

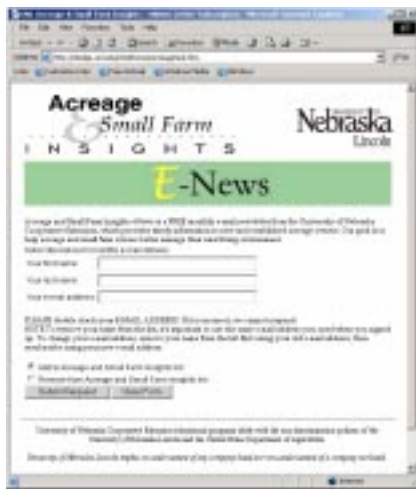
## Information for Acreage and Small Farm Owners

There is a new newsletter available called the Acreage Owner's Newsletter. It was created by the Southeast District Acreage Team. It is available by e-mail and will be sent out monthly and is free of charge. Each issue will focus on a timely "theme" and be coordinated by a member of the acreage team. The topic for the May issue was water quality, coordinated by Sharon Skipton. They will list upcoming events for the area and various workshops being offered through the University.

If you are interested in signing up for this great newsletter, go to [dodge.unl.edu/Webforms/AcreageSub.htm](http://dodge.unl.edu/Webforms/AcreageSub.htm).

A second free newsletter is The Market Journal Update. You may sign up the newsletter by going to [marketjournal.unl.edu](http://marketjournal.unl.edu). The Market Journal program is geared towards farmers and gives timely information about crops, livestock and various topics farmers use to stay on top of the markets. In addition to being broadcast weekly, the Market Journal is archived and available on its Web Site.

Here is a sample from the Web site: The experts say it's going to be another hot dry summer on the Great Plains and a lot of Nebraska farmers are taking the forecast to heart. Anticipating limited soil moisture, they're planting more acres in grain sorghum. On this edition of "Market Journal," there are tips to help farmers successfully grow and market sorghum. Guest experts on the program include Gage County Extension Educator; Paul Hay and Barb Kliment of the Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board. Also on the program, a Nebraska farm partnership with years of experience in growing, milling and marketing sorghum. Gerald Simonson and James Vorderstrasse of Twin Valley Mills near Hebron share what they know about growing and marketing sorghum as both grain and food-grade product. (KW)



## Time to Harvest Bromegrass Hay

You may have heard the story about the lady who always cut the end off a ham before placing it in the roaster pan to cook. When her daughter asked why she did this, the mother said she didn't know the reason but her mother always did so and therefore it must serve some purpose. When the girl questioned her grandmother about it, grandma said, "I had to cut the end off, my roaster pan was too small to hold a whole ham."

I wonder if people decide when to cut bromegrass hay using the same logic. Most bromegrass hay is cut in mid- to late-summer — July, August, even September. Do people cut their brome hay at this time because it is the best time or

because it is the time when they have seen other people doing so?

Cutting brome in mid- to late summer can have its advantages. Weather damage is less likely because hay dries faster and rain usually occurs less frequently later in the summer. Some folks have fewer conflicts with other field activities. Sometimes mowing late gets weeds that can come on strong after an early harvest. But what does waiting do to the quality of the hay?

Brome cut in early June soon after heads appear, will have a crude protein content of around 10–11 percent and TDN (a measure of energy) of 55–60 percent (on a dry matter basis). That's plenty adequate for wintering most beef cows all by

itself or for most pleasure horses. However, when cut in late summer, crude protein might be only six percent with TDN below 50. All livestock need some supplements if fed that kind of hay, according to Bruce Anderson, NU extension forage specialist.

Another advantage to cutting earlier is the possibility of grazing regrowth in September, provided we get some fall moisture. Most pastures can use a little help that time of year. So, for the best quality hay and to possibly extend the grazing season, why not break with tradition and cut bromegrass early. (TD)

## Ammoniate Wheat Straw for Extra Feed

Following the drought of 2002 and a dry early spring, pasture and hay production will be less than normal in 2003. If you think you might be short on forage for your cow herd, don't overlook wheat straw as a forage source. Wheat harvest will soon be underway, but there is still time to make arrangements to harvest the straw behind the combine. Straw can make good feed for your dry stock cows if you treat it with anhydrous ammonia. "Treating wheat straw with anhydrous ammonia can make it almost as digestible and as readily eaten as average prairie hay. This could help stretch your hay supply. But you have to do it right," according to Bruce Anderson, NU extension forage specialist.

