RIPPE GELBVIEH

TAKING PRIDE IN OUR CUSTOMER'S SUCCESS

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Rotational Grazing "Kiwi" style

New Zealand is known world wide for its ability to maximize the efficiency of their grass through intensive grazing. Therefore, I decided to give you a quick description of how they accomplish this. They do not have "ranches" instead they have "farms" that beef cattle and sheep graze. They manage these critters similar to the way we farm in the United States. On the majority of the ground that can be cultivated in New Zealand, they grow a mixture of rye grass and white clover, which are both perennials. After 5 to 15 years, depending on the stand quality, they will break the pasture up and drill white clover and rye grass back into the same paddock. They prefer the mix to range from 20 to 40 % white clover and rye grass filling out the remainder.

The reason they use these two cultivars is pretty simple. Rye grass grows fast and you can accumulate a lot of herbage growth in the spring along with decent growth in the fall. They tell me it is very easy to grow rye grass and anyone can do it as long as you have nitrogen and water. White clover is a legume that provides nitrogen for the rye grass. It is very high in protein content and very nutritious for lactating cows and fattening steers. White clover experiences peak growth in the summer when temperatures are at their highest. Consequently, when you combine these two cultivars with enough moisture, approximately 25 to 35 inches, you accomplish a peak growth in the spring followed by another peak in the summer while it tapers off into the fall.

Their grass grows for about 10 months of the year depending on where you are located. The farmer's ultimate goal is to maximize the amount of stock they place on their land. They do this by matching the amount of herbage their stock need to the amount of herbage grown during that time of year. The number of animals that they have on their farm changes from season to season. For instance, they set the time of parturition or calving to when their forage starts to grow. In the fall, they sell off their fattening animals and simply keep their breeding herd over the winter. In the winter they graze their left over grass, and a variety of plants in the *brassica* family (such as swede and turnips). They typically calculate exactly how much forage an animal needs during this time of year and only fence off this amount and move the herd each day to control intake. During the spring they will rotate to each paddock very quickly trying to stay ahead of the grass. In the fall and summer, they will allow each paddock more time for recovery.

It can be a very complex process depending on how intensive each individual farmer wants to make it. There are several minor management techniques each farmer will employ throughout the year. It has definitely been a learning experience and I hope to learn even more before June.

Hello everyone, I am finishing my college at Lincoln University in Lincoln, New Zealand. In this newsletter, I will share some of my experiences in New Zealand. If you have any questions about the newsletter, or have some special request for other information, feel free to give me a call anytime at (316) 323-4874 or email at rippe02@yahoo.com

Sincerely,

Dustin Rippe

New Zealand Blog:

- The climate in New Zealand is similar to our climate in southeast Nebraska except their growing season is 10 months long. Their winter is not near as harsh, but they experience about the same heat we receive in the summer.

- The size of New Zealand is about same size as Nebraska. The topography could be described as very mountainous, but the largest mountains are only about half the size of the Rocky Mountains. Predominately, the areas that are farmed are flat and you could drive a tractor on. Their rainfall varies greatly depending on where you are at. However, the area that receives an enormous amount of rainfall is not even farmed.

- The size of the farms are very small, some as small as 160 acres. They simply maximize

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"You'll never break a horse if you stay sittin' on the fence."

Old Cowboy Saying

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the efficiency out of their land and make due with what they have. However, I am noticing that they are increasing in size similar to the way we are.

- The farmers own very little equipment. If they want to fertilize, plant, or bale hay they hire a contractor.

- There are mainly two beef breeds that dominate New Zealand and they are Hereford and Angus. There are some Gelbvieh breeders and I have visited most of them. Apparently, they have not discovered the advantage of crossing the British and Continental breeds. However, you can be certain that I am doing my best explaining the advantage of heterosis. In a lot of ways, it reminds me of the United States in the mid 70's.

