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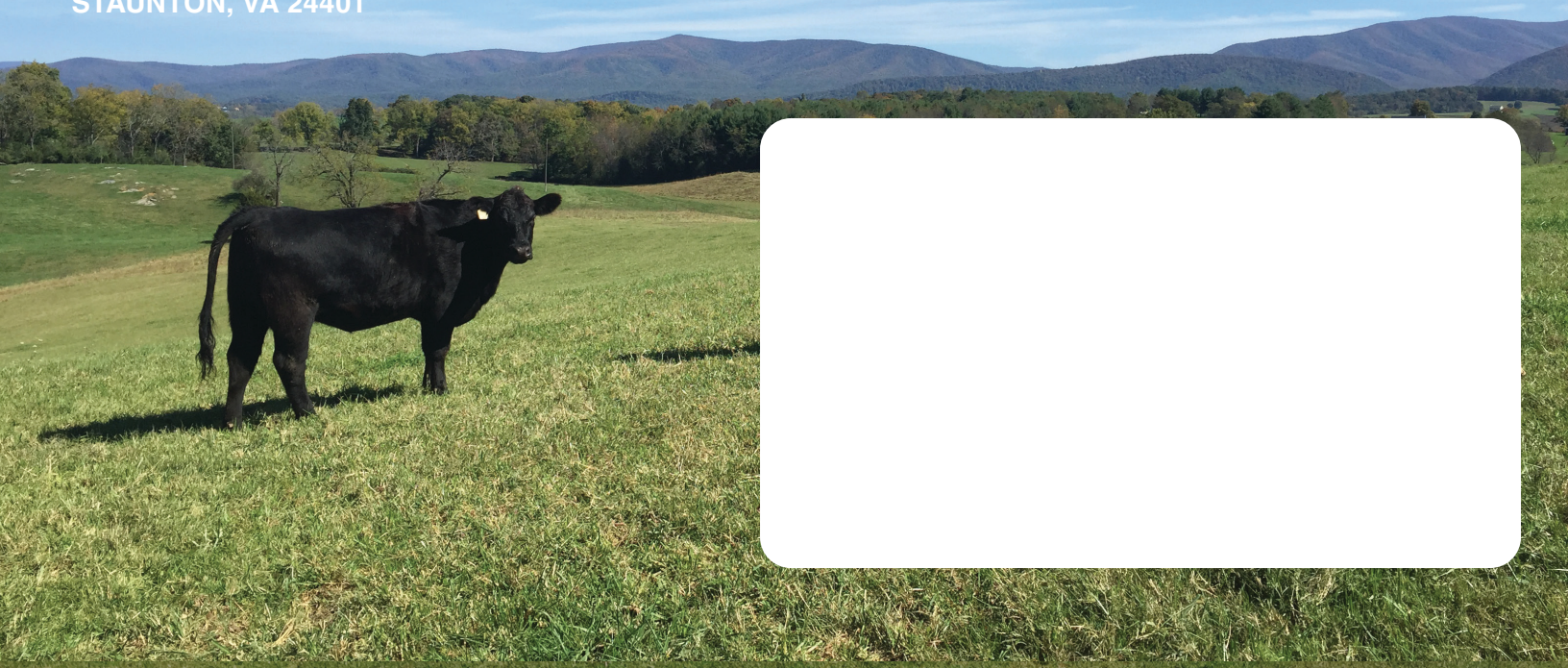

