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 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## BQA Certification

We have added another session at the Union Stockyards on Wednesday, February 13. NOTE the time change from previous classes. The class will start at 6:00 p.m. but the meal will begin around 5:00 or a little before. Call ahead to register. Call Janet at 937-393-1958 to sign up for this program. There will be a meal at 5:30 p.m. with the program beginning at 6:30 p.m. Please plan to arrive early so you can be finished eating by 6:30 p.m.

## Ohio Tobacco Museum

In 2019 the fundraiser will be held the same as it has been in the past two years. The Scioto Ribber will cater the meal, and you can choose steak, ribs or chicken with the purchase of your ticket. The location will be the Ripley Elementary School Cafeteria and the date will be April 13, 2019. Tickets are now available and remember we only sell 300 tickets. You can contact me for more information at [dugan.46@osu.edu](mailto:dugan.46@osu.edu) or call 937-544-2339.

## Is Your Hay Cutting it?

For livestock producers 2018/19 winter has been a nightmare. Many have had to deal with mud and more mud on top of two blasts that saw temperatures dip below zero for a few nights. This happened while some were calving, kidding or lambing. The mud was solid during those times, but it continues to cause issues for many operations. In addition to requiring added stress to the livestock, it adds stress to the producer, too. Part of that stress is getting the feed to the livestock, and another part is dealing with feed that may not be meeting the needs of the livestock.

The following is from Matt Morris from Penn State, and was on the Beef Blog. He addresses some of the issues that we continue to deal with after a very wet growing season/hay making season of 2018.

Getting hay made during the 2018 season was a challenge to say the least. What hay did get made was probably not prize winning stuff by any means. I wanted to write this article because I have received several calls and have been out to a few farms where the hay's nutritional value was being questioned. I'm writing this with beef cattle in mind as that is the type of farms that have been asking the question, but it would apply to other types of livestock as well. Hopefully you were able to attend the Central MD Forage and Livestock conference in January where Penn State's Forage Specialist, Dr. Jessica Williamson, gave a good talk on feeding lower quality hay. A lot of this info was covered during her talk so be sure to attend next year!

First I will explain the problem: cows and calves are thinner than usual. The calves that were weaned have been anywhere from 50 to 100 pounds lighter than normal and the cows have less condition at weaning than previous years. Keep in mind, a cow should drop two body condition scores from calving



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to weaning (from 6 to 4, or 8% of their body fat). The problem in situations like this is that it is never one single thing that is causing the issue. The first thing to look at is not only nutrition, but health protocols. Were the calves vaccinated properly? Are the cows vaccinated properly? Have the animals been wormed recently? What type of mineral supplementation are you practicing? Is there some other issue where a vet should be consulted? If you have any underlying health issues that are not being corrected, low feed quality in a year like this is going to compound the problem. Get all of those issues corrected while also considering any nutritional needs. Having a good working relationship with your veterinarian is important. They'll be able to help you through a lot of these problems.

If all the proper health and herd care protocols are being followed and there continues to be a problem then the focus turns to the nutritional needs of the herd. The first and most important thing to do is get a forage analysis done on your feed, no matter the feed type. Without a forage analysis, you are only guessing if the feed is meeting the nutritional needs of your animal. A great example of why a forage analysis should be done came a few weeks ago. I looked at some hay and would have said it was absolutely the problem just by visual evaluation. I still recommended an analysis. The results came back: 11% crude protein (CP) and a relative feed value (RFV) of 81! Pure alfalfa has a benchmark RFV of 100 for reference. Now there are many more results from a forage analysis, but those are the big ones. It just goes to show that visual evaluation of hay is not telling the whole story. This is why I said there is usually more than one issue causing the problem!

Next, you need to know the nutritional needs of your animals. This varies based on the class of livestock. As a general rule of thumb a lactating, 1200# beef cow will require between 10 and 11% CP in the diet. Dry cows and mature bulls need about 8% CP and stocker calves need 12-14% CP in their diet. Digestibility is also a factor and it is related to the crude protein. As protein levels go up, digestibility usually goes up. The inverse is also true. These numbers are driven by forage maturity at harvest. Earlier cut, immature forages are usually higher in CP and digestibility. As the plant grows and gets more mature before harvest, as was the case in 2018, CP and digestibility goes down. Just as reference, orchard grass cut in the vegetative stage can be over 20% CP and over 70% digestibility. The same plant, cut at a mature stage can be less than 10% CP and less than 60% digestibility. In a good year, with timely harvest, hay can meet all the nutritional needs of the beef herd. This year was definitely not that way. The problem was compounded by the fact that cows came off summer and fall pastures that were low in energy because of such little sunlight and too much moisture throughout the growing season.

Unfortunately, we're not able to change the quality of our hay once it is harvested. In fact we need to store it properly to prevent further loss of quality during storage. So what can you do to make the hay you do have work for your operation? Supplementation is going to be a key strategy this year. There are endless options for supplementing the beef herd, but generally they can be thought of in two categories: protein and energy. Supplement whichever one you need based on your forage analysis. Probably the most economical, non-forage derived protein supplement for the beef producer is going to be soy hulls or corn gluten feed (not meal). Raw soybeans can be fed, but must be limited to no more than 4# per head daily due to high fat levels. If you're able to get in touch with any of our local breweries and take their spent brewer's grain, that makes a great protein supplement as well. If energy is your limiting factor, the best option for a beef herd is whole kernel corn. No processing of the kernel is needed as the digestive tract will still digest about 84% of the starch. There's no economic return by grinding the corn when feeding beef cows as that only increases total starch digestion by a few percentage points. It is important to limit feed corn to beef cows on a forage based diet.

## **Dates to Remember**

- Feb. 13 Beef Quality Assurance training at Union Stockyards in Hillsboro starting at 6:00 p.m. Meal starts at 5:00 p.m. RSVP at 937-393-1958.
- Feb. 21 Adams County Cattlemen Education meeting at Frisch's at 7:00 p.m. The topic will be meeting nutrient needs with poor hay and plenty of mud, plus the importance of good quality minerals.
- Feb. 28 GAP for Tobacco at Frisch's at 1:00 p.m. Call 544-2339 to RSVP one week prior.
- Feb. 28 GAP for Tobacco at Maysville Comm. College at 6:00 p.m.
- Mar. 5 GAP for Tobacco at Frisch's at 1:00 p.m. Call 544-2339 to RSVP one week prior.
- Mar. 5 GAP for Tobacco at the Brown Co. Fairgrounds at 6:30 p.m. call 378-6716.
- March 12 Farm and Family Night at Maysville Community and Technical College.