

RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Text of the Reno Gazette-Journal's published summary of Dr. William Kvasnicka's report about the malnourished Angus cattle at UNR's S-bar-S Ranch

1/12/2005 09:21 pm

A report by a UNR veterinarian who examined the S-bar-S cattle on June 17, 2002, states that the body condition of the cows was 3 to 4 on a scale of 1 to 9, and "the ideal goal at this stage of production should be at least a 5" rating. On the cattle rating scale, the rating of 5 would be the minimal standard for a healthy cow and a 9 rating would be a perfect animal at the peak of its life

He said the animals showed signs of a copper deficiency and were infested with parasite eggs "at counts greater than typical cows in Nevada "

He wrote that the pastures at S-bar-S "appeared to be overgrazed" and recommended the cattle be moved to the Main Station Farm, given blood tests to check for deficiencies, and that a long-term plan be approved for

management at the S-bar-S Ranch

EDITOR'S NOTE: University of Nevada, Reno College of Agriculture Dean David Thawley said cattle are rated on a "zero to 9" scale, but Kvasnicka said cattle are rated on a scale of 1 to 9 and that has been corrected in the above excerpt

[Click here to read the full text of Dr. William Kvasnicka's report about the malnourished Angus cattle at UNR's S-bar-S Ranch.](#)

[Click here to read the full story about the S-bar-S Angus cattle](#)

[Click here to see the entire special report, "Trouble on the Farm."](#)

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Full text of Dr. William Kvasnicka's report about the malnourished Angus cattle at UNR's S-bar-S Ranch

1/12/2005 09:21 pm

Dr. William Kvasnicka, a UNR veterinarian working for the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources, examined the college's Angus cattle on June 17, 2002. His report to Dean David Thawley, reproduced without corrections to spelling, punctuation and grammar, is below:

Thank you for scheduling time from your schedule July 2nd to discuss the following issues at the S Bar S Ranch.

I was asked to assist in processing the cow/calf herd on June 17th. The cows were being DNA sampled, treated for internal and external parasites, and vaccinated for pinkeye.

I have repeatedly been urged by Dr. Beattie and Bill Inman to propose an animal health production medicine program for the ranch. Thus I agreed to be present on June 17th to observe ranch facilities and assess the status of the herd.

The following observations were noted and form the basis for my assessment that the ranch is experiencing a financial and animal care crisis.

Body condition of cows 3-4 on 9 scale. Ideal goal at this stage of production should be at least 5.

Several cows appeared to still be cycling as evidenced by tail head hair loss and skin abrasions from repeated mounting by other cows and bulls. I did not inquire regarding the breeding season goal.

Body condition of heifers 4

Cows and calves display signs of suggestive of copper deficiency (rough hair coats and a slight change of hair color to a red tinge that is typical of copper deficiency).

Fecal exams collected from the cows revealed elevated internal parasite egg counts greater than typical of cows in Nevada. The counts on samples collected from the calves were very low. This indicates the immune status of the cows is compromised resulting in increased production of eggs from the internal parasite population. The calves have not been grazing contaminated pastures and thus are not yet infected.

The pastures appear to be overgrazed and had not been fertilized this growing season.

Recommendations that I was going to suggest for immediate action.

Increase nutritional resources of cows, heifers and calves. Main station was to be an option. Cows and heifers to be managed as separate production units thus providing adequate energy to meet their unique nutritional requirements.

i. Cattle moved to the main station must be segregated to prevent exposure to animal populations that could expose the S Bar S cattle to bovine viral diarrhoea virus. BVD infected carrier sheep have been identified and not eliminated from main station flocks. The status of cattle populations at main station is unknown.

ii. Pregnancy examination 45 days following the breeding season.

Sell the open cows and heifers to conserve nutritional resources for the bred cows and heifers.

Call Dr. Randy Walstrum 775 782 3855 or leave a message with John Keithly at 775 784 5337.

iii. Determine copper status with blood tests.

Correct if needed with oral bolus.

Oral free choice is an option that has been selected but not on the basis of an accurate diagnosis. The oral free choice products are dangerous if consumed by sheep.

iv. Soil and forage sample testing to facilitate formulation of a life cycle mineral supplementation program by a qualified nutritional consultant.

v. Early wean this years calf crop.

Allows cows to regain body condition before winter

Heifers and bulls can be on a development program to achieve a desirable yearling target weight.

vi. Instigate a cost effective strategic internal and external parasite control program

vii. Develop a vaccination protocol based on anticipated disease challenges. Revised on basis of future diagnostic tests and performance.

Long range strategic plan development for S Bar S.

Designate Bill Inman as the responsible ranch manger.

Assign ongoing nutritional, range management, and animal health advisors to consult with the ranch manger.

Develop a ranch profile of facilities and resources as a basis of goal setting.

Determine AUM capacity of the ranch.

ii. Soil and forage analysis.

iii. Map pastures, corrals, working facilities, and inventory available equipment

iv. Obtain historic records.

v. Assess current herd and individual animal record system and determine health and nutritional requirements based on reliable diagnostic evaluation.

vi. Write a production management program and set goals.

A business plan.

Nutritional requirements

Vaccination schedule

Biosecurity program.

Genetic goals.

Marketing plans.

d. Revise programs based on quarterly assessment of ranch resources and animal performance by the manager and the ranch consultants.

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