Livestock News

Cumberland County Center — November 2012

Inside This Issue

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For any meeting in this newsletter, persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate by contacting the Extension Office where the meeting will be held by phone, email, or in person at least 7 days prior to the event.

Important Information

Buck Collection Day

The Johnston County Goat Producer's Association will host a buck collection on Sunday, November 18 at the Livestock Arena in Smithfield. Biogenics (www.biogenicsltd.com) will be doing the collection. Bucks need to be in place by 8 AM and the semen will be processed, frozen and placed in straws, ready for pick-up some time on Monday morning. Payment will be made directly to Biogenics. Please contact Dan Wells, Johnston County Livestock Agent, to preregister your buck (s) and receive payment and pre-collection instructions at (919) 989-5380 or email dgwells@ncsu.edu

Eastern Carolina Cattlemen's Conference

The conference will be on Tuesday, December 4th in Clinton starting at 8:30 am. See attached sheet for more information.

Cape Fear Regional Cattle Conference

The fourth annual Cape Fear Regional Cattle Conference will be held on January 17th at the Farmers Market in Robeson County. The conference starts at 4:30 pm and costs $5. Topics include a Fencing Demonstration by Dr. Matt Poore and Herd Health Presentation by Dr. Mark Alley. The program includes a meal and time to visit the vendors.

NC State Fair & Southeast Regional Livestock Judging & Skill-A-Thon Contests

Congratulations to Mary Vorder Bruegge for all of her hard work at the NC State Fair Livestock Judging & Skill-A-Thon Contests. Mary competed in the junior division in both contests and placed 7th in sheep in the livestock judging contest and 6th overall for the skill-a-thon contest. She was also on the 4th place junior skill-a-thon team with youth from Sampson County. Great job Mary! For more information on how to get involved in livestock judging or skill-a-thon, contact me at 910-321-6862 or mandy_harris@ncsu.edu.

NC State University A&T State University COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
Empowering People · Providing Solutions

Animal Waste Management

By: Becky Spearman, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Bladen County

CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES

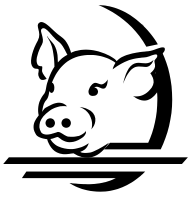
Date	Location	Time	Contact
November 8th	Scotland County	9 am (6 hrs)	910-277-2422
November 29th	Bladen County	9 am (6 hrs)	910-862-4591
December 4th	Cumberland County	9 am (6 hrs)	910-321-6872
December 14th	Sampson County	9 am (6 hrs)	910-592-7161

Initial Animal Waste Certification Training

There will be an initial training class for type A or type B license on **January 23 and 24 at the Bladen County Extension Office**. The cost for the class and manual is $35 or $5 for just the class. Call Becky Spearman at (910) 862-4591 to register.

Calibration and Sludge Surveys

All farms are required to calibrate their irrigation equipment and perform a sludge survey. General Permit Farms are required to calibrate at least once every two years and perform a sludge survey every year (unless an extension from DWQ was granted). NPDES farms must complete both every year. Call your Extension Agent for more information.



DWQ Website with Recordkeeping Forms

DWQ's website has access to many recordkeeping forms including IRR 1 and 2, freeboard/daily precipitation, stocking/mortality, Plan of Action Cover Letter, Plan of Action 5-day drawdown form, Plan of Action 30-day drawdown form, change of OIC and many other forms. http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/aps/afo/report

Check your Cont Ed Hours! - Animal waste operators must have six hours of continuing education credit every three years. Call your Extension Agent to check your hours or go to DWQ's website at http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/admin/tacu

Reminder - Animal Waste Operators must send in their $10 renewal fee for their license to DWQ by December 31st.

Hay Directories are below for people selling hay or looking for hay to buy. It is free to list your hay for sale.

