

Virginia Cooperative Extension

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College of Agriculture
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School of Agriculture
Virginia State University

“Where the Green Grass Grows...”

Franklin County Ag Newsletter

October 2008, Volume 1, Issue 1

Tim Johnson
ANR Extension Agent
90 East Court Street
Rocky Mount, VA 24151
(540)483-5161
tj05@vt.edu

It has been a pleasure meeting the producers and residents of Franklin County. For those of you that I have not yet met, I was hired as the new Ag Extension Agent on May 25th of this year. I graduated with my Bachelor's Degree from Virginia Tech in AgEcon in May of this year. This newsletter is to keep you updated and informed on any changes and information related to Agriculture. I would appreciate hearing from you with any ideas or suggestions that you may have. I look forward to working with each of you.

Tim Johnson

Franklin County Extension Agent



Price Report

-Corn-	560'2
-Soybeans-	1187'0
-Wheat-	750'4
-Live Cattle-	102'2
-Feeder Cattle-	106'6
-Class III Milk-	17'46
-Oil-	107'86
-Dow Jones-	10854'17

All prices as of
September 23, 2008

COOL- And it's not the weather!

Beginning September 30, 2008 all livestock producers will be required to sign an affidavit confirming that the livestock they are selling is of U.S. origin, or that it is of some other country origin. The federal government passed this legislation, but left compliance up to the industry. Producers will be required to sign affidavits which will be kept at the point of sale, i.e. the local livestock market. The local markets will be instrumental in the implementation of the program.

Country Of Origin Labeling or COOL was initially enacted from the 2002 Farm Bill. However, through several delays, until September 30, 2006 and then until September 30, 2008, it looks as though this is the real deal. The original law called for

labeling of beef, lamb, pork, fish, perishable ag commodities, farm raised and wild fish, including shellfish and peanuts. The 2008 Farm Bill adds chicken, goat meat, ginseng, pecan, and macadamia nuts to the list.

One important fact about COOL is that it applies only to retailers, not to food service providers such as restaurants and cafeterias. It is important to note that this legislation is not tied in with age and source verification. There is a six month period after September 30 when an industry education and outreach program will be implemented by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the USDA.

All information obtained from the USDA website. For questions, contact Franklin County Extension or USDA.

Have you had your forages tested lately?

I know no one wants to hear this, but when have you had ANY of your forage tested? Given the wet spring that we had, then the dry summer, that is until August, this is an ideal year to have your feeds tested. While the service is no longer offered by Virginia Tech, kits are available at the extension office to send to a private lab for testing. With high input costs, no one should be putting out too much hay, or too little, without knowing it's nutrient value. Perhaps more important is a soil test. With fall planting under way, having a FREE soil test is a cheap insurance policy. Have your fertilizer put where you need it.

The Real World

Given the current state of agriculture, I think it is imperative that we all work together as one. Farmers are historically price takers and there is not much that will change that, especially in the commodity markets. There are areas where farmers have an edge including direct marketing and sales. While I realize everyone can not set up a road side stand to sell their products, perhaps we need to take a closer look at the possibility of marketing products as a group and not individually. There is power in numbers! We will continue to be under pressure from land issues, fuel prices, fertilizer prices and so on, but we don't farm for the money do we??? Someone recently told me there are no real gamblers in Las Vegas, the real gamblers are America's farmers...and I have to agree.

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