JUNE 2024

Sublette County Ag. & Natural Resources Extension Newsletter

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UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Extension
Sublette County

Newsletter Highlights and Upcoming Events

SUBLETTE COUNTY AG. AND NATURAL RESOURCES EXTENSION

UPCOMING EVENTS:

JUNE

18TH-20TH: STATE SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN

25TH-27TH: 4-H CAMP IN UINTA COUNTY

JULY

1ST: 4-H FAIR ENTRIES DUE, HORSE CERTIFICATIONS DUE, SELLER'S AGREEMENTS & PHOTOS DUE

11TH-14TH: STATE SHOOT

12TH-14TH: WYOMING WOOL FESTIVAL, THERMOPOLIS

Click here to join the Sublette ANR Extension Facebook Page!

Sublette County Extension Webpage

HORN FLIES & CATTLE: THE CHALLENGE AND SOLUTIONS

As summer arrives in Wyoming, warmer weather means it's time to switch from the felt hat to straw, open the windows to let in the air, and, most importantly for ranchers, turn cattle out to graze and start thinking about hay season. However, with the cold temperatures leaving, it also means the return of our least favorite neighbors, the bugs.

From mosquitoes to ticks, there are plenty of insects to annoy both us and our livestock, but horn flies in particular can take a toll on our herds.

Horn flies (Haematobia irritans) are blood feeding parasites frequently found on cattle in large numbers, where they can feed 24 to 38 times a day. These pesky insects reproduce by laying eggs in the manure piles of cattle. Horn flies can hatch and grow into adults within 10 to 20 days when it's warm. Horn fly levels usually peak in late summer.

Introduced to the U.S. in the 1800s, these pests are now found across the U.S., including Wyoming. Horn fly infestations are uncomfortable and annoying for cattle at best and can become extremely stressful and even lead to blood loss when numbers are high enough. This can lead to sacrificed herd productivity, where weight gain, milk production and grazing patterns are all negatively impacted.

Studies have shown that horn flies can decrease weaning weights by up to 15% in calves and cause up to an 18% impact on weight gain in stockers and replacement heifers. Horn flies cause an estimated loss of $1 billion to $2 billion annually across the U.S. beef industry.

Studies from the University of Wyoming have shown that herds at higher elevations have much lower infestation rates than those at lower elevations, which is good news for many operations across the Cowboy State, in particular those at or above ~7,000 feet. However, for those running cattle in the lower elevations, such as the northeast corner of the state, horn flies are still capable of causing economic loss through the stress caused to cattle.

At about 200 horn flies per head of cattle, the value of sacrificed production exceeds the cost of controlling the flies. The key is to prevent the fly population form reaching this economic threshold.

Ranchers seeking to mitigate horn fly levels may use several control methods. One of the simpler forms of control that may help is to break up manure piles with machinery to expose eggs and larva to dry air and insect predators. However, this is only practical on smaller acreages or in other limited operations.

For chemical control, back rubbers (oilers) and dust bags have been used for many years and can be effective at applying insecticidal dust or oil to cattle. It is important to remember, however, that these are often voluntary (unless cattle are forced through at a collection point) and will not be effective on animals that do not use them.