1. North Carolina Department of Agriculture's Hay Alert is at http://www.agr.state.nc.us/hayalert/. Producers can call the Hay Alert at 1-866-506-6222. You can sign up to list your hay on-line.
2. The Southeastern NC Hay Directory is available at http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu/files/library/67/HayDirectory.pdf. Call your Extension Agent to learn how to include your farm on the list.
3. Cumberland County Hay Directory: http://cumberland.ces.ncsu.edu/files/library/26/hay_directory_march_2012.pdf

Forage Management Tips

From Production and Utilization of Pastures and Forages in North Carolina

November

- Do not graze fall-planted perennial pastures until growth reaches 6 to 8 inches.
- Separate lactating and dry cows and give the lactating cows the best quality pastures and hay.
- Winter annual pastures planted in September may be responsive to a nitrogen application (30 - 50 lbs/acre).
- Test forages before winter feeding begins.

December

- Limit the grazing of winter pastures by feeding hay or restricting acres available to animals.
- Feed hay stored outside before using hay that is stored inside.

Pasture Land or Row Crop Land?

By: Michelle M. Shooter, Extension Livestock Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Robeson and Hoke Counties

Record breaking grain prices this year have a few farmers in our area flirting with the idea of taking pasture land out of grass production and putting it into grain production. Even though grain prices are at record highs, one must take notice that beef prices have been high and are expected to remain high in 2013. There are several things to consider when contemplating the move from pasture to row crops. It is important to remember that prices are not guaranteed to remain high from year to year. Dr. Ron Heiniger, Professor of Crop Science and Cropping Systems Specialist, says conversion of pastureland to row crops should only be done after careful consideration of the economics and alternatives. He suggests thinking through the following three steps before making a decision.

1. Land Suitability

Is your land even suitable for row crops? Suitability should be determined by looking at soil surveys, soil properties (such as pH), and nutrient availability. Certain classes of land - very sandy soils, rocky or gravely soils, very poorly drained soils, - are unsuitable for sustainable row crop production and should remain in pasture. It is important to remember that just because a certain tract of farmland may produce a crop in a favorable year does not mean it will do so when conditions are adverse. Keep in mind that economical crop production depends on consistency of production, not one good year. If the pH is not ideal this will mean a good deal of investment required to adjust pH. If the Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC is used as a measure of fertility) is low then nutrients will not remain in the profile long enough to satisfy demands of a row crop. If the Base saturation is high then micronutrients will tend to be deficient. These soil properties are critical to good row crop production. Finally, if nutrient levels (p, K, Mg, Zn, Cu, Mn) are low then it will take some time to build soil levels resulting in potential for crop deficiencies and crop failure.

2. Economics

While crop prices are high today they may well be low next year. Growers need to consider both a current budget and a budget with lower grain prices. Consider what your break-even crop prices are for this land and the break even yields required. Can this piece of ground produce profitable returns even when crop prices are low? Compare these results with the return from leaving it as a pasture.

3. Timeliness

Success in an agricultural enterprise is based on timeliness. Planting at the right time, spraying at the right time, harvesting on time. How will adding this land to your cropping system affect your timeliness? If it means planting later or not being able to scout in a timely manner then sooner or later this will lead to big problems with potentially large losses.

The above issues are important to contemplate for farmers considering turning pastureland into cropland. In many cases there was a good reason pasture is pasture in the first place. Make sure you know what that reason was and decide if you now have the resources or tools to overcome the problem that prevented this land from being used for crops in the past and remember the old saying "Farm the good ground and leave the rest for pasture" is still valid today.

Reducing Calving Difficulties

By: Becky Spearman, from publications by Missouri Extension and Oklahoma Cooperative Extension.

The goal of a cow-calf producer is to sale a calf every year from each cow. The first step in selling a calf is to get a live, healthy calf born. This article will discuss tools to reduce calving problems, the normal calving presentation and the stages of labor.

The most common cause of dystocia or difficult birth is relative fetal oversize which could be that the calf is too big, the heifer's pelvic area is too small, or both. Most of these losses are seen in first calf heifers. The second most common cause is abnormal presentation. The third cause is lack of uterine contractions or uterine fatigue. For fetal oversize, prevention is the first step to reduce this problem. There are several tools that producers can use to prevent most dystocia problems including sire selection to reduce birth weight, pelvic measurements of heifers, and using a controlled breeding season. Completely eliminating dystocia in first-calf heifers is unlikely, but through management decisions you can reduce the number of problems.

