

News Column
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LAMBS, COLD WEATHER, AND COVER CROPS

It seemed like a good idea in August! That's when we synchronized our ewes for artificial insemination,...so they would lamb in January.

My trip to misery actually started in late May when I booked our A.I. date. We pushed our August A.I. date back a couple of days from what was originally proposed, to work around a planned trip to Colorado to see daughter Kelsey and her new house.

The trip to Colorado was fun – and the two day period in mid-January when most of those ewes lambed was NOT fun. Two days earlier would have been better.

We have enough experience with synchronization and A.I. now to know what to expect. I'll mark the due date on my calendar using a 145 day gestation table and we might have one ewe lamb that day, or even on day 144. However, the majority will lamb on days 147 and 148.

I saw it coming and scheduled a day and a half off work the week they were due. The weather forecast predicted really cold temperatures on days 147 and 148, and I knew I'd be in trouble if I wasn't home. Day 147 was Wednesday, January 19. The ewes waited for the temperature to drop, then the lambs started dropping.

I might have slept three or four hours that night.

In the two-day period when the temperature was mostly between 2 and 10 degrees we had 16 lambs born. Fourteen of those lambs came to the house to dry off and warm up and would have died if I hadn't been there to help out.

Wednesday and Thursday nights were challenging that week, but I slept really well Friday night, once the temperature was above 20 degrees again.

Now, it looks like we're headed for another cold snap later in the week. That's when the ewes that didn't stick with A.I. – and re-bred 17 days later – are due. It looks like I'm going to be tired and grouchy again.

Grazing Cover Crops – February 10

Getting back to business,...let's talk about next week's Coffee Shop meeting. The topic is "Grazing Cover Crops", something that should be of interest to many cattle producers. The meeting will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 10 at The Farmhouse in Riley.

Dale Strickler will be the speaker and his name is one that many will recognize. Dale is well-known throughout north central and northeast Kansas for his cover crop knowledge and his personal experience grazing covers, both in the summer and through the fall and winter.

Dale grew up in Anderson County, attended Kansas State University, then taught agronomy courses at Cloud County Community College before going to work for a private seed company. He lived in the Jamestown area for several years where he maintained his own cattle and grazing operation.

Dale is currently an agronomist for Green Cover Seeds, with locations in both Kansas and Nebraska.

While reservations aren't an absolute requirement, we like to know how many to expect so we can have the right amount of refreshments. Please register online at www.riley.ksu.edu, or call our office by noon the day before the meeting to let us know you are coming.

If you have questions, you can reach me at the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350. Or, you can send e-mail to gmcclure@ksu.edu.

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