

Cattle Ear Tag Senses Temperature

"Cattle will get a fever at least 24 to 72 hrs. before they show visual signs of illness, so this product is an ideal way to detect sick animals early," according to Richard Crider, one of the three inventors of FeverTags™. Crider and his two partners are Texas cattle feeders and came up with the idea to monitor their feedlot cattle.

"Good, experienced cattle hands are becoming harder and harder to find," says Crider. "We can teach people how to physically handle cattle, but the process of observing cattle to determine if they're healthy, if they're eating properly and if they're on the verge of getting sick is more difficult. FeverTags makes that process much easier, because the blinking lights tell at a glance which animals to watch."

Crider says the early warning system lets them treat sick animals sooner. "A fever occurs anywhere from 24 hrs. to 3 days before visual signs such as drooping ears, lethargic physical activity and loss of appetite."

The FeverTag is a 1/2-oz. ear tag that's placed in an animal's ear just like a typical two-piece ID tag. It's made from the same

durable weather resistant plastic.

The heart of the device is a small computer microprocessor that monitors an animal's core body temperature every 15 min. An ultra-bright light flashes in the tag when a higher than normal temperature is detected. Crider said the flashing light is easy to see in sunlight or at night.

While FeverTags were originally designed for high-risk cattle, Crider said they're gaining acceptance by cattlemen who want to monitor their cattle first rather than mass treating them with antibiotics.

"The cost for mass treating a group of cattle can be \$18 to \$20 or more per animal, and that's significant if you're bringing in hundreds of cattle at a time," says Crider. "The FeverTag is an ideal alternative, because initially it costs \$16.95, and a tag can be used for 3 to 4 60-day cycles. That translates into less than \$3.50 per head."

FeverTags are available in three temperature settings: 103, 103.06, and 104 degrees F. Each of the settings represents different treatment protocols for beef or dairy cattle.

Alvin Fults of Tejas Trading Company



Cattle are fitted with a regular ear tag and a FeverTag which flashes brightly when an animal runs a fever.



in Amarillo says tags are a "no-brainer investment for better herd health and lets him see sick cattle sooner than if he's just observing them while they're eating."

Cattle managers at the Dean Cluck Feedyard in Gruver, Texas say FeverTags take the guesswork out of seeing which cattle are sick and need immediate attention. Sick cattle can be treated sooner and get back on

feed sooner, which saves the feedlot money while maintaining average daily gains.

FeverTags are available from Walco, and will also be available from Tractor Supply in the fall of 2011.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Richard Crider, FeverTags LLC, 12208 Canyon Drive, Amarillo, Texas 79119 (ph 888 345-8247; www.fevertags.com).



A series of 3-ft. long forks fit into slots on front of bucket. Metal grating on back makes it easy to see what's happening.

"See-Through" Bucket-Fork

"I don't know what I'd do without it," says Chad Travis, Drasco, Ark., about his "made-it-myself" see-through bucket-fork.

It measures 5 ft. wide at the bottom, 6 ft. wide at the top, and 2 ft. high on back. A series of 3-ft. long forks, sharpened to a point and spaced 6 in. apart, fit into slots on front. The back side of the unit is made from metal grating that's welded to a frame made from 2 by 3 tubing.

A 6-in. wide, 3/8-in. thick metal plate goes all the way across the bottom, then tapers upward on both sides at an angle to support a pair of short tines located about 1 ft. above and 1 ft. outside the forks.

The rock bucket can be used together with a home-built, hydraulic-operated, L-shaped "squeezer clamp", which pins onto angle iron brackets welded across the top of the bucket. Made from 3-in. sq. tubing, the clamp comes with a 3-spiked steel jaw that's used to hold objects in place.

"The grating on back of the bucket makes it easy to see what I'm doing," says Travis. "It works well to scoop up most anything except sand and gravel. In fact, my solid-sided bucket sits idle most of the time. I've used it to scoop rocks, limbs, logs, scrap iron, tires and so forth. Over the years I've moved more than 2,000 tons of rocks with it.

"I do commercial bush hogging and don't go anywhere without my rock picker. I've taken out a lot of cedar trees under 5 in. in diameter. I use the forks to rip the trees out,



Bucket can be used together with a hydraulic-operated, L-shaped "squeezer clamp", which pins onto angle iron brackets welded across top of bucket.

roots and all. I've also used it to dig out a lot of hedges.

"It works great for forking up tree limbs and brush. Even without the squeezer clamp, the brush gets caught under the bucket's outside tines so it won't fall off. It also works well to fork loose hay and manure in a pasture where I feed round bales."

Travis uses the squeezer clamp to block up logs when cutting firewood. "I slide the forks under the log and clamp down on top. I can raise the log to a comfortable height and cut wood without having to bend over."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Chad Travis, 574 Greers Ferry Rd., Drasco, Ark. 72530 (ph 870 668-3400).



Austrian-style scythes are lighter and cut faster and easier than traditional American-style scythes, says Botan Anderson.

Austrian Scythes Cut Fast And Easy

Botan Anderson specializes in Austrian-style scythes, which are lighter and faster cutting than traditional American-style scythes. He also teaches people how to use and sharpen them properly.

"American-style scythes have thicker, heavier, and harder steel blades that hold their edge longer than Austrian-style scythes, but never get as sharp in the first place," says Anderson. "Austrian scythes have softer edges that are cold hammered to a really thin, sharp edge. They are lighter and cut faster and easier."

While both styles have a standard crescent-shaped blade, the Austrian-style blade also has curves end-to-end and side-to-side. The rocker curve runs lengthwise on the blade, curving the tip up from the ground when the scythe lays flat to the ground. The belly, a side-to-side curve, lifts the cutting edge off the ground. These three curves make the blade stronger and allow it to slide across the ground with the edge and tip rising against the stalks being cut.

The snaths, or handles, are also different on the two styles. The straight Austrian style allows a fuller cut.

Anderson says the Austrian scythes are ideal tools for small farmers or people who keep only a couple of cows or horses. Hay can be cut, dried and stored with minimum effort and expense, especially if using his scythes and a special cutting technique.

"Peter Vido of New Brunswick developed the cutting technique for use with the Austrian scythe," says Anderson. "Using it, a person can cut a swath one and a half times their height. I'm 6 ft., 5 in. and can cut a 10-ft. swath."

Anderson says such a long swath has been done with American scythes, but only in short competitive bursts. He can do it continuously, thanks to the smooth side-to-side weight shift. Watch the video on his web page, and each stroke is as smooth as the next.

As important as the swinging technique is, the sharpening technique is even more vital. On the soft, Austrian-style scythe steel, it involves "peening" the scythe edge. Rather than grind the steel, the edge is hammered with repeated light blows along the edge of the scythe. Peening anvils allow sharpening anywhere there is a stump or other surface to support them. Once fully peened, or hammered, a special whetstone does the final honing.

Anderson suggests a 20-min. touch-up peening of a blade after every couple hours or as it starts to dull. "If you let the edge get too dull, it can take 45 min. to sharpen properly," he says. "Mowing with a sharp blade is so much easier that you will mow more even with time out to sharpen than you will continue to mow with a dull blade."

Anderson holds workshops at his Wisconsin farm where he teaches cutting techniques as well as peening and honing. Scythes and related tools are listed on his website. Packages of scythe, snath, whetstone and whetstone holder are priced from \$230 to \$250. Peening anvils range from \$35 to \$90, depending on size and style.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mystic Prairie Eco-Farm & Scythe Shop, 1900 Johnson St., Wilson, Wis. 54027 (ph 715 772-4642; mysticprairie@mysticprairie.net; www.onescytherevolution.com).