Controlling birth weight is most effective through genetic selection. The major criteria for bulls to be used on heifers should be birth weight EPD. Genetics are available that will produce acceptable birth weight/calving ease, while maintaining above average growth potential. Many breeds have a calving ease EPD also. Using proven AI sires will further enhance calving ease.

Another tool that will minimize the fetal size problem is pelvic measuring heifers. The best time to measure is before you breed the heifer, so you can consider culling her if she is does not have an adequate size or has an abnormal sized area. A trained veterinarian or producer will measure the pelvic area both vertically and horizontally. These measurements are multiplied to give the pelvic area in centimeters squared. Reference charts can be used to determine which heifers have a higher chance of having problems.

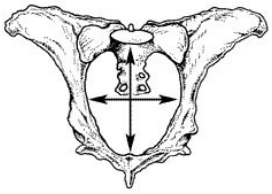


Figure 1
Vertical and horizontal measurements determine pelvic area.

Another tool that you can use is a controlled breeding season. This way you will know when your heifers are due to start calving and you can be more observant. Another recommendation is to breed heifers 4 to 6 weeks earlier than the cowherd. This allows better observation of the heifers and allows them extra time to get back into a good body condition to rebreed on time.

You have taken steps to prevent dystocia, but it can still happen. Research shows that 6-10% of all calves born die at or soon after birth and half of those deaths are due to calving difficulty. This puts losses due to calving problems as the second biggest loss behind failing to conceive.

It is important to know the normal calving presentation (figure 2) and the three stages of labor (table 1), so you will know when help may be needed. Normal delivery should occur within 2 hours after the water sac appears. Prolonged calving may result in a dead or weak calf. Timing is critical and it is important to observe cows and heifers frequently during the calving season.

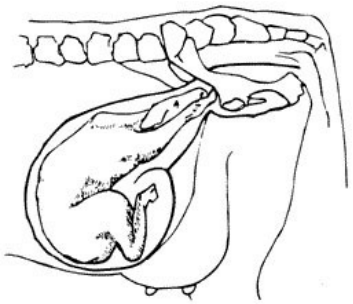


Figure 2 Normal position of the calf just prior to delivery

Table 1: Three stages of labor	
Stage 1 - Preparatory (4 - 24 hours before birth)	Calf rotates to upright position Uterine contractions begin Water sac expelled Hard to detect, watch for isolation Elevation and switching of the tail
Stage 2 - Delivery (1 hour or less)	Cow usually lying down Fetus enters birth canal Front feet and head protrude first Calf delivery complete About 1 hour in heifers and 30 minutes for adult cows
Stage 3 (less than 8 - 12 hours)	Shedding of placenta or fetal membranes Retained if not shed within 12 hours

Prepare calving equipment before calving season. Cleanliness is a must because future cow fertility may be compromised. Consult early with your veterinarian if assistance may be needed - time is critical. There will be an opportunity to learn more about assisting cows at the Eastern Carolina Cattle Conference on December 4th (see flyer).

Check out these publications to help you assist cattle or call your Extension agent to request a copy.
Missouri Extension at http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/agguides/ansci/g02007.pdf or
Oklahoma Extension at http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5171/E-1006web.pdf

Staying on Budget with Horses during Tough Times

By: Tyrone Fisher, County Extension Director and Livestock Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Harnett County

Owning a horse is a significant investment of both time and money. Most North Carolinians do not generate income from their horse, but are intent on spending time with their equine companion. During these tough economic times, we need to explore and implement options to reduce costs.

Keeping a horse outdoors with access to a loafing or run-in shed saves the cost of building and maintaining a barn as well as labor expenses associated with stall cleaning. It is usually more cost efficient to keep a horse on the owner's property/farm compared to boarding. Boarding is necessary for some horse owners, but can be expensive.

Flies, mosquitoes, and ticks are responsible for a number of bacterial and viral diseases of horses. Reduce the risk of these diseases by discouraging these insects and ticks in your horse's environment. To reduce the risk of some diseases, consider having visitors wash hands and change boots and clothing before and after handling horses.

