



# 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- Proper Dental Care

The improper feeding or watering of a horse accounts for over half of the digestive disorders. Digestion in the horse begins at the mouth, and the condition of the horse's teeth may affect its ability to obtain and digest food. Incisors or the front teeth, six on top and bottom, allow the animal to clip or tear off forages, while the molars grind in a circular motion the food into smaller pieces exposing more surface area for microbial and enzymatic digestion. Floating a horse's teeth is one of the single most important procedures to ensure a healthy animal. Without proper alignment of the jaw, the animal may be

difficult to turn left or right, throw their head, lose weight, and/or waste feed. In addition, younger horses may have wolf teeth that need to be removed because of interference with a bit or develop lumps along the bottom of the jaw due to retention of baby teeth or caps.

There are several problems that may develop in a horse's mouth, these include but are not limited to points, hooks, long teeth, infected teeth, waves, and sharp canines which all may be prevented with regular maintenance.

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## BEEF BITS – MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

As fall is quietly making its presence known with colder mornings and shorter days, it is time to start thinking about weaning calves. There are several different weaning strategies and each has its positive and negative points. These include: diesel smoke, separate pastures, fence line, backgrounding, and several others or combinations of these.

Weaning calves on diesel smoke is probably one of the more simple protocols. Animals are simply gathered, sorted, and calves are sold, weaned and trucked during the same day. This is relatively low labor intensity and low noise due to lack of bawling calves on the ranch however, these animals tend to increase the amount of labor required in the feedlot. Calves weaned on diesel smoke have to deal with several different stresses at one time: weaning, transporting, and commingling at the feedlot or next facility. They tend to eat less, travel more, and have a greater incidence of sick-

ness or morbidity and may be deemed less valuable to a buyer.

Calves weaned in separate pastures, out of hearing and visual distance of their dams will have less stress than the previously mentioned method. These animals however will still tend to walk fences and spend less time eating and resting which may lead to an increase in morbidity within the herd. These animals may be trucked within 4-7 days, as soon as bawling and fence walking has ceased however; if these animals are kept on the place for a month to six weeks most of the sickness will have been eliminated and essentially a 45-day backgrounding period has been implemented.

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### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- September 3rd– Labor Day UCCE Office Closed
- September 10th and 11th– Aspen Meeting, Alturas Elks Lodge 7 PM and Cedarville BLM 8 AM for field trip on 11th.
- September 18th– Cattlemen's Day at the Modoc Veterinary Hospital
- September 26th– Goose Lake Coalition Meeting, New Pine Creek
- October 13th– Farm Bureau Field Day, Cedarville
- October 27– Modoc County Cattlemen Annual Dinner, Alturas

### WEANING CONT.

Fenceline weaning tends to be favored by a lot of ranches because it is lower stress on the calves. Consequently it does take more infrastructures because fences must be stout enough to ensure calves and dams do not mix after initially weaning. Hog-wire or sheep wire would be sufficient enough to reduce the calves' ability to milk while still allowing contact between pairs, reducing the amount of stress placed on the calves.

There are a lot of niche marketers and buyers requesting a backgrounding period is implemented before animals are shipped. This may include but is not limited to: vaccinating, proper mineral nutrition, bunk feeding, and acclimating animals to people. This can be accomplished by any of the above weaning methods with the exception of diesel smoke. The normal backgrounding period from weaning to shipping is usually 45 days. These animals are considered superior in feedlots as the initiation period is cut considerably and animals have lower morbidity and higher average daily gains.

Weaning is a stressful time for animals and any value you can add to a calf is value added to your name and the ranch. For more information or questions on any of the above weaning strategies contact the Farm Advisors office.



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World Together,  
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The Modoc 4-H Youth  
Development Program is  
accepting volunteers for the  
2007-2008 Program Year.  
Positions available in  
Citizenship. Leadership &  
Animal Science.

The fun begins September 1st.  
Call the 4-H Office  
(233-6400) for more  
information.



## FALL SEEDING OF ALFALFA

There are several advantages to late-summer planting of alfalfa, the greatest advantage is that by next summer you can have a fully established alfalfa stand with a good first season yield. Furthermore, as the days get shorter, much of the new seedling's energy is dedicated to root development for a deeper, stronger, root system. Lastly, late-summer seeding allows planting directly into the stubble of a previous cereal crop without additional tillage.

### RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH FALL SEEDING

If you plant too late, mid September or later in Modoc County, the new seedling stand may not be mature enough to withstand killing frosts in October or harsh winter conditions that cause soil heaving.

### FERTILITY REQUIREMENTS

Adequate soil fertility is fundamental to stand establishment. Most soils in Modoc County are sulfur deficient and may also require additional phosphorus applications. Pre-planting incorporation of sulfur and phosphorus materials is highly recommended. Consult with your fertilizer supplier or Farm Advisor to get the best recommendations for your specific field's needs.

### IRRIGATION

Proper irrigation of a new seeding is essential to achieving a dense healthy stand. A general rule of thumb is to apply approximately one inch of water per irrigation, (a 3-4 hour set for most wheel line systems) and to re-apply water every 4 to 5 days until late fall. As the days get shorter and the evapotranspiration rates decrease, be careful not to over irrigate.

### WEED CONTROL

Weeds compete with alfalfa for light, water, and nutrients. Controlling weeds in the seedling year can get the stand off to a fast, healthy start, and reduce weed pressure in subsequent years.

For more information on alfalfa establishment and management contact Don Lancaster at the Modoc County Farm Advisors office. A good overall reference is the INTERMOUNTAIN ALFALFA MANAGEMENT publication number 3366 which is available from the ANR Catalog. (<http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu>) 1-800-994-8849

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**Wanted Information on Important Dates for Modoc County**

If your club, group, or organization has important dates you would like to have included in the newsletter please contact the Modoc county cooperative extension farm advisors office either by phone 233-6400 or e-mail [cemodoc@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cemodoc@ucdavis.edu).

**EQUINE DENTAL HEALTH CONT.**

Also, regular dental procedures may improve your horses athletic and show performances especially when correct bit seats are placed. Please remember dental abnormalities are easier to prevent than they are to correct. Schedule an appointment for dental work on your horse if you notice any of the above problems and consider yearly check-ups to prevent any major problems.