

November 2022
Volume 23, Issue 1

**OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION**
Morgan County
P.O. Box 179
McConnelsville, OH 43756

Morgan County Agriculture Newsletter

Dear Friends,

I hope you are doing well. We are starting to get programs finalized for this winter and I want to make sure to share the dates with you as soon as possible, so you can hold the dates. We are planning a full slate of programs including pesticide and fertilizer recertification, and the return of pesticide training for new applicators and pesticide testing. We also have cattleman's programs scheduled, including the return of the Beef Banquet. We are also planning a daytime Cow-Calf school at Clemens Farms on February 20th (President's Day) with presentations and demonstrations. As always, if you have questions, you can reach me here at the office, 962-4854; at home, 557-3154; or if I am in town or on top of the hill, my cell at 740-517-9738. We have several very interesting and important meetings coming up and I hope you can attend those of interest. Again, I will finish up by saying "keep safety in mind".

Kindest regards,



Chris Penrose,
Extension Educator
Agriculture and
Natural Resources

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Upcoming Events

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| December 3 | Buckeye Shepherd's Symposium, see enclosure |
| December 12 | Cattleman's meeting, 7 p.m., Morgan H.S. Vo-Ag room, details inside |
| February 7 | Morgan County Pesticide Recertification (6-9 p.m.) and Fertilizer Recertification (9-10 p.m.). Morgan H.S. Vo-Ag room |
| February 8, March 8, April 12, | 6:30 p.m. Beef Webinars, details in next newsletter |
| February 13 | Beef Banquet, 6:30 p.m., Riecker bldg. Community room |
| February 17 | Ohio Forage and Grassland Council Annual meeting, Deerassic Park, Cambridge |
| February 20 | Cow-Calf School, daytime, Clemens Farms |
| February 23 | Fertilizer Recertification, 6-7 p.m., Riecker bldg. room 325 |
| March 13 | Pesticide Training for new applicators, 6 p.m. Riecker bldg. room 325 (call for a reservation) |
| March 23 | Pesticide Testing, 9 a.m., Riecker bldg. room 325 (will need to pre-register for the test) |

Ohio Forage & Grasslands Council

I have had the privilege to be a part of the Ohio Forage & Grasslands Council (OFGC) since its beginning in 1997. This organization exists to enhance the profitability of Ohio farmers using forage and grassland resources, and to facilitate the opportunity for interaction between producers and other forage workers – both public and private. I bring this up because on February 17th, the annual meeting will be near Cambridge at Deerassic Park, near Salt Fork state park. The keynote speaker will be Ed Rayburn, Forage Professor from West Virginia University. A \$35 annual membership will give you a discounted rate for the annual conference and automatic membership to the American Forage & Grassland Council. I will provide more information about the conference in the next newsletter. In the meantime, if you have questions about OFGC or would like to join, call me or go to afgc.org.

Controlling Cocklebur Can Be A Challenge, Chris Penrose and Ted Wiseman, OSU Extension Educators, Morgan and Perry Counties

Over the past 20 years, we have seen more and more cocklebur becoming established on our farms and many farmers in the area have noted that as well. On Chris' farm, I think it started when I fed whole shelled corn to my cattle out in the pastures to extend hay supplies in the winter. You would think this summer annual would be easy to control but it is more of a challenge. We and several of our colleagues recently finished a five year trial on timed mowing of pastures in the summer and one year after concluding the study, we went out to the site in September, it had not been mowed yet, and it was completely engulfed with cocklebur. No matter when or how often we mowed, after doing the same thing for five years, there was no difference.

Controlling Cocklebur Can Be A Challenge, Chris Penrose and Ted Wiseman, OSU Extension Educators, Morgan and Perry Counties (continued)

One would think that if we went out and mowed a summer annual when the stem is elongating with immature seeds and cut below the seeds, we would kill the plant, and that still may be the case. However, how about the 10% that were too short to mow or still immature? During the trial, we noticed many cocklebur plants maturing only four inches tall with lots of seeds after mowing – very discouraging. Even then, we wondered why it kept spreading so much.