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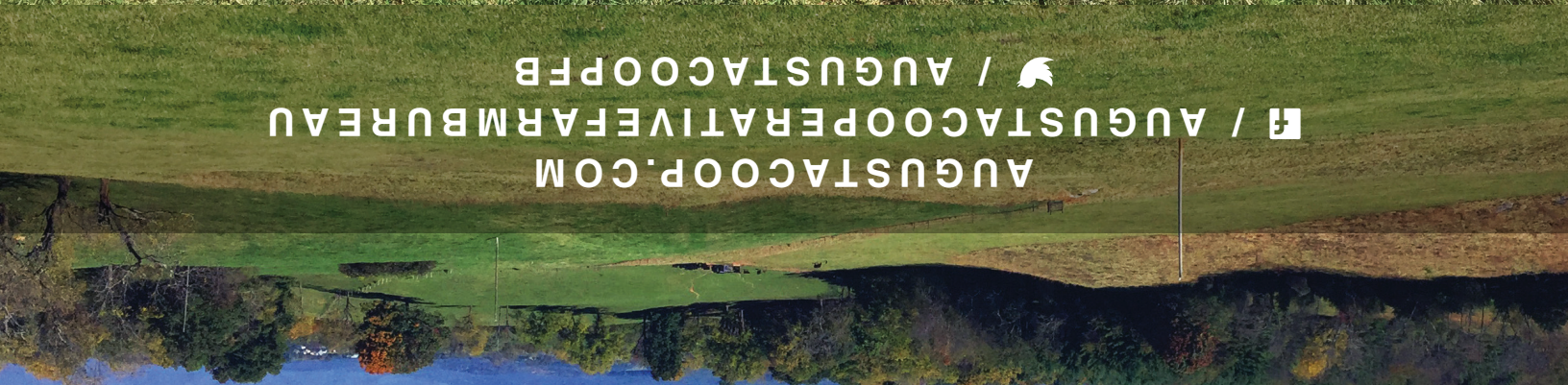


AGRONOMY & BEEF BULLETIN

February 2024

SINCE 1929

Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau, Inc.

TIPS ON USING LESSER-QUALITY FORAGES

TESTING THE FORAGES IS THE KEY, ALONG WITH DILUTING THEM AND ALLOWING LIVESTOCK TO BE SELECTIVE.

Hay and forages after last summer's extreme drought come at a premium price and are of great value.

As producers may be purchasing or digging deep into their feed piles, they may notice spoilage or mold. Molds may occur any time of year, and the risk of problems can show up early or late in the year as well."

"In hay, excess dust can be a sign of mold spores, and can actually cause respiratory issues in humans and livestock," says Ben Beckman, Nebraska Extension beef systems assistant educator. "Alternatively, anything that is overly wet or slimy should be suspect as well. Off colors should be noted. Black and white molds are pretty common and should be noted, but may not be a cause for concern in low amounts."

Mycotoxin-creating molds can sometimes be pink, blue or green, but also black, gray or white as well, Beckman says. He recommends testing if there are any off colors.

"But just because the mold isn't a strange color, it doesn't mean that it isn't a problem," he adds. "We all know what cured hay smells like, so if it smells off, that is another sign we may want to test."

For silage, all of the same rules apply. Just like with hay, properly cured silage has a distinct smell, so if it smells sour — like ammonia, or off in any other way — be sure to test it.

Feeding options

Here are some tips for using forages that may have some spoilage or mold issues:

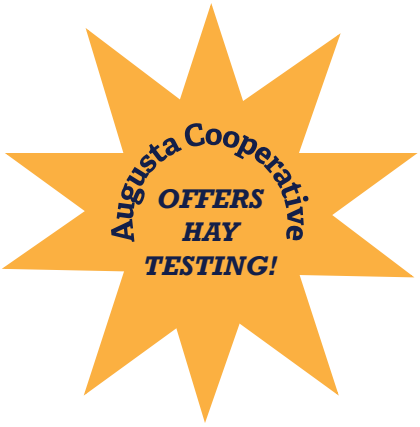
Test it. If a producer tests the forages in question, they know what they are dealing with.

"Some mycotoxins produced by mold can cause issues at very low levels," Beckman says. "If you are feeding risky feeds to animals, feed the ones that are less susceptible, like dry cows, versus growing animals, calves or pregnant or lactating cows."

Dilute it. "Dilute the feed in the diet, so levels of intake are low," Beckman adds.

Give livestock options. "Give the animals the option to be picky," Beckman says. "Grinding a feed and feeding in a ration reduces the animal's ability to select higher-quality forage and leave the rest. This is especially true for hay.

"If we have hay that we don't think is too high of a risk, rolling it out and letting animals self-select while providing an alternative feed option can be a good route to use the good portion, and the rest can become a soil amendment."



