to chuck-wagon tours, dutch-oven cooking, working ranch vacations, and hunting excursions.

"Stockgrowers is proud to have been able to offer this course to ranchers in South Dakota," said Margaret Nachtigall, Executive Director for Stockgrowers. "We wish all of our graduates the best of luck in their businesses and look forward to seeing them succeed."

This course was supported by the South Dakota Community Foundation, the Clarkson Family Foundation, and the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association. Additional Agritourism courses will be offered in the fall of 2010 and throughout 2011. Please contact Silvia Christen at the SD Stockgrowers Assoc., 605-342-0429, for more information about enrolling.

S.D. DEPARTMENT OF AG: Protect Ag Inputs From Potential Flooding Issues

PIERRE— Because of potential spring flooding, the South Dakota Department of Agriculture encourages agricultural retailers and producers to take some basic precautions in storing fertilizers, pesticides, seed, and feed products.

ANHYDROUS AMMONIA:

- Have a plan to move product out and ship to terminal or other storage facility
- Move nurse tanks and other ammonia equipment out of flood-prone areas
- Secure storage tanks to prevent movement or damage by flood waters
- Drain lines and remove pumps and other system components
- Lock and protect tank valves
- Turn off power to ammonia system when unattended
- Prominently display firm manager's name and telephone number on all tanks.

BULK DRY FERTILIZER:

- Construct barriers at flood water entrances to prevent water from entering bins
- Delay shipments or temporarily move product to higher ground.

BULK LIQUID FERTILIZER AND PESTICIDES:

- Accelerate or postpone shipments
- Inventory all stored products
- Lock and protect valves
- Close and lock site gauge valves on bulk fertilizer storage tanks
- Secure empty storage tanks to prevent movement or damage by flood waters
- Prominently display firm manager's name and telephone number on all tanks.

FEED:

- Delay shipments or receipt of drugs and feeds
- Move manufactured feed out of flood-prone areas

- Store drugs for animal feed off the ground and out of flood-prone areas.

SEED:

- Dike or sandbag bins
- Store seed off the ground and out of flood-prone areas
- Anticipate a high demand for early maturity varieties that could mean supply shortages
- Identify potential alternative suppliers of seed
- Consider keeping a copy of the labeling and an unopened seed container for each lot. That may preserve evidence in case of performance problems with the seed.

SMALL PACKAGED PESTICIDE CONTAINERS:

- Postpone incoming shipments
- Inventory products
- Move products to an area protected from flood waters and away from drains
- Keep containers off the floor and secured
- Move grain fumigants out of flood-prone areas.

WASTE PESTICIDE:

- Protect all pesticides from flood waters, including unusable or unwanted herbicides, insecticides, or other pesticides
- Use rigid plastic or metal containers to repack or over pack product in paper bags, older containers or containers in poor condition to protect from water damage
- Store pesticides damaged by water or otherwise rendered unusable for proper disposal. Do not throw pesticides into the trash or dump on the ground
- Contact the waste pesticide collection program for information on the free disposal of damaged or unusable pesticides

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture also reminds retailers and agricultural producers that spring road restrictions could limit the pace at which products can be moved.

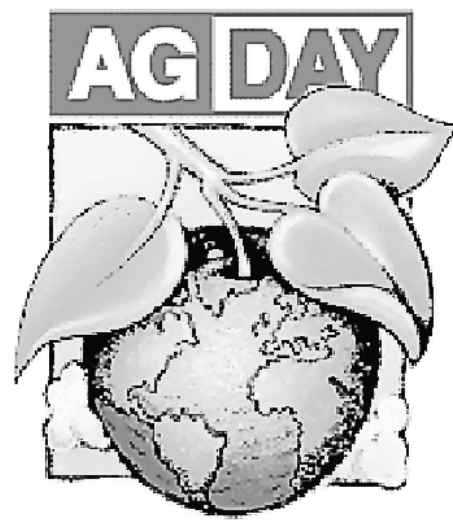
Did You Know?

- Nebraska agriculture contributes over \$17 billion to Nebraska's economy each year.

- Nebraska's 10 leading commodities are cattle and calves, corn, soybeans, hogs, wheat, chicken eggs, dairy products, hay, dry beans and grain sorghum.

- Nebraska's farms and ranches utilize 45.6 million acres — 93 percent of the state's total land area.

2010 National Ag Week March 14-20



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