According to "Weeds of the Northeast", 1997, and trying not to get too deep in the "weeds", this plant blooms July through September, it has male and female flowers on the plant, and each bur (the seed cover we have to pull off of our dogs) contains two fruit, each with one seed. The discouraging part here is that the lower seed can germinate soon after the bur (or seed pod) splits open. The other seed can remain dormant for one to several years, meaning it may take years to eliminate.

Timely, repeated mowings may keep cocklebur in check or slow the spread, but if it becomes established, pastures will likely need a herbicide. According to the 2022 OSU Extension Weed Control Guide, most broadleaf herbicides for pastures are very effective, as well as Glyphosate for spot treatments. Before selecting one, consider the residual impact of the herbicide and how long one must keep animals out of the pasture after spraying. We are fortunate that there are options for short term and long term residual of the herbicides, and there are herbicides that may have short to no grazing restrictions depending the class and type of livestock you have. As always, read and understand the herbicide label and restrictions before using, some have very strict grazing and haying requirements.

If you have pastures where cocklebur was present this year, it will only get worse, so consider taking action next year. If you have some fields where you find a few rogue plants, consider pulling them out, before they can get established. One plant one year could become many the next.

Johnsongrass; Feed or Weed?

Another plant that is causing issues, especially in hay fields is johnsongrass. Jordan Penrose, Gallia Co. Ag. Educator recently provided this article that may help us manage this plant. Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*) is a competitive perennial warm-season grass that is native to the Mediterranean region. Johnsongrass seed was exported around the world to be primarily used to control erosion. It got its common name here in the United States from an Alabama plantation owner by the name of William Johnson, who used the seed in the 1840's to plant on his river-bottom farm as a forage alternative and to help control water erosion. Today, johnsongrass to many is now considered a weed and in many states is considered a noxious weed. In an article by Oklahoma State University "Johnsongrass in Pastures: Weed or Forage?" johnsongrass is known as the weed that we love to hate and hate to love. The reason it is a weed to many is that it reduces the yield and quality for crops that it grows in. But it also has some upsides to it as a forage because it has a high yield and can have good palatability and quality.



Johnsongrass: Feed or Weed? (continued)

When identifying johnsongrass, it can resemble a few different plants at its seedling stage, such as corn and sorghum, but once it is past that stage the plant becomes more distinct. At the seedling stage, the easiest way to identify johnsongrass is that it has more narrow stems and leaves than corn and sorghum and has a distinct and prominent white mid-vein. Some of the ways to identify a mature plant; is that it can range from 2 to 8 feet tall, the stems are more of a pale-yellow green color and can be up to 0.8 inches in diameter. The lower part of the leaf that encloses the stem are flattened, hairy, opened, ribbed, and slightly toothed. When you pull the plant out by the roots you will notice that it also has rhizomes. The rhizomes are a good indicator of johnsongrass because most other plants that resemble it do not have them. The rhizomes are white with red and purple spots and are long.

Managing johnsongrass can be difficult because it can reproduce new plants by seed or by rhizomes. The way to control the rhizomes is to keep the plant from producing new ones. Most production of rhizomes happens when the plant exceeds 2 feet in height and begins producing a seed head. The most effective way to reduce rhizome production is to keep the plants under a foot tall by closely grazing or mowing, which can work when the grass is in pasture field, but more of a challenge in hayfields.

Even though johnsongrass is considered a weed, it has some desirable forage traits to it. Johnsongrass has relatively high quality and can have high yields, making it quite comparable to other forages like Sudangrass. Johnsongrass is very palatable before it hits its reproductive growth stage, then the quality and palatability go down and then livestock like cattle will avoid it. A word of caution is johnsongrass will produce prussic acid and can be lethal to livestock. According to Dr. Mark Sulc's article "Precautions for Feeding Frosted and Drought-Stressed Forages," do not graze after a killing frost until plants are dry, which usually takes 5 to 7 days. And after a non-killing frost, do not allow animals to graze for two weeks because the plants usually contain high concentrations of prussic acid.