Testing is cheap

"We can make guesses at quality by visual assessment, but even if a forage isn't moldy, changes in quality from year to year can be quite big and don't always show up as something we can assess visually," Beckman advises. "Basic hay tests can easily help inform a feed plan or ration and pay for that cost on day one."

Mold and yeast counts cost more, and mycotoxin tests can be expensive, Beckman says, so the best option is to prevent issues in the first place so testing isn't necessary.

Beef Magazine

WINTER CATTLE CARE: GET YOUR HERD READY FOR COLD WEATHER

Many factors go into winter cattle care. Wind, snow, ice, freezing temperatures and mud are just a few elements that can negatively impact cattle performance. Shelter, bedding and nutrition are all key fundamentals in combatting the harsh winter months, but they're also a lot to balance when the wind is howling and the snow is blowing.

Learn how to prepare your herd before the temperature drops and how to best care for them when they are battling the cold.

What is optimal winter body condition?

Going into winter, cows should be in good body condition. A cattle body condition score (BCS) of 6 is an excellent place to start. As temperature drops, a cow must pull from her body stores to generate heat, especially if she's spending the winter on low-quality forages, like crop residue, or somewhere without windbreaks or shelter.

If she's in good condition, not only is she well insulated, but she's also not losing heat. When a cow is not losing heat, snow accumulates on her back, giving her even more insulation.

If she's not collecting snow on her back, that's a sign she's not in the condition she needs to be – she's losing body heat, which is melting the snow. As that snow melts, it makes her coat wet, increasing her energy needs for maintenance.

continued on page 2

Caring for under-conditioned cows

A few cows are always behind on their body condition score compared with the rest of the herd. When you have cows losing condition who can't sustain themselves through the winter, sometimes it's best to sort off the lower-condition cows and give them an extra boost of nutrition before the weather sets in.

It may only work to sort the low-condition cows if you have separate pastures or pens where you can provide additional nutrition.

If nothing else, identify why they're in a lower body condition score. If you've worked through the herd and fed them appropriately to get them back into condition before winter, and they still didn't gain weight, then there's probably an underlying reason.

Teeth can be a significant factor in causing weight loss. Mouthing cows can answer many questions, especially with older cows. Cows missing front teeth have trouble grazing standing forage, while cows missing back teeth have difficulty chewing and breaking down forage. Deworming cows can also be a simple fix. If they didn't get dewormed properly or if that's not part of your program, worms can be a significant factor in preventing a cow from absorbing nutrients.

Understanding why cows are under-conditioned can lead to a problem solved.

Identify cold stress in cattle

The telltale sign of cold cows is butts to the wind, head down and huddled in a group. Cows with a heavy winter coat may experience cold stress when temperatures approach 20°F.

Initially, in a cold-stress situation, feed intake will go up. From a grazing standpoint, they'll start to graze more over a day or so, but then intake and grazing will start going down. Those are things that can be difficult to monitor.

The main thing to consider when cattle are experiencing cold stress is to keep them dry and out of the wind. Cows can typically adapt to cold temperatures over time as long as temperatures decrease steadily, allowing them to grow their heavy winter coat.

If you can't get cattle inside, a windbreak, shelter or something similar can make a big difference. Bedding can also make a herd much more comfortable in bad winter weather. Not only does it help insulate where they lay, but if mud becomes a factor, it helps keep them dry. When cows get muddy, they also get wet, and a damp coat takes energy out of a cow as she tries to stay warm.

Feeding during a cold snap

Heat from digestion is a great way to help a cow warm up. That's why we see a lot of additional forages being fed during cold winter months. Even if a cow is on pasture or corn stalks, she may need additional forage during a colder-than-normal period.

Get your herd ready for winter and have all the tools to keep them at the highest level of performance all winter long.

Nutrition for winter feeding situations

High-quality forage

When forage quality is high, the main factor to monitor is protein. Ideally, protein should be around 10% or higher.

If the protein content in your forages meets this benchmark and ample forage is available, there isn't much need for supplementation besides offering mineral. Providing mineral ensures that the cows are getting what they need and you're feeding the rumen microbes.

Low-quality forage

When forage quality is below 10% protein, cows may benefit from supplemental protein to help feed the rumen microbes and aid in digestion.