Unless a mare or stallion has exceptional conformation and an outstanding performance record, planning a foal that realistically may be difficult to market is unwise and expensive. If your horses are not producing a profit, you may want to rank them to importance to family members if you have to start selling.

During an emergency, it is common for a horse owner to approve procedures one cannot really afford. There are many benefits of a yearly veterinary examination. Research has shown that taking an active interest, and being involved with the daily care of a horse results in a healthier horse and reduced veterinary care costs.

With feed costs rising, it is important to utilize feed efficiently. Nutrient requirements for horses depend on their physiological status and their level of production. Most horse owners over feed their horses, leading to wasted money and unhealthy, overweight horses. Removing unnecessary grain from diets can lead to substantial savings. Regardless of the horse, forage should be the backbone of a horse's nutrition program and should comprise at least 50% of their diet.

During summer months, utilize pasture as an affordable way to meet a horse's nutritional requirements. Reducing costs associated with horse ownership takes hard work and some creativity. Most cost reducing opportunities fall in the area of preventative medicine, education, and taking on the responsibilities of horse ownership.

Reference: Caring for horses on a budget, J. Wilson, DVM and K. Martinson, PhD, University of Minnesota

Winter Care of Goats and Sheep

By: Tiffanee Conrad-Acuña, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Richmond County.

Winter weather is coming soon and feels like it is already here due to Hurricane Sandy's arrival. There are several things that we need to think about in order to keep our goats and sheep healthy during cold weather.

Goats and sheep need to have a good supply of clean fresh water. When water is really cool during the winter months, animals do not drink as much, so it's a good idea to warm it up some if possible. Any ice that accumulates needs to be broken and taken out since goats and sheep are not able to bust through it on their own. This will ensure that they drink enough water and prevent them from getting urinary calculi.

Goats and sheep will also eat more hay and pasture during winter months. Keeping their rumens active and healthy will actually help them to produce more body heat. Farmers oftentimes ask about the safety of heat lamps. They can be a good tool to use to keep animals warm, but you must be concerned about fire hazards. Never hang a heat lamp over straw or other bedding material or too low where the animals can knock it over. Heat lamps have caused many barn fires over the years.

Goats and sheep can handle cold temperatures well, but they do have problems with wind and wet weather. They do need a shelter to keep the wind and rain off of them, but it needs to be ventilated as well. A shelter with no ventilation can cause problems with ammonia from urine. Goats and sheep that do not have a proper shelter are prone to pneumonia. Wood shavings or straw work well to absorb urine in shelters as well as to keep animals warm. You will want to regularly clean the soiled bedding so that the barn does not have problems with ammonia.

Most people forget about parasite control during the winter months, but it's a good idea to check their eyes with the FAMACHA system and deworm any animals that need it. A goat or sheep that is carrying a large load of internal parasites is easily overcome by the cold because it will be immune suppressed. Animals are more likely to catch a disease when their immune system is compromised.

Also, you don't want to forget about hoofcare during the winter months. Your animals may not be exercising as much as they normally do during the summer months, therefore they are not wearing their hooves down as much. You'll want to trim their hooves every 2 months or so to ensure healthy feet and legs. If their hooves are properly trimmed, they are able to get to their water and food. If you have any questions about the care of your goats and sheep during the winter time, please call your local Extension Agent.

Showmanship Circuit Winners

By: Dan Wells, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Johnston County.

Results for two showmanship circuits were announced at the NC State Fair. These kids accumulated points for their placings in showmanship at a series of shows in Eastern North Carolina this fall. If you know any of these young people, please congratulate them for all their hard work and accomplishments.

The **Eastern Carolina Showmanship Circuit** is for youth showing lambs and heifers. This circuit marks its twentieth year in 2012. There are three divisions for both species. First place in each division won a belt buckle, second in each division won an embroidered Carhartt jacket. Additionally, the first place senior in both lambs and heifers received a $500 scholarship. Cargill/Nutrena sponsors the circuit, providing some gift certificates to be drawn at the awards presentation and a circuit tee shirt for every qualifying child. Wrangler also gives 30 gift certificates for $25. Final points rankings for the circuit are below.

