



# Modoc Ranch Roundup

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

## Horse Hints- Weaning

Weaning foals is a necessary event when breeding horses. Animals should be weaned at 4-6 months. If foals must be weaned younger they usually require some form of liquid milk replacer or a specially designed foal pellet. It is stressful on the mares, foals, and the owner. To minimize the possibility of an accident(s) a well thought out weaning strategy should be used. The main process though should keep your foal and investment safe and as stress-free as possible.

Before weaning, it is important that foals are halter-broken. This will help ensure minor problems do

not turn into major disasters especially if the foal is injured. The foal should be healthy and in good condition; additionally, foals should be dewormed at 2-3 months of age. As weaning is a stressful time, therefore other stresses should be minimized.

Prior to weaning, the corral or pasture where foals will be turned into should be examined closely for potential hazards such as loose or broken boards, exposed nails, inadequate fencing and sharp edges on feed and water troughs. Fix, remove, or replace any items deemed as hazardous.

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## BEEF BITS – PRICING SUPPLEMENTS

Many are aware stockpiled forages (standing or left-over grass) and native grass hays are below a cow's nutrient requirements for a mature or heifer within the last trimester until three or four months post partum. During this time, protein and/or energy supplementation is necessary to ensure animals are rebred in a timely manner, to increase weaning rates, and weaning weights. Though, the question is where do you begin and how can you find the most cost effective supplement.

The first step is to test the quality of your main forage source by coring bales or clipping pastures. This will give a baseline for the majority of forage used in a ration and is comparably inexpensive. Supplies for forage testing can be loaned from this office and a list of credible testing labs is also available. Personally, I prefer wet chemistry to the NIRS testing facilities. Wet chemistry does take longer but tends to be more accurate especially with lower quality cool season grasses

than NIRS or NIR testing.

Choosing an economical source of protein or energy supplement can be simplified by comparing products on a cost per pound of the actual nutrient (energy or protein) the supplement is to provide. Comparing supplements on a cost per ton basis can be misleading. Follow these guidelines for comparing nutrients on a cost per pound basis. The same calculations can be done for energy using TDN as the percentage value.

Calculate the amount of nutrient per ton..

If the supplement in question is a ton of 18% crude protein alfalfa; then multiply 2000 lbs x 0.18 = 360 lbs of actual protein in the alfalfa. The rest of the weight is considered other nutrients and filler.

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- October 24th– Modoc County Cattlemen’s Annual Dinner, Brass Rail 6 PM
- November 1st– Benefit for Pat Puckett, Caldwell Ranch
- November 11th– Office Closed
- November 18th– Agribusiness Management Conference, Radisson Hotel Fresno, CA
- November 19th-21st–CCA Convention, The Nugget, Sparks, NV
- November 27th &28th– Office Closed, Happy Thanksgiving
- December 2nd– California Sheep Commission, Sacramento, CA
- December 5th– California Wool Growers Board Meeting, Sacramento, CA

### BEEF BITS - CONT

Calculate the cost per pound of nutrient.

Using our 18% crude protein alfalfa at  
\$200 per ton; divide \$220/360lbs =  
\$0.61 per lb of protein.

With this in mind, not all protein supplements are created equal, you must decide between natural protein, nonprotein nitrogen, liquid or dry, and ease of feeding. Nonprotein nitrogen or NPN comes in many forms, some are more beneficial than others. Urea and biuret, the two of the most common forms of NPN, can be used but have threshold levels which can be toxic (0.13 to 0.23 g urea per pound of body weight) or lethal (0.45 to 0.68 g urea per pound of body weight). The effectiveness of urea and biuret is dependent on the energy content of the forage in the diet, quality of diet, and form in which it is fed. Other forms of NPN are amino acids or the building blocks of protein and can be considered natural nonprotein nitrogen and fed similarly to natural protein sources.

Cattle consume and require quantities of nutrients not percentages so if cattle eat more or less than the quantity required than rations may be incorrect. A general rule of thumb is cattle eat 2-3% of their body weight. Higher quality forages increase intake along with cold, wet, environmental conditions. In the office, we have easy ration balancing software and to evaluate feeding programs. Stop by.

### BENEFIT CLINIC AND LUNCHEON FOR PAT PUCKETT

DATE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2008

TIME: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, LUNCH TO FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY AFTER CLINIC END

WHERE: CALDWELL RANCH, ALTURAS, CA

COST: \$200 – SUGGESTED DONATION FOR CLINIC

\$20 – AUDIT / \$20 – LUNCHEON

An amazing opportunity for anyone looking to improve their horsemanship skills. Richard Caldwell will be providing an intense one-day version of his horsemanship clinic, teaching the same concepts as the clinics he has given all over the U.S. and Canada!!

All proceeds from the clinic and luncheon will be going to the Californio Ranch Horse Association and Pat Puckett to help with expenses brought on by Pat’s recent illness. Any proceeds unused by Pat will be put into a fund for other fallen buckaroos in need.

