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New Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor!

I am tremendously excited to have become the new livestock and natural resources advisor for Placer, Nevada, Sutter and Yuba Counties on July 1, 2017! Most recently, I have been an associate specialist in rangeland science and management at UC Davis, with research and extension activities focused on drought management, livestock-predator coexistence, and water quality. I am also a partner in Flying Mule Farm, a small-scale commercial sheep operation in Auburn, California. I have a master's degree in integrated resource management from Colorado State University and a bachelor's degree in agricultural and managerial economics from UC Davis. I currently serve as vice president of the California Wool Growers Association and am a past president of the California-Pacific Section of the Society for Range Management. While I am looking forward to concentrating my research and extension activities on livestock-predator interactions, drought resilience, irrigated pasture, targeted grazing, and ranch economics, I will be conducting a formal needs assessment this fall to help focus my future work.



If you would like to schedule a ranch call, please call the office at (530) 889-7385 or email me dmacon@ucanr.edu. I am based in the UCCE Placer office in Auburn but am available for meetings and ranch calls in Sutter and Yuba Counties. You can also follow me on Twitter at @flyingmulefarm and on Instagram at @flyingmule. Also, be sure to check out the UCCE Foothill Sustainable Ranching page on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FoothillSustainableRanching/>.

Beef Quality Assurance Workshop – September 23, 2017

The Tahoe Cattlemen's Association is sponsoring a Beef Quality Assurance workshop on Saturday, September 23, 2017, at the Sierra Foothill Research and Extension Center (SFREC). Topics will include cattle health, meat quality, water and environmental quality, and transportation. Speakers will include Dr. Jim Oltjen from UC Davis and Dr. Bret McNabb from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. The workshop will include classroom discussion, hands-on chute-side activities, and lunch! Stay tuned for details!

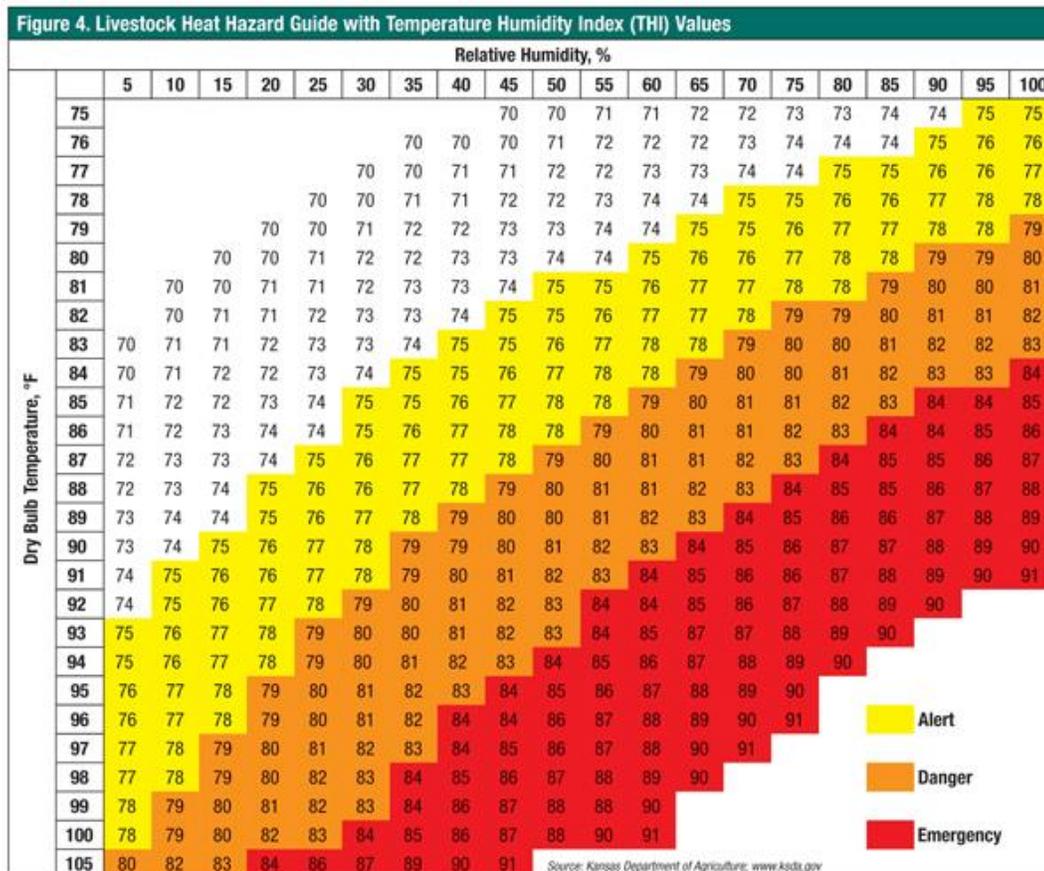
Coping with Hot Weather – Keeping Animals and People Safe

As midsummer approaches, those of us who raise livestock in the Sierra Foothills and Sacramento Valley are constantly aware of the challenges presented by prolonged hot weather. While temperatures have moderated somewhat following the first heat wave of the summer in late June, we can expect to see more 100+ temperatures before the summer is over. Here are a few of the precautions I try to take to protect our livestock – and ourselves – during hot weather.

During heat waves, I try to start working extra early. I usually move irrigation water and check the sheep before heading into my day job. I typically can leave the house before 7 a.m. and complete these chores in time to get to work at 8 a.m. As always, I wear a wide-brimmed hat to shade my head, along with light-colored shirts and plenty of sunscreen. I also drink water constantly; on particularly hot days, that may be more than a gallon of water. I am also conscious about taking breaks and cooling down – heat stroke should be taken seriously. For more information about heat illness prevention, go to <http://ucanr.edu/News/Heat/>.

In the summer months, our sheep graze both irrigated pasture and dry, annual forage. In both cases, they have plenty of trees for shade. We fill water troughs morning and night - their water consumption doubles compared to the cooler weather of springtime. We also walk through the sheep more frequently - keeping an eye out for respiratory infections or other heat-related ailments. While sheep (and other livestock) can usually tolerate this kind of heat reasonably well, wide swings in temperature can create problems. By checking on the sheep twice a day, we can generally catch any problems before they become too serious.

Similar to humans, livestock experience more heat stress during periods of higher humidity. Here is a useful table from the Kansas Department of Agriculture:



We also keep a close eye on our dogs - both border collies and livestock guardian dogs. The guardian dogs, like the sheep, drink more water in this heat. They'll also stand or lay in the water troughs - I would, too! As long as they've got shade and water, they seem to handle the heat. With our herding dogs, we try to do any necessary work as early as possible. We take plenty of breaks, too, which gives the border collies a chance to cool off in the water troughs.

With the heat, the fire danger increases. We're always aware of the sound of fire planes and the smell and sight of smoke in the summer time; I'm especially vigilant in weather like this. With all of the dry grass, a spark and little bit of wind on a day like this can be disastrous. Once we wean the lambs, the ewes will graze on dry forage for several months - I won't really relax until we move them back to irrigated pasture in early September.

For more information on coping with heat, check out this bulletin from the California Animal Health and Food Safety Lab:

http://cahfs.ucdavis.edu/local_resources/pdfs/fact%20sheets/Heat_stress_fact_sheet_2016.pdf

Check out the Ranching in the Sierra Foothills Blog!

For information about regional agricultural events, updates about new research, and conversations about ranching in the Sierra foothills and the Sacramento Valley, be sure to check out my new Ranching in the Sierra Foothills blog at <http://ucanr.edu/blogs/RanchingintheFoothills/index.cfm>.

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