JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH - 2022 ISSUE 4

CD ACRES/DEWITZ FEEDLOT

The Quarterly Landowner/Employee Newsletter

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UPDATE

As this newsletter is being written the area is experiencing a major snowstorm impacting the calving season and delaying the much-anticipated planting season. In January we continued with preventative maintenance on the equipment in the shop, working on the repairable vehicles purchased, feeding cattle and watching the many deer that frequented the farmyard. February was a busy month between sorting, shipping, and selling cattle. This March the cows started calving and the equipment is ready for this spring's planting season, layered with a coating of snow.

CROP PROGRESS, PASTURE CONDITIONS, AND LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT

With no growth happening in the fields and pasture, we can focus on the cattle. The winter weather had a big factor in how the feedlot cattle increased in weight. When the weather stays cold the cattle gain evenly, if the weather warms up and drops cold suddenly, the cattle gain less. This winter started out cold, then had sporadic warming, and a sudden drop in temperature. This led to less weight gain in some of the cattle sold this winter. The livestock market was just as cold, held back by the increase in feed cost and the 9% increase in placement into feed yards.

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WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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Crop Progress, Pasture Condition, Livestock Development

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FARMING IS A PROFESSION OF HOPE.

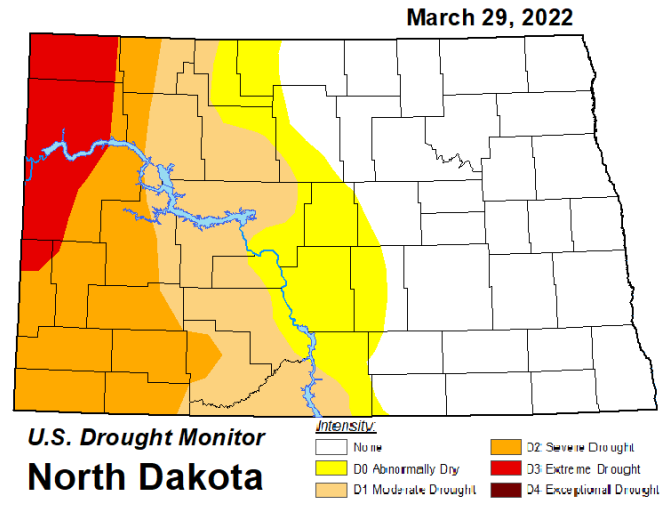
The biggest focus for us in the next couple of weeks will be to take care of the newborn calves. With more than half of North Dakota still facing drought, we need the moisture, but this blizzard could do lasting damage to the herd.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

One major management practice is formulating a diet for beef cattle and feeding the cattle a balanced ration. These are keys to maintaining adequate cattle nutrition. Proper ration formulation allows us to predict how long beef cattle will need to be fed to achieve a targeted body weight.

Another practice is to invest in vaccinations for cattle health. In particular, vaccination timing can help prepare calves for better health with a little extra labor and time. Vaccination, weaning, and shipping are all stressful events, which can impair the animal's immune system. Spacing the procedures out can help ensure vaccinations work to their best ability. This year's replacement heifers have received their Bangs vaccination and have been sorted to their perspective groups getting ready for artificial insemination in June. Also, decreasing stress on livestock during handling will help reduce sickness and enable cattle to go back on feed more quickly.

WEATHER UPDATE



The winter of 2021-22 was mostly as predicted. Temperatures across much of North Dakota were three to five degrees below average. Precipitation came in at or slightly higher than normal in most areas. The winter forecast was based largely on the occurring La Niña ocean/weather pattern in the Pacific. This La Niña pattern is expected to remain through the spring of 2022. Historically a La Niña in the spring tends toward average precipitation and average to slightly below average temperatures. Last spring also saw similar La Niña conditions and temperatures ran one to three degrees below normal and precipitation was below average. March and April were particularly dry last year with an uptick in precipitation in May. The current spring outlook calls for an equal chance of above- or below-average temperatures for nearly the entire state and below-average precipitation for all of North Dakota. Given recent trends and past history, look for slightly below average temperatures this spring with average to slightly below-average precipitation across North Dakota.