- There are two important pieces of information you need to know about New Zealander's in case you ever come across one of them. The first is that they love their beer. The second is that they love their sports, predominately Rugby.

- They also believe in preserving their natural resources. Recycling is the norm. Ground water and carbon sequestration are both important topics that are brought up regularly.

- The value of their dollar is very important to their agricultural economy. Most every farmer will mention this when you are talking to them. In addition, the first two chapters of my financial budgeting book are on exchange rates and their impacts. Their dollar is currently very strong compared to the U.S. dollar and many farmers are suffering.

- The drought in Australia is that bad. They say that on average one farmer commits suicide every four days in Australia.

- Measuring pasture mass is a common practice among farmers. The university uses all kinds of expensive devices, while the farmer uses his eyes. From what I can tell, the farmer achieves the most accurate results. Sounds like home!

- The farmers wear short shorts nearly all of the time.

- The dairy cattle are grazed very intensively under pivots in the South Island. They receive very little supplementation and it is not unheard of for a dairy cow to be 10 and still producing. Some dairies are going to back to milking once a day so they have time for their family.

Understanding Pasture Re-Growth

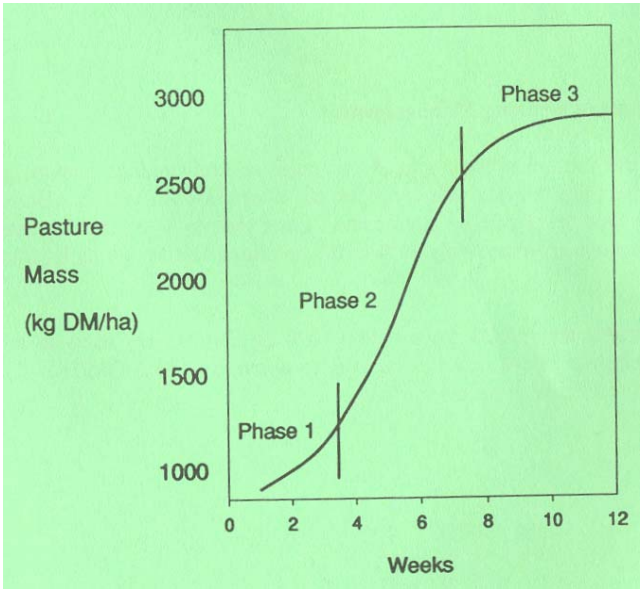
If you ever consider utilizing rotational grazing of any sort, it is imperative the you understand the basics of plant re-growth after grazing. Plants follow a sigmoldal growth pattern, which is illustrated on the chart to the right. Ignore the amount of pasture mass and the time because this changes with climate and different seasons.

Phase 1 (Lag phase) Phase 1 is the slow growth after very hard grazing. The photosynthesis is low because the sunlight is falling on bare ground or dead leaves. Some farms will not graze the grass this low so there is a quick recovery time. The harder you graze, the more time the grass spends in phase 1.

Phase 2 (Linear Phase) The grass goes into phase two, once it has reached 95% light interception. This is a period of rapid growth, especially in the spring when moisture and light are not limiting. Phase 2 is where dry matter accumulates.

Phase 3 (Final Asymptotic Phase) This is the period when accumulation of grass slows as the pasture length increases and more leaves become shaded. The death rate at the bottom of the plant increases, and in some cases may exceed the rate of plant growth.

You do not want to graze your pasture until it has or is about to reach Phase 3. However, allowing your grass to spend much time in phase 3 is a waste. Dr. Moot, a plant science professor at Lincoln University, states that most Americans are too conservative with their pastures and don't graze them hard enough. Most New Zealand farmers will graze each pasture to the ground starting in the fall and through the winter. This removes the dead material and "tidies up the paddock" as a New Zealander would say. He warns that you have to be careful not to graze all of your pastures to the ground in the winter. This is because you want to have some re-growth in a few of the pastures in the fall so when spring comes those paddocks go right into Phase 2. I mentioned to him that their system is well thought out and almost managed similar to our corn. After this he replied, "Why don't you manage pasture like your corn?"