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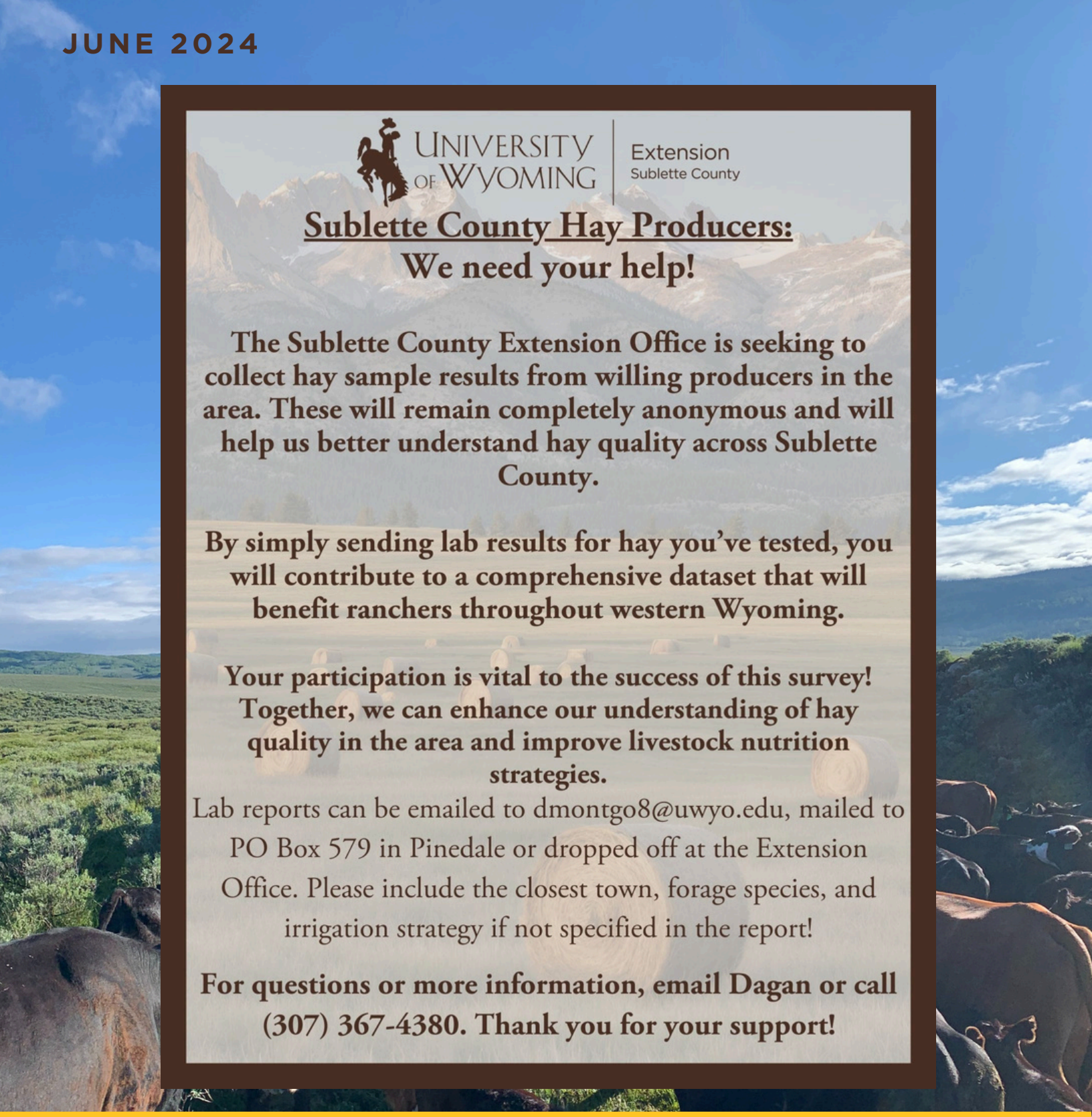
Spray and pour-ons can work to reduce fly numbers on cattle, and there are several forms of application. It is important to be aware that these usually are only effective for 1 to 3 weeks, so reapplication is usually needed. These two methods are great when introducing new animals to a herd from off the property or another pasture, which can introduce flies that weren't present before, such as at bull turn-out. Before introducing bulls or other new animals, consider using a pour-on or spray on the newcomers to reduce the risk of spreading horn flies to the rest of the cow herd.

Finally, oral larvicides (also known as insect growth regulators or IGRs) can be fed to cattle. These larvicides prevent horn fly larvae from surviving in the cow's manure when the eggs hatch.

New alternatives are also becoming available. These include organics, garlic infused feeds, and even predatory insects that prey on horn flies. These options are still undergoing study but may prove effective options in the future. Be sure to consider the cost per head of treatment. Each different treatment method has varying costs, efficacy, and ease of use.

For more thorough information on horn flies, including life cycle, production losses, assessment of infestation levels, and control and management options, view https://www.wyoextension.org/agpubs/pubs/B-1386.pdf, a publication by a team of researchers from the University of Wyoming. This publication can also be found by searching "Horn Fly Management for Wyoming Beef Cattle" at www.wyoextension.org/publications/. The University of Wyoming Extension entomology program also has resources on a number of other insect pests, as well as help identifying insects.



SUBLETTE COUNTY EXTENSION VOLUNTARY HAY ANALYSIS SURVEY

The Sublette Extension office is continuing a survey of hay quality across the county. We are asking any hay producer who would be willing to share with us lab reports from hay testing they have done. We would greatly appreciate any help we can get! See the flyer for more details and please feel free to share with others!

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GRAZING CATTLE AROUND LARKSPUR

Although beautiful to look at, tall larkspur is a toxic plant that can cause significant losses to ranchers grazing cattle in the mountains. With only a few pounds being needed to kill a bovine, this plant poses a major threat. However, there are management solutions that can mitigate risk. UW Extension has a publication with details on timing and management strategy that can help ranchers avoid larkspur poisoning in their herd this summer. Click the image to the left to view!

BLACK GRASS BUG MANAGEMENT FROM UW

If you have noticed yellowing patches or withering on your wheatgrasses this spring, grass bugs could be to blame. Click the image to the right to view a UW team's article on black grass bug management

Issued in furtherance of extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Kelly Crane, Director, University of Wyoming Extension, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Wyoming Extension, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071.

Train the Trainer:

Basics of Competitive Wool Evaluation

UW College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources

Tailored for educators and volunteers, this workshop is **perfect for those looking to start wool judging/evaluation programs.**
There will be **extensive hands-on practice** to master the key characteristics determining wool quality.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

- **Grading wool**
- **Evaluating clean fleece yield**
- **Assessing staple length & strength**
- **Comparative placing techniques**

WORKSHOP DETAILS

JULY 12TH, 1 - 3PM

WYOMING SHEEP & WOOL FESTIVAL
HOT SPRINGS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

REGISTER AT: **HTTPS://BIT.LY/4B630SZ**