Limited forage

With limited forage, creating a balanced diet is the best thing you can do for your cows. By-products, gluten feed, distillers grains and corn silage are all great sources of nutrition and energy to keep cows going. Especially when drought conditions impact forages, energy-dense diets can change the game.

A good mineral program is always critical, especially if you feed cows in a bunk scenario.

Extreme cold

Maintaining cattle body condition in extreme cold, even with high-quality forages, is hard. Feeding additional forage and energy-dense ingredients is key to keeping cattle going while limiting performance impacts.

Purina

NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS OF THE COWHERD

KNOWING THE NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF COWS HELPS PRODUCERS COST EFFECTIVELY MEET THEIR NEEDS.

As we near the winter months and the time of year when feeding harvested forage becomes the norm, we address the topic of daily nutritional requirements of the cowherd. Grazing and feed expenses account for about 42% – 52% of the input cost of a cow-calf operation. Knowing the nutritional needs of cows helps producers cost effectively meet their needs. Overfeeding or underfeeding both rob the profit potential from cow-calf operations. During the normal production cycle cows should gain some weight/body condition during the dry stages and lose some weight/body condition while nursing a calf. With that in mind, having cows at a BCS 5 – 6 going into calving season is optimum. This means that cows are in good shape and have ample energy reserves to draw upon when the "spike" in Crude Protein (CP) and energy (TDN) requirements occur post-calving as the cow begins lactation. Cows need to be in good shape at the beginning of calving season to reduce the rebreeding interval and stay on schedule to breed, calve and raise a calf to weaning each 12 months.

Assuming an ample supply of good quality water and an adequate vitamin/mineral supplementation program, the two primary nutritional requirements of cows are CP and TDN. In normal weather, there are three primary influences on the daily requirements of both:

1 – Mature Weight

2 – Level of Milk Production

3 – Stage of Production

Where cows are now in the production cycle and when they will start calving should be considered when making management decisions regarding feeding. The example below follows a 1,300-pound cow through a normal production cycle during the middle trimester of pregnancy, the final trimester of pregnancy, and the first 90 days post-calving based on her level of milk production.

During the middle third of pregnancy, the 1,300-pound mature cow needs:

- CP = 1.64 pounds per day
- TDN = 11 pounds per day

The same 1,300-pound cow in the final third of pregnancy needs:

- CP = 1.84 pounds per day
- TDN = 13.3 pounds per day

The increased nutritional needs reflect not only the cow's maintenance requirements but also the increased growth and development of the fetus as calving draws near.

After calving, during the first 90 days of lactation, the same 1,300-pound cow will have increased nutritional requirements based on how much milk she is producing:

If giving 25 pounds of milk per day at peak lactation, she will need:

- CP = 3.4 pounds per day
- TDN = 19.3 pounds per day

If giving 35 pounds of milk per day, she will need:

- CP = 4.2 pounds per day
- TDN = 22.2 pounds per day

In summary, the same cow has a dramatic rise and fall in protein and energy needs over the normal production cycle. Knowing these requirements is essential to cost effective feeding of the cow herd. Managing a nutritional program correctly plays a huge role in reproductive performance.

Beef Magazine

PREPARATION IS KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL CALVING SEASON

K-STATE VETERINARIAN REVIEWS STEPS FOR CATTLE PRODUCERS BEFORE AND AFTER CALVING

Kansas State University veterinarian Gregg Hanzlicek says being prepared ahead of calving season is the best way for producers to assure they will bring home the newborn calves successfully.

A key to having a successful calving and production season is for cows and heifers to be in the appropriate body condition, which according to Hanzlicek is a score of 5-7. He said he has seen many cattle in the 3-4 range in the past few months.

"We're far enough away from calving that we can add condition to these cows and heifers without (creating) an economic burden," he explains. "It really comes down to having a formulated ration that is balanced for protein and energy."

For those wanting to add scour vaccines to their prevention program, "it's time to decide what vaccine they are going to use," Hanzlicek says. "Look at the label and schedule on the calendar when they need to start vaccinating the cows and heifers."

Hanzlicek says heifers will require two doses of the scours vaccine, while cows need one. The timing of those vaccines is "very, very important," he adds.