If you are considering herbicides to control johnsongrass make sure to read the label and know the type of herbicide you are using and how you are going to use it. A herbicide to kill johnsongrass will likely kill other grasses. Another option that has been used with some success is a rope wick applicator, with a non-selective herbicide when the johnsongrass is taller than the other desirable forages. If you have enough legumes and are willing to eliminate all grasses, a selective grass herbicide can work. If you want to replant a field, I would consider a no-till seeding after a non-selective herbicide, as tilling a field and reseeding could leave viable rhizomes, allowing for rapid reintroduction of johnsongrass. A long-term option to reduce johnsongrass is to fence in the field and graze livestock during the growing season. On my family's farm we have two fields that johnsongrass is in, both are permanent hayfields, the other fields we take a cutting or two of hay off, then rotationally graze, there is no johnsongrass in any of those fields. We usually do not see the johnsongrass show up until we start our second cutting hay, and it is still young enough that it has that positive upside for hay unless it gets too tall. Johnsongrass can be managed, but it will be more of a challenge if it's in a permanent hayfield.

Are You Still Grazing?– Chris Penrose, Ag & Natural Resource Educator, Morgan County

I still am but I am not sure how much longer. My goal is to make it well into December then stop feeding most of the cows hay in early March. I started to stockpile some of my fields in August and everything was going great and growing through September. I even tried a technique that has been used on the east coast to lightly graze well stockpiled fields while there is still time for regrowth. The principle behind that is to stimulate new growth on the stockpiled grass that has slowed down. I took the cattle off the field around the first of October assuming another month of growth but guess what? Grass does not grow much when you get no rain. I actually had one of the best forage growing seasons I can recall until October, so I do have plenty of hay. The way things are going, I will likely start feeding hay by the end of November. When you farm, things rarely go as planned.

I do have a nice, stockpiled field on fairly level ground (for Morgan County, Ohio) that I will save until early March and place my spring calving cows there. My goal is to feed no more hay and have a nice, thick sod for the cows to calve on.

At this point, what can we do to help get us through the winter (going to Florida gets more appealing to me every February!)? I think having equipment in good working order is critical, hope is not a good plan. Equipment breaks down at the worse possible moment and have a backup plan in case it does. For example, I was looking at the worn out tread on the front tires of the tractor I feed rounds bales with and ordered new front ones knowing the hill I have to go up to feed hay. Over the years, I don't know how many times tires have gone flat just after noon on Saturdays!

Plan now on where you feed hay. I try to consider the ease to get to the feeding site, minimizing damage to the field and the ability to spread the nutrients where they are needed the most. Do you have the ability to set out some round bales while the ground is firm and bring the livestock to the hay at a later date? One of the best systems I have seen was to place round bales at least 20 feet apart, then use electric fence to provide hay as needed.

Match your animals needs to the hay you have. I will start feeding my poorest quality first and keep the best hay back until February when the pregnant cows needs are at the highest and the weather tends to be the worst.

Were there herbicides used on your hay fields? I have a set of round bales from a field that was sprayed with a residual herbicide for spotted knapweed. The restrictions are very specific and I have a field identified where I will feed knowing that I may lose some legumes there (and hopefully some broadleaf weeds).

Do you have enough feed and is the quality adequate? Take inventory and develop a strategy if you may not have enough grass and hay. Hay is typically less expensive now than in February, especially if we have a rough winter. Are there harvested corn fields you can graze or a neighbor's field where you could set up a temporary fence to graze? Supplementing with some corn can help stretch out hay supplies. When the quality of the hay is not good enough, typically it is more of an energy issue than a protein issue, so again, supplementing with some corn could be an option. If protein is an issue, protein tubs are an option, but be aware of the source of protein: urea based protein tubs are best for high energy diets and not poor quality hay, and not for calves under 120 days old or less than 400 pounds, there could be an ammonia toxicity issue.

The weather has been great the past month for harvesting crops but forage growth was virtually non-existent has now virtually stopped with the freezing temperatures. We really can't do much to grow more but we can plan for when the unexpected happens. My cows are still grazing but it will not be as long as I had hoped, so I am planning on feeding more hay this winter and have set some round bales in fields I have finished grazing to feed later in December.

Selecting a Business Structure By: Robert Moore, Thursday, November 3, 2022



According to the Ohio Secretary of State, over 170,000 applications were made for new businesses in 2020. This means that every year, thousands of people are faced with the decision of how to structure their new business endeavor. Business entity selection is an important decision because it affects taxes, liability, and management.

