

Weekly Ag Report

David Lile

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Hi this is David Lile with the Weekly Ag Report.

It's turn-out time for Lassen County cattle ranchers. Lots of cattle trucks on the road filled with cattle that have spent the winter grazing the foothill country of the Sacramento Valley. Every year in May as the foothill range begins to dry, our range and pastures here in the mountains are just starting to turn green. To keep the cows on high quality forage many ranchers truck cattle back and forth between foothill winter range and summer range here in the mountains. Economic comparisons between feeding through the winter locally and shipping to winter range, usually favor shipping out. Keeping cows on grass is almost always cheaper than feeding hay, and the calves often do a little better as well. But there are exceptions, and in drought years like we've just been through, many cattle have to be fed even on winter pasture and that cuts deep into profit margins. Also, some local ranches have a good place to winter cows and a relatively cheap source of hay and for them it just makes sense to keep cattle home for the winter. And one thing's for certain - good foothill rangeland is getting harder to come by.

Many cattle are already turned out in the drier sage brush country, and those headed to Forest Service Allotments will be out in a couple weeks. Drivers should remember that Lassen, Modoc, and Plumas are open range counties so always be alert particularly when driving on county, forest service and other rural roads or highways.

Cattlemen, if ear-tags for fly control is part of your spring program, Extension Veterinarian Dr. John Maas, recommends you consider either of the two new tags on the market, the Avenger or the XP-820. Not only are these tags effective, but they should help prevent the build-up of resistance of the fly population to the old tags that have been on the market for years.

Got an Ag question? Give us a call at UC Cooperative Extension office 251-8133 or drop an e-mail at dflile@ucdavis.edu. We'll catch you same time next week with the Ag Report.