Also, Hanzlicek recommends establishing a clean calving area to help reduce the risk of scours. "There's two major risk factors for scours," he notes. "One is the lack of colostrum consumption. The other is a contaminated environment that the babies are born into."

Hanzlicek recommends having a location to move the pairs off the calving area to keep the calving facility less contaminated with the scour organisms.

Getting the calf here safely is another factor to consider, "Most operations are going to have to help at least one animal during the calving season," Hanzlicek says. The last national survey indicated that 1 of every 100 heifers and 2 of every 100 adult cows will need assistance.

Being prepared to pull a calf is important. Hanzlicek said producers should have the following items on hand:

- Clean straps or chains
- OB sleeves
- Lube
- Working calf pullers
- Veterinarian's phone number

Intervening at an appropriate time is important. "If we intervene too early and the cow or heifer is not dilated, we can injure the tissues and hurt the calf," Hanzlicek said. "If we intervene too late, a lot of times that's when we end up with stillborn calves."

According to Hanzlicek, once a cow has reached the second stage of labor, they should give birth within 30 minutes. A heifer should calve within an hour. Second stage labor is when the heifer or cow can be observed experiencing uterine contractions, or the water bag or calf's feet are visible.

If assistance from the producer is needed, and they are unable to extract the calf within 15 minutes, then help – either a veterinarian or someone with more experience -- should be called.

Following calving, the calf should be up and nursing within two hours, Hanzlicek says. If not, a colostrum replacer can be given to help get the calf started.

"Colostrum-based powders are the best way to go, and I would recommend that every producer have one or two bags of powder replacer on hand during the calving season," Hanzlicek says.

Beef Magazine

EVENTS / CALENDAR

TO VIEW ALL CALENDAR EVENTS, SCAN THE QR CODE.

VENDOR DAY

Wednesday, February 21 | 4 PM - 8 PM

Augusta Expo - Multipurpose Building
277 Expo Rd, | Fishersville, VA 22939
The largest farming brands on site in one location! Book your 2024 items at drastically reduced rates at our annual vendor day! Door prizes, goody bags, snacks, and deals galore! Visit AugustaCoop.com for more details. *Full list of sale items available February 9, 2024 on AugustaCoop.com/events.

AGRONOMY CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY

Friday, February 9 | 11 AM - 2 PM

Augusta Expo - Building 2
277 Expo Rd, | Fishersville, VA 22939
Additional information: RSVP to Staci Alger at (540) 885-1265 x 253 or SAlger@AugustaCoop.com

STAFF UPDATE

BRAD BROWN - CEO

Brad Brown is the Chief Executive Officer at Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau, Inc.

Before being named CEO in January 2024, Brad was Augusta Co-op's Assistant General Manager / Retail Operations and Purchasing Manager and was responsible for all of the company's retail supply chain, store operations and sales generation.

Prior to Augusta's senior leadership team, Brad was Manager of both the Weyers Cave and Staunton retail store locations and was responsible for day-to-day store operations including inventory management, sales generation and payroll.

Brad also leads Augusta Co-op's wholesale division, Greener Valley Supply, LLC., and played a key role in the company's launch and development of strategic supplier relationships, overall ensuring flexibility to an increasingly demanding marketplace.

In addition to his professional activities, Brad currently sits on the board of the Virginia Cooperative Council and is an active board member of the Augusta County 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show & Sale since 2017. Furthermore, he speaks regularly on leadership in agriculture at industry forums and other agriculture institutions.

Brad earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Ag Science with an Ag Business Management minor from Penn State University in 2007.

TROY GRIMM - COO

Troy, an Augusta County native, grew up outside of Churchville, VA where his passion for agriculture began at a young age. After graduating from Buffalo Gap High School, Troy attended Virginia Tech University where he received an Associate's degree in Agri-Business in 1990. Troy began his professional career with May Brothers, managing a beef and poultry operation outside of Parnassus, VA while simultaneously building his own cow/calf operation.

In 2007, he accepted a Field Sales Representative position with Augusta Cooperative managing the western territory region. Two years later, Troy began managing the Weyers Cave store and moved into his role as Agronomic Manager in 2011.

