

2001 Year at Rhodes Research Farm

Ron Sealock, superintendent

Welcome to the annual progress report for the Iowa State University Rhodes Research Farm. It is always satisfying for me to open this report and review the outcome of the projects that so many people have worked so hard at instituting.

Construction continues at the Rhodes Farm. In the past, a heifer development barn and a new calving facility were completed. This year the Department of Transportation is working to convert Highway 330 to four lanes. The farm contributed approximately 24 acres for widening of the right-of-way and a large amount of fill dirt from a 25-acre borrow area. The highway project will be a great improvement. The farm will have a new border fence along the highway.

The farm was short on feed supplies in spring 2001. A more typical growing 2001 season enabled us to rebuild forage supplies from the previous dry year. Total growing season precipitation for the year 2001 was 24.52 inches, a welcome change from the 17.42 inches in 2000. Average rainfall for our area is about 27 inches for the April through October time period. The real key to forage utilization for us was ample rainfall, more than nine inches, in August and September. Fall regrowth of forages was excellent, enabling grazing until January 1. Costs for wintering cows drop dramatically when grazing can be extended.

In 2002, several environment-related studies are underway. The ongoing phosphorous runoff study and a new buffer strip trial are in progress. The cattle breeding project, swine hoop finishing project, forage breeding and selection experiments, and many other studies continue. Please stop by so we can show off the many projects at the farm. We enjoy seeing new faces and greeting old friends.