RANGE BULLETIN

Livestock & Natural Resources Newsletter

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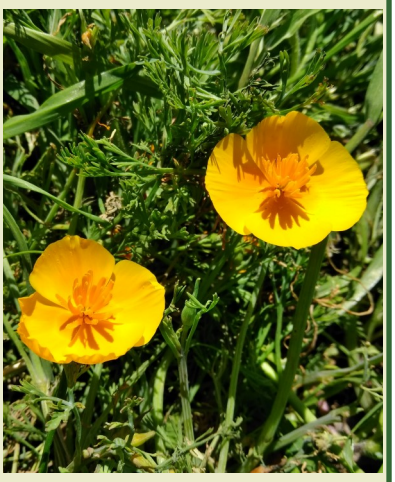

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Want more Livestock and Range information?

Find us on Facebook! Search for **@UCCEFresnoMaderaLivestock** or visit the page directly at **https://www.facebook.com/UCCEFresnoMaderaLivestock/** for weekly updates on upcoming events, recent news, and research information.

New cattle newsletter and podcast

UCCE has a new statewide feedlot specialist, Dr. Pedro Carvalho, based in Holtville. He has a newsletter (read/ subscribe) and a weekly podcast (listen).

Economic survey of poultry producers

If you raise poultry on a small scale please consider taking this survey from our state poultry specialists:
ucdavis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8k6NObL8sTqNKx7

Wolf OR-93 in California

A young wolf, OR-93, made his way through the Sierras and crossed Fresno County in late March 2021. The wolf is still in coastal counties as of April; CDFW will notify county departments if he comes back through the Valley.
Wolf identification / CDFW updates

COVID-19 Precautions Continue

UCCE offices will continue working remotely through June 30, 2021.
Please contact us with any questions!

Upcoming Virtual Events

UC Davis Picnic Day - April 17

Webinar: **Public Engagement on Gene Editing in Livestock**
Read more about the project: https://news.cahnrs.wsu.edu/article/wsu-led-research-examines-how-we-perceive-trust-new-technologies/

Saturday, April 17, 2021 • 11 AM-12 Noon (PDT)
Registration link: http://ucanr.edu/survey/publicengagement

Receive a $5 Starbuck's gift card for:

- Participating in the April 17 webinar.
- Being one of the first 200 people to answer a short survey before and after the discussion on Zoom.

Registration will ask for a User Name. Researchers' will know you by that User Name. Once you register, you will receive an email with a link and password to sign into the event using your User Name.

IN COLLABORATION WITH WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Project title: Social Interaction & Consumer Acceptance of Genome Editing in Domestic Livestock
Principal Investigator: Jill McCluskey, Regents Professor and Director, School of Economic Sciences, College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (509-335-5555)
Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture
This project is certified as exempt by the WSU Human Research Protection Program

Save the date!

Webinar: Weed management for small-acreage landowners

May 25, 2021
6:00pm-7:30pm

Topics will include: Common pasture and rangeland weeds, basics of weed identification, integrated pest management of yellow starthistle, and more!

Full agenda and registration information to come.

Virtual Range Camp: Save the Date!

June 21-25, 2021

This June, high school students can again join Virtual Range Camp from the comfort of home. Camp is an engaging and educational experience where campers learn all about rangelands and natural resource management, including time to talk with statewide professionals about the varied and exciting careers in these fields. **Read about past Range Camps, and stay tuned for registration information!**

Recorded events and online resources

Beef Quality Assurance trainings

A new advanced biosecurity training and bilingual, operation-specific BQA certification courses can be accessed here, any time:
bqa.beeflearningcenter.org/

You will need to create an account, but the materials are available at no charge.