As the lead for the agronomy team at Augusta Co-op, Troy maintains a Nutrient Management Planner and Commercial 1A license. In January of 2024, Troy accepted the position of Chief Operations Officer, and in tandem, will additionally remain as the Agronomic Division Manager.

In his 17 years with Augusta Co-op Troy has made significant contributions to many aspects of the business, as well as to the customers and community he serves. He has charted high standards for his team members he manages and takes pride in being a knowledge resource for his customers.

Troy and his wife Lori, currently reside outside of Churchville, VA. Their two children, Taylor and Drew also reside in VA, pursuing their professional careers; Taylor, Ministry and Drew, IT/Cyber Security. Troy's love for hunting and traveling with his family remain as a passion in his personal time.

To visit with Troy about any agronomic needs he can be reached at TGrimm@AugustaCoop.com.

MEET RYAN SENSABAUGH AUGUSTA CO-OP FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

Ryan grew up in Greenville, Virginia on his family's sheep farm.

Throughout middle and high school, he was active in both 4-H and FFA where he competed in various contests including Stockman's, Livestock Judging, Forestry Judging and Poultry Judging. He also participated in the Augusta County 4-H & FFA Market Animal Show. Ryan graduated from Virginia Tech in 2021 with a degree in Agribusiness Management.

While in college he was an active member of the Virginia Tech Block and Bridle Club, a national organization focused on agriculture and service. During his membership he was active in assisting host many 4-H and FFA Block and Bridle events.

Ryan currently lives in Greenville, Virgina and is an active member in the community.

To contact Ryan, customers may reach him at (540) 294-5179 or RSensabaugh@AugustaCoop.com.

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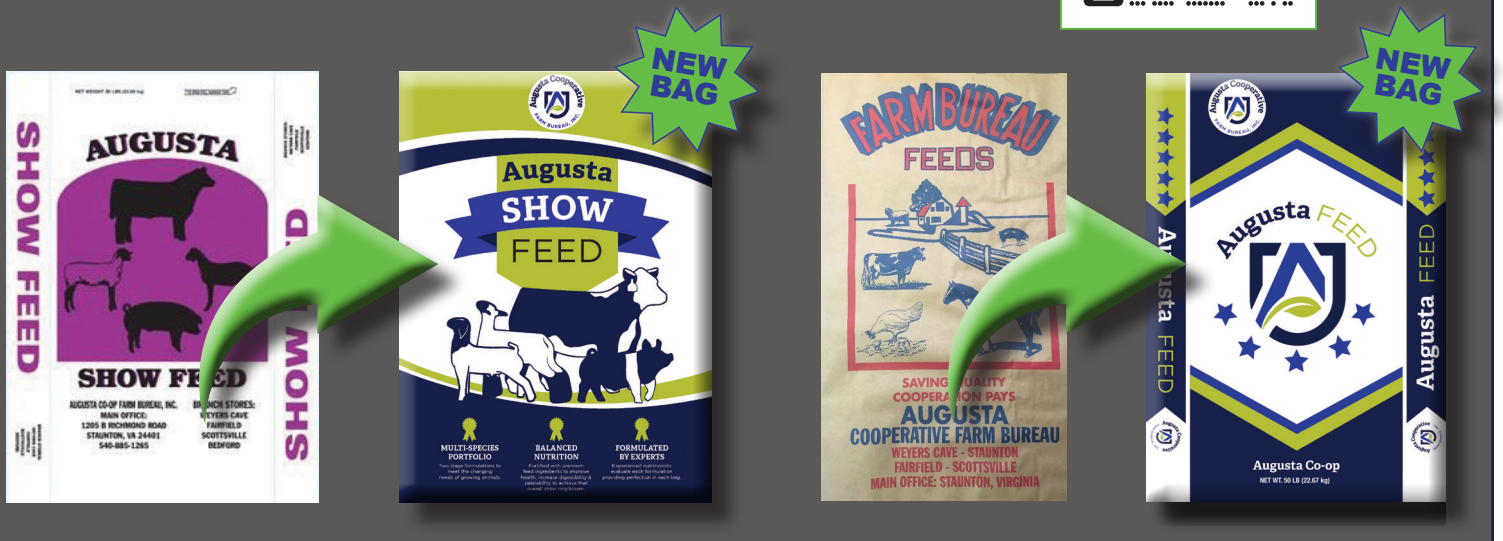

