



Volume 8, issue 1

Modoc

April 2015



# Ranch Roundup

C O O P E R A T I V E E X T E N S I O N

## **LETTER FROM NEW FARM ADVISOR**

Greetings Modoc County,

I am elated to be in Alturas and have enjoyed my first two months as Modoc County Farm Advisor. I can't wait to meet each of you and be of assistance leading research in the area and spreading information about new technologies, policies, and programs.

I grew up in Iowa where my family raised feeder steers and grew row crops. I left to attend college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and received my undergraduate degree in water science in 2009. After working for the University of Georgia Extension, I returned to UNL to pursue a Master's degree in Agronomy specializing in Range Science. In 2013 I started a job coordinating undergraduate research at the Niobrara Valley Preserve, a ranch in the Nebraska Sandhills, owned by the Nature Conservancy. We conducted research primarily on post fire rangelands and forest ecosystems with cattle and bison grazing.

My specialty areas are range resource management and watershed protection and management although I have training in several areas and a variety of experiences to draw from. Please feel free to stop by my office at 202 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St. or give me a call at 233-6400 if you have any concerns involving livestock and natural resources in Modoc County. I am happy to be of assistance or help you get in contact with an expert. This newsletter serves as an update to research being done in the county and current issues of importance.

Cheers,

*Laura Kay Snell*

## **FOOTHILL ABORTION VACCINE UPDATE**

Foothill Abortion is a bacterial disease that causes the loss of 45,000-90,000 calves annually in California. It is transmitted by a tick that lives in the soil around trees, dry brush areas, and rock outcroppings in foothill rangelands. Pregnant cows do not show obvious clinical symptoms but abort calves between six and nine months into pregnancy.

Aborted fetuses typically have small ruptured blood vessels under the skin in the mucosal areas (eye lids, gums, tongue). They also usually have enlarged lymph nodes and can have enlarged abdomens due to fluid buildup. A trained pathologist is needed for a definite diagnosis but this sign can help you determine if you are on the right track.

The vaccine has been through three years of preliminary safety trials and has produced encouraging results. The vaccine must be administered a minimum of 60 days prior to breeding and it has a 90 day withdrawal period before slaughter. Participation in the vaccine program requires collection and reporting of data including specific cattle treated, location of treated cattle, pregnancy, and calving data.

Woodland Pharmaceuticals has begun an agreement to start producing the vaccine but it could take up to two years to have in commercially produced. To bridge the gap, the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) has agreed to expand field trials on the vaccine produced by UC Davis. Producers looking to be involved in the trials can apply using the attached form. CCA requests that a donation be made in the value of \$20-\$25 per vaccine to help offset the cost. There will most likely be a minimum herd size that is identified due to the high level of paper work that is required for a USDA vaccine trial for each herd. The vaccine must be administered by a veterinarian or certified UC Davis staff.

If you have any questions or are looking for more information, please contact Billy Gatlin at (916) 444-0845 or [billy@calcattlemen.org](mailto:billy@calcattlemen.org).

## MOUNTAIN LIONS IN MODOC

90% of mountain lion sightings are mistaken with people actually seeing dogs, bobcats, raccoons but even so, mountain lions exist all over California. Mountain Lions have a 3 lobe bottom paw pad and circular toes. They use scrapes to communicate and tend to bury their prey to come back to feed later. According to attacks reported to USDA California Wildlife Services, in 2014 mountain lions amounted to \$323,381 in financial losses in California.

What should you do when you suspect a mountain lion attack on your livestock? Contact California Wildlife Services and/or California Fish and Wildlife immediately. Deterioration occurs quickly and identification can be very difficult after 48 hours. Although mountain lions are a specially protected mammal in California, they can be taken with depredation permits after a confirmed predation and approval from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Preserve the site until a confirmation can be made. Take pictures of the attack and the site around the attack. Cover tracks, scat, scratch marks, and drag marks with a bucket, tarp or box to preserve them.

How can you help to prevent mountain lion predation and attacks? Suggestions at [www.wildlife.ca.gov/keep-me-wild/lion](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/keep-me-wild/lion) are a good start. If possible, decrease preferred deer food and habitat near livestock. Installing motion sensitive lighting and random sound generation can scare mountain lions away. Sturdy, covered shelters for sheep, goats, and other vulnerable animals as well as bringing pets in at night can all decrease predation. If you are being

stalked by a mountain lion, do not run but instead face the mountain lion, make noise, look big, and fight back.

A new mountain lion policy is in the beginning stages from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The new policy aims to better define interaction types and responses to those interactions. A response guidance team is being put into place to more quickly address mountain lion interactions across the state. Along with the new policy, a state wide mountain lion survey will be completed over the next couple years to better assess mountain lion habitat and populations.

Modoc County is in the north district of the USDA Wildlife Services division. Please contact Jim Shuler (530-336-5623) or Kent Mullis (530-260-0667) if you suspect mountain lion predation has occurred or if you have any questions about mountain lions in Modoc County.