Backyard poultry videos

UC Cooperative Extension Specialist Maurice Pitesky has a new series all about backyard poultry health and care, called "The Sitch", available here:
youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMBlQ6krAXFBNLKZR3LUteYlVeETyq-to

Foreign animal disease outbreak in rabbits

Dr. Rosie Busch, UC Cooperative Extension Specialist
Rebecca Ozeran, UCCE Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) is an extremely contagious viral disease that causes severe illness and death in the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), the only rabbit species to be widely domesticated globally. Referred to as "classical" RHDV, the disease is thought to have emerged in the 1970s in Europe. Since that time, RHDV has become widely distributed throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand, with isolated cases also appearing in North America. A new variant of the virus, RHDV2, was discovered in 2010 in France and has subsequently been found worldwide. RHDV2 affects rabbits that were immune to the "classical" RHDV.

Rabbits can contract RHDV or RHDV2 through direct contact with infected animals or indirect contact with contaminated feed, bedding, or equipment. The virus is very stable and can last outside the animal host for several months in various climates. Isolate cases of RHDV have appeared intermittently in the U.S.; cases were identified and the disease was eradicated. In March 2020, an outbreak of RHDV2 emerged in the Southwest and over the past year has spread across the western states and into southern California. This outbreak is different since it was discovered that not only are domestic and feral European rabbits susceptible to the disease, but wild rabbits and possibly pikas, too. Controlling the disease in wild rabbit populations poses serious challenges and highlights the critical importance of practicing proper biosecurity to mitigate disease transmission within domestic rabbit populations.

Cottontail rabbit © Dagny Gromer via Creative Commons licensing

As of April 5, 2021, RHDV2 had been confirmed in domestic rabbits at 32 backyard properties in six southern California counties: Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura. A total of six southern California counties have had wild cottontail rabbit and/or jackrabbit detections to date: Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego.

In California, rabbits are raised for meat, wool, pelts, and as pets and show animals. According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, the demand for rabbit meat continues to grow. You may find products sold at upscale restaurants, farmers markets, and ethnic markets. In California, 4-H youth can learn the basic principles of animal science and husbandry, community leadership, and business management by raising a rabbit. In 2020, over 9,400 youth enrolled in rabbit projects in California alone.

Rabbit owners are encouraged to prevent contact with wild rabbits and jackrabbits by keeping domestic rabbits indoors in areas with disease. Some rabbits that look healthy are capable of spreading the disease. A list of biosecurity practices that may help "Keep Your Rabbits Safe from Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease" can be found on the CDFA website: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/CDFAProtectYourRabbitsRHD.pdf

This article continues ►

Rabbits cont'd

If you or someone you know raises rabbits for 4-H projects, these practices especially apply when considering showing rabbits at fairs and other public spaces. There are additional guidelines for hosts of rabbit shows: http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/RHD_Risk_Management_Advice_for_Rabbit_Show_Organizers.pdf

While there is not a RHDV2 vaccine approved for use in the U.S., USDA and CDFA are allowing California licensed veterinarians to import European vaccines on an emergency basis. Veterinarians may send an email to AHBFeedback@cdfa.ca.gov to receive an approval letter and instructions on how to apply for a USDA import permit. Recommended biosecurity practices for veterinary clinics caring for rabbits are described: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/RHDBiosecurityGuidanceforVeterinaryClinicsFactsheet.pdf

Ranchers, land owners, and the public can help the state monitor the spread of this virus in the wild rabbit population by reporting sick or dead rabbits to the California Department of Fish & Wildlife at (916) 358-2790. Rabbit owners should consult a veterinarian if a domestic rabbit is sick and report dead domestic rabbits to the California Department of Food & Agriculture at (909) 947-4462.

Drought: Strategies and Resources

In January I calculated a range of possible forage production based on our weather patterns at the time, as shown in this table. Unfortunately, we have not had an average or wet spring. The eastern two-thirds of both Fresno and Madera Counties are currently classified as experiencing D2, or Severe Drought (see the current Drought Monitor map for CA here).

Weather Pattern	Potential Total Growing-Season Rainfall (in.)	Predicted Peak Standing Crop (lb/ac)
Dry winter, dry spring	7	**1094** ± 197
Dry winter, average spring	13	**1885** ± 92
Dry winter, wet spring	19	**2370** ± 78

The highlighted row above is what I expect we will see as our peak forage crop this spring. If my historical data gave us a good prediction, we may only see 897 to 1291 lb/ac in an area that averages 2225 lb/ac. At worst, that's about 40% of average forage yield - and at best, only 58% of average yield.