Bale straw soon after grain

harvest, preferably with some moisture or dew on it. Then, gather bales into rows that are stacked like a pyramid. Next, cover the entire stack with one sheet of six to eight millimeter black plastic. Use ropes or other methods to hold plastic in place. Make sure that you seal the edges of the plastic on the ground with loose soil to prevent leakage. Once that is done, you are ready to insert a pipe into the center of your stack and attach the pipe to the anhydrous tank.

Be careful — ammonia can be dangerous. Slowly turn on the anhydrous until the plastic balloons slightly. Don't go too fast or the plastic can rupture. Next, check and repair any leaks. Continue to add anhydrous slowly until you have added 60 pounds per ton of

straw. This should take about 10 minutes for each ton of straw, depending on the moisture content of the straw.

When you are through, turn off the tank, remove the pipe and seal its opening. Keep the plastic on the stack until about a week before feeding. Then open one end to allow excess ammonia gas to escape. Ammoniated wheat straw can be very valuable feed.

Consult extension publication "Ammonia Treatment of Low Quality Forages" (EC 89-265) for more information, including a worksheet for calculations. This publication can be accessed on the Web at [www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/beef/ec265.htm](http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/beef/ec265.htm). (TD)

## Tanks vs. Ponds and Creeks for Livestock Water



Could watering cattle from tanks be better than using ponds or creeks? Both amount and quality of water should be considered. The current drought is drying up many ponds and creeks. If you rely on them for cattle water during summer, alternatives might be needed this year. If you decide to change your water supply situation, consider identifying ways to put all water into tanks rather than allow cattle to wade into it.

Tank water is better for cattle, and they prefer it to ponds or creeks. It usually is cooler and offers easier access. Plus, when cows walk into

ponds and creeks, they stir mud and sediments into the water and often deposit urine and manure. No wonder calves consistently choose tank water over ponds when given a choice!

Investing in tanks probably will actually pay for itself. Reports from Montana, Oregon, Canada and elsewhere show the higher water quality found in tanks provides a boost in cattle gains. Calves often weigh an extra 50 pounds at weaning when tank water is available instead of ponds and yearling steers can gain an extra three to four tenths of a pound per day. With this much added perfor-

mance, water tanks, pipes and pumps can be paid off in just a few years.

In addition, pumping water into tanks usually improves grazing distribution by attracting cattle to graze areas near the tanks instead of spending time in the ponds or creek. This can increase your pasture's carrying capacity or grazing season.

Think of it, better grazing, higher gains and reliable water. So much to gain and so little to lose. (TD)

Source: Bruce Anderson, Extension Forage Specialist.

## 2003 Pesticide Container Recycling Dates

The Nebraska Pesticide Container Recycling program provides a recycling opportunity for plastic from 1- and 2.5-gallon containers. More than 40 inspection/collection sites are available to take your rinsed plastic containers to in Nebraska. Three pesticide container recycling dates have been established in Lancaster County.

The UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, in conjunction with local businesses, will be holding public collection days from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the following locations:

- June 27 — Firth Co-op, Princeton
- July 11 — Farmers Cooperative, Waverly
- July 25 — Farmers Cooperative, Bennet

In addition, the Lancaster County Extension office, located at 444 Cherrycreek Road in Lincoln, is accepting containers now through Oct. 31 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Call 441-7180 for directions.

All liquid pesticide containers require proper rinsing (triple rinsing or pressure rinsing). Rinse the containers immediately after emptying and place the rinse water in the spray tank for application on the labeled site. It is illegal to burn the containers. Crop oil and adjuvant containers may also be recycled. Please remove caps and plastic labels or multi-layered paper labels.

Commercial applicators are encouraged to recycle their customer's plastic containers at these sites. (TD)