Information gathered from "How to better manage human-mountain lion conflict" meeting April 2, 2015 at UC Davis; California

Department of Fish and Wildlife, and USDA Wildlife Services.



### PROPOSED 2015-2016 EXTENSION AND EXPANSION OF FOOTHILL ABORTION VACCINE TRIALS

**RANCHNAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **OWNER(S) NAME(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHYSICAL ADDRESS/RANCH LOCATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BILLING ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WORK/HOME PHONE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CELL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCATION OF CATTLE WHEN VACCINATED (IF DIFFERENT THAN RANCH LOCATION):**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NUMBER OF DOSES REQUESTED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PLANNED (APPROX.) DATE OF VACCINATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO INITIATE BREEDING?** \_\_\_\_\_

**METHOD USED TO RECORD CALVING:** \_\_\_\_\_

**METHOD OF INDIVIDUALLY RECORDING HEIFER AT TIME OF VACCINATION (BANGS TAG, SILVER BRIGHT, 840, ETC.):**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT INFORMATION FOR HERD VETERINARIAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IF INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS TRIAL, PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND TO:**

**CALIFORNIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
1221 H STREET  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814**

## GRAP UPDATE

The Grazing Regulatory Action Project or GRAP is a work team created by the Regional Water Boards to address water quality impacts related to livestock grazing in California. Grazing is considered a potential source of pollutants to approximately 4% of stream impairments in the state. 303 (D) listed impaired waters in Modoc County include Mill Creek and Bidwell Creek in northeast Modoc, the Pit River, Canyon Creek, and Rush Creek in southcentral Modoc and the Tule Lake area in northwest Modoc. Waters can be considered impaired for a variety of reasons including pH, temperature, sediment, nutrients, and others. The Pit River is the only 303(D) impaired water where grazing is listed as a potential source in Modoc County.

GRAP is an attempt at a one-size-fits-all policy to achieve state wide water quality goals. California's rangelands and ranching operations are extremely diverse and this type of project risks affecting the good water management programs already in place in most of the state through the Rangeland Watershed Program (RWP). California's Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan, created through RWP, enhances

water quality protection by adapting to site-specific conditions, challenges, and opportunities. Instead of developing a new state wide regulatory action, building upon the collaborative success of the RWP would be more advantageous.

A group of landowners, UC Davis researchers, regional water board representatives, and public land managers convened March 3-4 to discuss current rangeland water quality research at the Rustici Rangeland Science Symposium at UC Davis. The success of the RWP was discussed as well as an in depth look at the impaired waters in California with grazing as a potential cause. No additional information about GRAP has been provided through the CA State Water Board since March but the timeline on their website indicates that 2015 will consist of developing an initial proposal, identifying stakeholders, and holding public comment opportunities for the proposal. Progress seems to have slowed recently, but it will most likely resume sometime in the future when the water boards are less concerned with drought.

## WILD HORSE OCCUPANCY AROUND SPRINGS

Expanding on a current project by BLM in Lassen County, wild horse monitoring around springs and seeps in Modoc County using trail cams will begin this summer. Camera monitoring with accompanied vegetation sampling will be conducted at roughly 15 spring or seep sites. The goals of the project are to quantify use and season of use of springs and seeps by wild horses, determine if horses are preventing livestock and other wildlife from using springs, and determine the impact of wild horses on vegetation surrounding springs. The study will be continued through the fall and repeated in the following year.

Along with pictures, soil samples will be taken from sites where horses have dug holes and eaten soil to understand why the wild horses are behaving this way. The digging and mining of soil causes great destruction and loss of vegetation.

The USFS is hoping to have enough funding to conduct a wild horse population survey by the end of this year and continue to plan to have some horses removed from Modoc County along with an updated wild horse plan.

## RANGELAND MONITORING CAMERAS

Cameras are still available from the Farm Advisor's office for ranchers to check out and complete rangeland monitoring. The cameras attach a GPS point to pictures so the pictures can be pinpointed to a specific location. These cameras were made available with RAC and Modoc County Cattlemen monies for the purpose of rancher monitoring and UCCE developing a database of photos for research and litigation.

Those that have cameras still checked out, please return them to the office so the data can be downloaded. Photo-point monitoring will be included in the July Forest Service Permittee Monitoring workshop.

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Alturas, California  
Permit # 22

**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

Modoc County UCCE  
202 West 4th Street  
Alturas, CA 96101

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Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor  
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## FUTURE EVENTS OF INTEREST

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**High Tunnel Users Group** Meeting May 16, 10-Noon in Lake City (RSVP modochightunnels@gmail.com)

Alturas **Children's Fair** May 16, 9-3

**USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training** for producers selling consumable products at Farmer's Markets, May 28, 1-4pm Cedarville BLM Office (RSVP svSaturdaymarket@gmail.com)

**Junior Livestock Show** June 8-12

**Forest Service Ecological Monitoring Trainings**, Tentatively scheduled for July 14, a training for permittees on Forest Service Monitoring

Look for **Beef Quality Assurance Training** information in the near future as well as a **seeding seminar and demonstration** this fall