Some drought planning and mitigation strategies are no longer an option, at this stage in the season and in the drought. However, there are still strategies to respond to current drought conditions. Consider both the forage supply you have, and the forage that your herd needs for the spring. Some strategies apply to the land itself, some apply to financial decisions, and some apply to your animals.

In the following table, my colleague Dan Macon compiled several strategies that can address either forage supply or the forage demand.

This article continues ▶

Drought cont'd

Drought strategies

Table adapted from Dan Macon, UCCE Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor, Placer-Nevada Counties

	Forage Supply	Forage Demand
Tools before drought	• Conservative stocking rates • Grass banking • Pasture rest • Pasture/range insurance	• Identify animals that could be sold • Incorporate additional classes of livestock • Multispecies grazing
Tools during drought	• Supplemental feeding • Substitution feeding • Stock water development or hauling • Apply for government assis-tance • Rent additional land	• Early weaning • Selling replacements • Culling • Allow body condition to decline

Tools before drought are strategies you may want to consider for longer-term drought resilience. Some of these strategies may already be your standard practice, while others will not be a part of your operation. As droughts become more frequent in California, you may find value in discussing with your family or any partners in your operation - which of these strategies might be well suited to your operation and your goals?

Tools during drought include strategies you may already be using this year, like supplemental feeding, and other options that may help keep your operation afloat. Given my prediction of 40-60% forage yields, there may be payouts through non-insurance programs like NAP, managed by the Farm Service Agency. However, these program funds may not be sufficient to keep your herd needs balanced with your forage supply for the rest of the year. It is good practice to use multiple strategies to mitigate drought impacts.

As of March, the USDA declared most of California to be in a drought emergency, which means that many financial assistance programs are available for livestock producers. Some of those include:

Emergency Loan Program: USDA-FSA Fact Sheet: emergency loan program

Livestock Disaster Forage Program (LFP): USDA-FSA Fact Sheet: livestock_forage_program_fact_sheet

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): USDA-FSA Fact Sheet: noninsured_crop_disaster assistance_program fact_sheet

Contact your local Farm Service Agency office for more information. The statewide directory is here.
For the Fresno County, USDA Service Center: call 559-276-7494, Ext. 2
For the Madera County, USDA Service Center: call 559-674-4628, Ext. 2

Cattle RFID Tags Available

Free Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Cattle Ear Tags *Available through CDFA*

Producers are encouraged to use electronic identification (ID) tags through a program offered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the California Department of Agriculture (CDFA). The USDA is providing states (CDFA) with no-cost, official 840 series, low radio frequency identification (RFID) half duplex button cattle ear tags. These tags are intended to be used in dairy and beef herd replacements with a focus on those producers not currently using RFID tags.

RFID tags are considered official ID. Official ID is required to move an animal interstate or when testing or vaccinating for regulatory purposes (e.g., Tuberculosis test, Brucellosis vaccination, Trichomonosis test). Additionally, RFID tags can be incorporated into many herd management software packages if a compatible reader is available.

There are two types of RFID tags being distributed through CDFA:

- White RFID tags are available to producers through their veterinarians with no restrictions.
- Orange RFID tags are available to private veterinarians only and can be applied at the time of Brucellosis vaccination.

The CDFA Animal Health Branch (AHB) is managing the distribution of RFID tags in California through the district offices. Producers are encouraged to speak with their herd veterinarian or their local CDFA AHB district office about the use of RFID tags. Tags may be requested by contacting district offices or emailing evet@cdfa.ca.gov.
Locations and contact information for CDFA AHB district offices can be found on the AHB webpage: www.cdfa.ca.gov/ah.

Sacramento Headquarters: 916-900-5002

Redding: 530-225-2140 Modesto: 209-491-9350

Tulare: 559-685-3500 Ontario: 909-947-5932