In Ohio, the vast majority of farms are sole proprietorships. This is likely due to the ease of starting and managing a sole proprietorship. With a sole proprietorship, the business and the owner are one and the same, there is not distinct, separate entity. For those new business owners who do want a separate entity, the Limited Liability Company (LLC) is usually the entity of choice. The LLC combines the best attributes of a partnership and corporation. LLCs are a relatively new entity, only gaining popularity in the last 20 years. There are many partnerships and corporations still operating that were set up before LLCs were an available option.

The following are a few, general observations regarding new business structures:

Sole proprietorships are the easiest businesses to start but provide no liability protection and can only have one owner

LLCs have largely made partnerships obsolete. An LLC can have the same management and tax structure of a partnership but provide liability protection for all the owners

LLCs are more popular than corporations due to the flexible nature of LLCs. Corporations generally must have a structure of shareholders, directors and officers. LLCs can be structured in almost any way that suits the owners

LLCs can be taxed as a partnership or corporation

Below is a table that provides various characteristics of each type of entity. Review the table to determine which entity might be best for a new business endeavor. Also, be sure to consult with an attorney and tax professional to be sure the new business structure suits the needs and goals of the owner(s) and has the most favorable tax structure.

Business Entity Comparison Chart					
	Sole Proprietorship	General Partnership	Limited Partnership	Limited Liability Company	Corporation (Corp.)
Definition	One person owns all the assets, owes all the liabilities, and operates in their personal capacity.	A voluntary association of two or more persons who jointly own and carry on a business for profit.	A partnership with one or more general partners and one or more limited partners.	Statutorily authorized company that is characterized by limited liability and management by members or managers.	Having lawful authority to act as a single person distinct from the shareholders who own it.
Formation	No formal requirements.	No formal requirements.	Filing with the state.	Filing with the state.	Filing with the state.
Governing Documents	None	Partnership agreement.	Articles of Incorporation and partnership agreement.	Articles of organization and operating agreement.	Articles of incorporation and bylaws.
Cost of Creation	None	None or Low	Medium	Medium	High
Owners	Sole proprietor	General partners	General/ Limited partners	Members	Shareholders
Number of Owners	One	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited, except 100 shareholders for S-Corp.
Personal Liabilities of Owners	Unlimited liability for the obligations of the company.	Unlimited liability for partners for obligations of the company.	Unlimited liability for general partner(s); generally no liability for limited partners.	Generally no liability for members for obligations of company.	Generally no liability for shareholders for obligations of company.
Taxation	Pass-through	Pass-through	Pass-through	Typically pass-through but may elect taxation as a corporation.	Tax at corporation and shareholder level unless S. Corp then shareholder level only.
Applicable Tax Rates	Individual tax rates.	Tax rate of partner.	Tax rate of partner.	Tax rate of partner if taxed as partnership; otherwise, corporation tax rates.	Corporate tax rates for C-Corp.; tax rates of shareholders for S-Corp..
Tax Treatment of Liquidation	No tax.	Generally, no tax.	Generally, no tax.	Generally, no tax if taxed as partnership; will likely be corporate and shareholder level taxes if taxed as corporation.	Generally, will be corporate and shareholder level taxes for C-Corp, tax only at shareholder level for S-Corp..

Morgan County Cattlemen's Meeting

Monday, December 12, 7:00-9:00 pm, Morgan High School
Vo-Ag room

Topics:

Judging Hay Quality- Cliff Little, Extension Educator, Guernsey County

Beef Outlook- Garth Ruff, Extension Beef Specialist

Note: We will have a short, important business meeting to discuss re-organizing the Morgan Co. Cattlemen's Association

Refreshments provided. There is no cost and is open to all interested.

Upcoming Beef related programs:

- February 8, March 8, April 12-Beef Webinars
- February 13, 2023- Beef Banquet 6:30 pm, Riecker Building Community Room
- February 20, 2023- Cow-Calf School, daytime, Clemens farms

OSU Extension
Morgan County
155 E. Main—Suite 320
P.O. Box 179
McConnelsville, OH 43756
Phone: (740) 962-4854
Fax: (740) 962-6508