I asked the magic Eight Ball!

Today, everyone has one thing on his or her mind. It's not where the next ball game is, or if it will ever warm up; it's 'Will corn prices stay at these prices?" I borrowed a magic eight ball from a friend and it told me, "Possible." Well, that does not tell me anything, but it's almost everyone's answer. I do not claim to know the answer to this question and neither should anyone else. It's easy to find gloom and doom opinions of what the markets will do, and what measures a producer should take. Some are even recommending that we grass feed our cattle. I do not agree with chasing fads or jumping off the deep end because of an ever-changing market. Therefore, instead of beating my head against the wall trying to figure out the answer to this question, I feel that commercial cattlemen should look into alternatives to take advantage of the current market. I feel that we all can agree that we will see placements going into the feedlot at a heavier weight. The market simply tells us that we can not afford to feed calves corn from 550 to 1300 pounds in a feedlot setting**. Instead, we need to look toward alternative methods to put CHEAP gain on calves from 550 to 850 pounds**. This is something most all commercial cattlemen can accomplish if they get creative. Here are some ideas that you could possibly employ this fall on your ranch:

- Corn Stalks – Supplementing your calves on corn stalks once you have weaned them.

- Grazing – You could simply plant a crop such as Rye onto some wheat stubble and graze that in the fall. There are several alternatives in this scenario and I feel this could be the most cost effective.

- Creep Feed – Yes I have spoke against this several times but this could be the simplest alternative for many commercial cattlemen.

- Late Weaning – Leaving the calves on the cows until November. If you have sufficient grass to do this during the fall this could prove to be a viable option.

- ????? – What is your idea?

I think there are additional methods available. You can also take advantage of utilizing the distiller's grain in conjunction with any of the above alternatives. One important piece of information you must take into account is how much the gain costs you. It is critical that you can achieve this gain cheaper than the feedlots can put it on. Remember to pay yourself for your feed, time, and facilities. With the current price of corn and low interest rates the market is telling us it is economical to put gain on slowly. There is also the possibility that you could work with a feedlot to get paid to put this gain on the calves while they have ownership and risk in the cattle. Neither the magic eight ball nor myself can answer how corn prices will fluctuate. However, I do know that there is an opportunity for cattlemen who think outside the box.

Bull Sale Report:

We were blessed with an absolute gorgeous day for Rippe Gelbvieh's 8th Annual Bull Sale. A record turnout made for an exciting day. Rippe Gelbvieh would like to thank everyone that contributed to the successful event. Your help was greatly appreciated. We would also like to thank everyone for coming and for having the confidence to bid and purchase bulls from our program. We would like to give out a special thanks to all of the 2007 buyers of Rippe Gelbvieh bulls.

Thank You!!

Lelyn Larson,
Kenneth Bonin
Neal Filipi
Dean and Linda Krueger
G & K Holtmeier
Steve Poppe
Michael Dux
Mike Hastings
Steve Heitman
Don Wegener
Jack Larson
Kyle Svec
William (Bill) Bledsoe
Alan & Gregg Wiedel
Harold, Gene, Mike, & Glenn Fischer
Marty Cline
Harold & Gene Fischer
Melvern Cornet
Roger & Jeff Novak
Will Bledsoe
Lonny Jacobitz
Melvin Oltmans

Rippe Gelbvieh

We are on the Web at

rippegelbvieh.com

Mission Statement:

"To produce superior Gelbvieh and Balancer seedstock based on economically important traits, which provide more profitability for our customers, and ensure the consumer a very satisfying eating experience."

"Then the Lord your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of you hands and in fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your lands. The lord will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers."

Deuteronomy 30:9

For more information about our program call Duane Rippe, (home) 402-324-4176, (cell) 402-200-0096 or Dustin Rippe, 316-323-4874 or online at rippegelbvieh.com