## Cooke County Crop and Cattle Report for Monday, March 4, 2019

Well for the first time all winter most farmers had a 2-3 day window to get some plowing and spraying done. Tractors and Spray rigs were running all over the county trying to beat the rain that came early Saturday morning. Most of the county received only a few tenths to half an inch but more rain is in the forecast for the next couple of days so it’s going to hinder the corn farmers from planting if it pans out. I talked to several corn farmers this morning and they don't like the weather predictions of rain and cold soil temps so they are holding off for now. I saw lots of spray rigs top dressing wheat and other winter pastures and some were putting out dry blends. The wheat pastures have looked bad all winter for the most part but producers are hoping that the fertilizer and warmer weather will jump start it so they can get something out of it. Stocker operators are hurting with limited grazing on wheat with most of them feeding hay while waiting on the winter pastures to take off. It’s been a rough winter for them with lower head counts and limited weight gains. The cow calf producers are in no better shape with cows looking pretty rough and calving on top of that. Everyone has fed a lot more hay than normal and most of it was lower quality too. I have had several reports of ranchers losing some cattle while feeding hay they purchased, and usually this results from nitrate or prussic acid poisoning or toxic plants in the hay. Although this time of year the prussic acid would have already dissipated so that leaves nitrates and toxic plants to blame. Or you could have sick cattle with a respiratory illness but that is usually evident by all the clinical signs leading up to death, and normally we recognize these signs and treat them with antibiotics. I am sure everyone heard about the 200 plus head of cattle being lost in Missouri, experts think it was nitrate poisoning. So what can we do to protect themselves? Well, you can have hay and forages tested for Nitrates and Prussic Acid, but there is no way to know if it is toxic weeds. Most hay producers spray for weeds and I would not buy any hay that has not been fertilized and weed sprayed. But you have to trust your hay source to tell you the truth about how they managed their hay patch. If you need any information on the above subjects please contact me and I will get you what you need.

**In the markets as of Mar 2-** Slaughter cattle trade at $128. Current feed yard closeouts were $34 in the black. The live cattle futures for April are at $130, while Mar Feeder futures were $144. The cash prices here in Texas for 750 lb feeder steers were at $1.42 and 550 lb. stocker steers were at $1.61. Average dress slaughter cows & bulls, $1-2 higher, cows at $60-66 while bulls were $82-89

**Hay report:** Coastal Bermuda: Small Squares: FOB: Good to Premium 297.00-400.00 per ton, 9.00-12.00 per bale. Large Rounds: FOB: Good to Premium 140.00-200.00 per ton, 70.00-100.00 per roll; Fair to Good 120.00-140.00 per ton, 60.00-70.00 per bale.

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