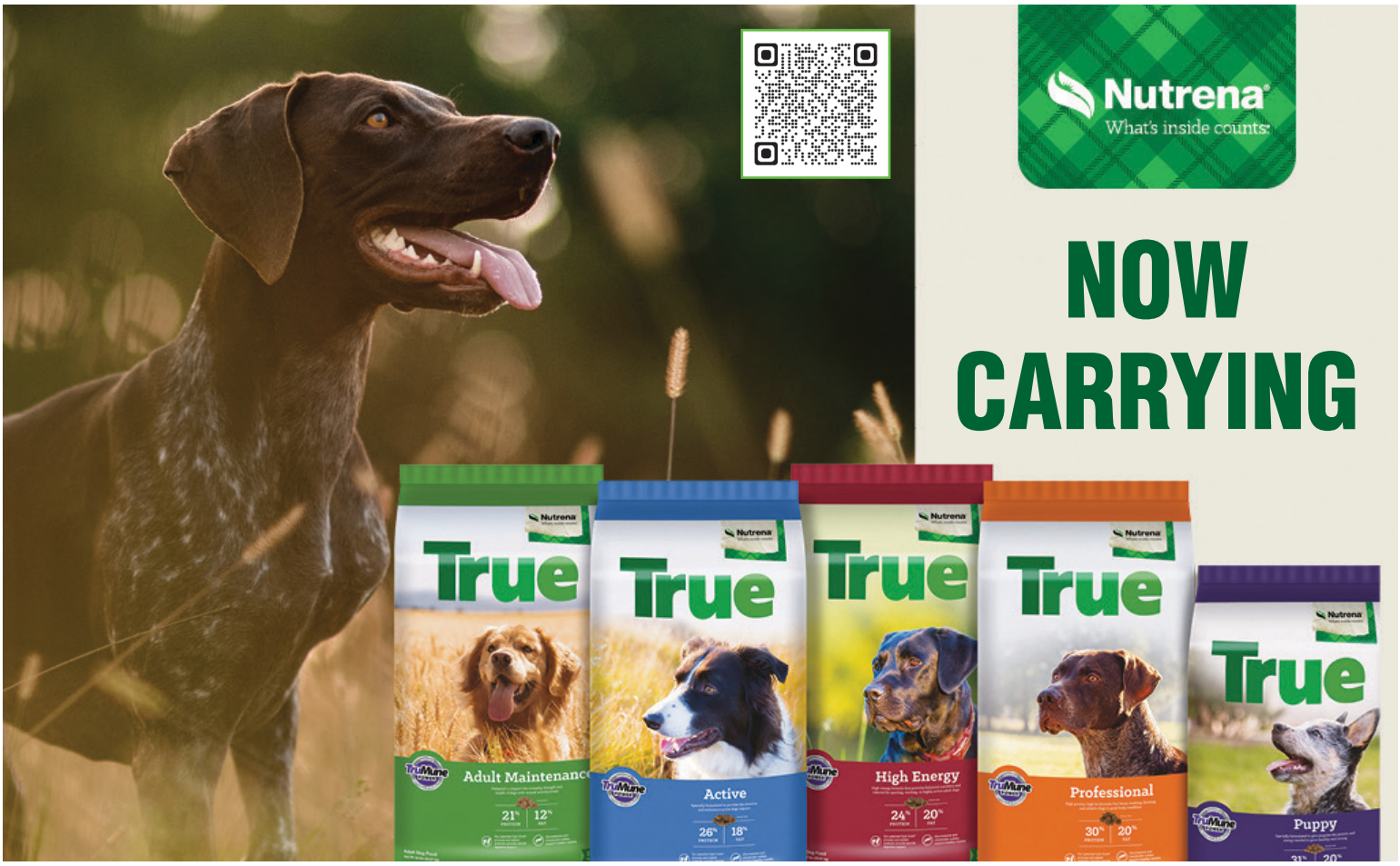

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