Please ride/attend/help in any way you can. There will also be a silent auction table with lots of items to bid on. Luncheon will be a fantastic spaghetti feast with Dutch oven cobbler for dessert!!

Information:

To sign up to ride in the clinic please contact Kim Kinnear at 818-521-4554 or [kim@bajahorse.com](mailto:kim@bajahorse.com)

Richard Caldwell’s website with contact info and directions. [www.vaquerohorseman.com](http://www.vaquerohorseman.com)

Or to donate directly– How to contribute.

[www.californioranchhorse.org](http://www.californioranchhorse.org)

## FALL AND WINTER RODENT CONTROL IN ALFALFA AND GRASS HAY FIELDS

The three major rodent pests found in Modoc County alfalfa and grass hay fields in the fall and winter are field mice, pocket gophers, and jackrabbits.

### Meadow Mice

Meadow mice or field mice are the most prolific and shortest-lived of all field rodents. They are commonly found in meadows, irrigated pastures, alfalfa, and grass hay fields. They thrive in areas which furnish them food and cover.

Meadow mouse infestations usually originate from more or less permanently established populations in nearby areas with dense weed or grass cover, which provides food, shelter, and protection from predators. Meadow mice are not wide-ranging; their normal home range is only a few square yards. They are territorial animals; females occupy a home range around their burrows where they don't tolerate other mice. After weaning at two to three weeks of age, young mice disperse from their mothers' home ranges, seeking to establish their own territorial domains. Infestations in alfalfa and grass hay fields will start as small, isolated colonies, and can spread with population growth into large infestations.

### CONTROL METHODS

Cultural practices affect mouse populations. Clean cultivation and weed control on fence lines, roadsides, and ditch banks are important preventative measures.

Predation by coyotes, badgers, and other carnivores, as well as a sizeable list of raptors and scavenging birds can help with control. However, it is usually not possible to have enough predators in a field to prevent a population explosion once it has started.

Maintaining a short stubble height after the last cutting of the season will help the predators find and reduce mouse populations.

The most effective control measure is to use anti-coagulant grain bait which is available from the Modoc County Agricultural Commissioner. Since meadow mice do not feed very far from their runways, spot baiting near runways and burrows is most effective.

Locating and treating small infestations before winter snow covers your fields is highly recommended.

### Pocket Gophers

Pocket gophers are often the most destructive vertebrate

pest of alfalfa. Alfalfa is a preferred for of gophers, and it provides ideal conditions for gopher population buildup.

They feed primarily on the taproot and often kill plants. Their feeding can lead to significant yield reduction, and their mounds cause damage to harvest equipment.

### CONTROL METHODS

A successful pocket gopher control program depends on early detection and control measures appropriate to the location and situation. The three most effective control measures for gophers are; hand-baiting, mechanical baiting, and trapping.

Hand baiting is useful for small isolated populations. Mechanical baiting is effective in widespread infestations, when soil moisture and texture conditions are favorable for artificial burrow formation. Trapping is a very effective winter time measure. Be sure to set traps in pairs, facing opposite directions.

### Jackrabbits

When fields and haystacks are surrounded by sagebrush, jackrabbits can cause serious damage. If jackrabbit populations are high, and palatable food becomes scarce in late fall and winter, they can become serious pests.

### CONTROL MEASURES

Fencing to exclude jackrabbits from haystacks and croplands is practical and cost effective in some situations. One or two inch mesh galvanized poultry netting can be used. The fence should be at least two feet tall and buried 4-6 inches in the ground. The netting can be stretched between posts, or attached to a barbed wire fence using hog rings. If attached to a barbed wire fence, a bottom wire is often stretched to keep the netting tight in the soil, and a third wire can be placed halfway between the top and bottom to add strength to the netting and reduce maintenance.

When large numbers of jackrabbits are present, shooting, trapping, and natural predators are not effective at population control.

If you have any questions on vertebrate pest control, contact Don Lancaster at the Modoc County Farm Advisors office, or Joe Moreo at the Modoc County Agricultural Commissioners office in Alturas.

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**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

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**H O R S E H I N T S - C O N T .**

Introducing foals to feed and water troughs while still on the mare is important. Foals may go off water or avoid a novel water trough while being weaned putting it at risk to colic, especially if the majority of the diet is made up of hay. Daily intake of water should be monitored if possible to avoid the risk. Foals should be fed 2 lbs of hay per 100 lbs of body weight or 8 lbs for a 400 lbs foal of high quality grass or grass/legume mix hay or allowed free choice in a pasture for 8-24 hours a day.

It is always best to wean foals together being herd animals they are less stressed when in groups. Place mares and foals together in a group for a minimum of 5 days before separating off the mares. This allows the animals a chance to establish herd dominance. A single foal can be weaned with a gelding for company if needed, giving the foal a companion.