COMMODITY PRICES

Prices for farm and energy commodities are soaring at their highest levels in years, but fluctuating wildly because of geopolitical turbulence. The price of wheat in March shot to a 14-year high, but farmers are quick to point out that the costs of their inputs, including fuel, fertilizer and pesticides, also have spiked, complicating the picture.

Both oil and farm commodity markets have been disrupted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Both countries are major grain producers and analysts predict between 40% and 80% of the Ukrainian crop won't be planted because of the war.

Ukraine is trying to continue its export program by moving grain to neighboring countries, but logistics are keeping the pace slow. There are reports of Russian grain leaking out of the country, but those supplies will likely be minimal.

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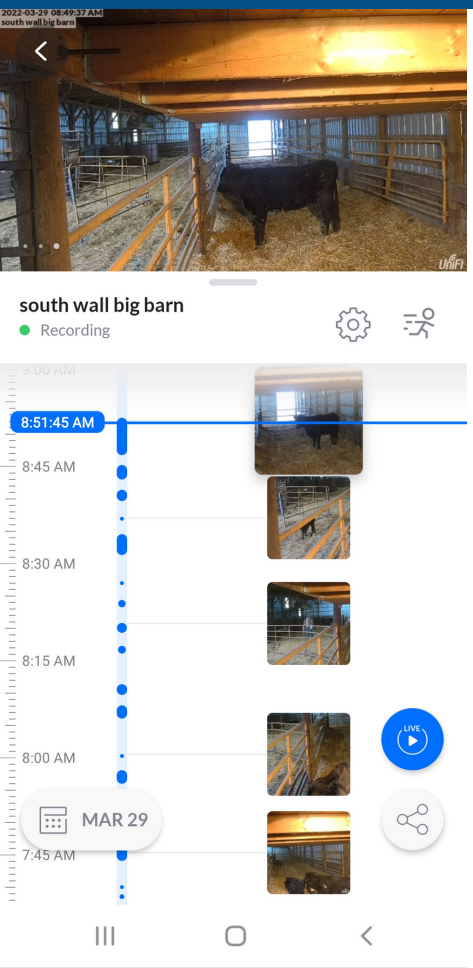

Besides the war in Ukraine, grain markets are keeping a close eye on China, where a resurgent COVID-19 wave caused a major port to close.
These prices are affecting all of us, the Consumer Price Index rose 7.9 percent from February 2021 to February 2022, following a 12-month increase of 7.5 percent in January 2022. Food prices increased 7.9 percent for the year ending in February 2022, the largest 12-month advance since July 1981. Energy prices rose 25.6 percent from February 2021 to February 2022. Prices for meats, poultry, fish, and eggs increased 13.0 percent for the year ending in February 2022, the largest yearly increase since July 1979.
Despite inflation continuing to rise, it will not change the farming operation. The crops will still need to be planted. We hope the crop will receive timely rains once it is in the ground. Spring is right around the corner.

TECHNOLOGY

The Farm At Hand app for the grain movement tracking continues to be used as semi-trucks deliver grain to local elevators.
We are ready for calving season with the installation of cameras in the calving barns for monitoring the animals. The cameras are continuously recording and highlights any motion with blue circles that the camera picks up as you can see in the screenshot to the left. The recorded images are sent to a hard drive for storage via the wireless internet connection. The images of any date and time can be viewed on a phone or desktop computer with wireless capabilities.
The solar powered GPS ear tags for the cattle have been released to the public. These ear tags will be utilized on the bulls in late spring. With the GPS location, animal activity monitoring, and interactive alerts sent directly to a cell phone, this will be another option to remotely monitor the health of the herd. If the system works, it will be expanded to more animals in the future.

UPCOMING AREA EVENTS

Interpreting Agriculture - Saturday, May 7, 2022 - Bismarck, ND
Midwest Agriculture Summit - Tuesday, June 28, 2022 - Fargo, ND

RETHINKING FARMING WITH HORSES WHEN WE TRY TO START TRACTORS IN THE WINTER TIME

Purchased Vehicle Repairables

Before

After