Lamb Showmanship Winners

Novice	Junior	Senior
1. Carolina Mayo	1. Mary Katherine Owens	1. Maryanna Bennett
2. Tyler Boswell	2. Corey Goss	2. Kelsey Bentley
3. Kaylie Pender	3 Caley Mayo	3. Heather Goodrich
4. John Owens	4. Haley Stevens	4. Morgan Murray
5. Travis Cox	5 Mary Catherine Mayo	5. Rachel Garrou

Heifer Showmanship Winners

Junior	Intermediate	Senior
1. Justin Wood	1. Carlie Piercy	1. Mason Blinson
2. Wyatt Kendall	2. Jordan Kennedy	2. Chase Piercy
3. Ashley Murphy	3. Macy Massengill	3. Joy Leigh Hinnant
4. John Caleb Heath	4. Rachel Murphy	4. Hannah Ferrell
5. Kacie Strickland	5. Madison Strickland	5. Cole Vester

The **Carolina Youth Meat Goat Showmanship Circuit** was also held this fall. This is a separate series of shows for youth showing meat goats. Youth accumulate points and the winners in three age divisions each receive a belt buckle, with the runners-up each receiving a jacket. This circuit is sponsored by Greene County Farm Bureau, Melissa Copeland/Pasquotank County Farm Bureau, Show Rite Feeds and Atlantic Screenprinting/RO Givens Signs. Winners are below.

Meat Goat Showmanship Winners

Novice	Junior	Senior
1. Ellie Elmore	1. Sara Jane French	1. Kaelyn Mohrfeld
2. Conner Mills	2. Makensie Mohrfeld	2. Justin Lawrence
3. Josh Fletcher	3. Christy Harris	3. Joel Dahms
4. Gabrielle Young	4. Alan Johnson	4. John Ronald Walton
5. Emma Vick	5. Rachel Murphy	5. Hannah Davis

Bio-security Starts at Home

By: Richard Goforth, Area Poultry Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension

There have been quite a few reports of MG (Mycoplasma gallisepticum) and ILT (Infectious Laryngotracheitis) recently in both commercial and backyard flocks so I thought it might a good time to encourage poultry owners to review their bio-security plans and procedures. Most disease organisms are transferred or moved through one or more pathways. These pathways are called vectors. Vectors can be natural and hard to control such as air movement, or mechanical in nature like dirty equipment. Bio-security measures are usually designed to limit vectors movement from one flock or population to another.

So the first step in any good plan is to limit access to your flock, only those who need to work or care for animals should have direct access to animal facilities. Workers should make sure they limit their exposure to outside flocks and especially birds of the same species. Anyone working with the birds should have fresh clothes or coveralls, shoes or boot covers when entering the flock. For small flock owners often the most practical solution is to have dedicated shoes or boots for tending your flock and make sure you change before leaving or returning to the farm. Remember it is just as important you don't track out anything as it is to not track a disease back to your farm.

At this time of year is very important to make sure your rodent control program is effective and ready to handle the increased pressure of the fall migration of rodents into houses and facilities as they search for food and water sources, as well as a cozy winter breeding ground. Rodents are difficult to keep out of animal facilities since there is always a source of food and water for animals and often some level of shelter and easily accessible nesting materials. Good rodent control is essential to bio-security since rodents come in contact with many of the same items as your animals. If you are lucky or have planned well enough to have significant distance between your farm and other farms, rodents are less likely to be the original source of a disease but they can make controlling or limiting its spread between houses or flocks very difficult. Which brings up two other important points of good bio-security for limiting on farm movement. First if you cannot practice all in, all out on your farm always care for the youngest to the oldest and any sick animals last. The second point is whenever bringing in new birds or animals, isolate and quarantine them for at least 2 weeks. This provides a chance for any signs of disease to show and for them to shed any fomites they may be carrying. Isolation or removal of sick animals or birds can help stop the spread of disease to the entire flock or herd if it is practical. Insect control is also essential part of good bio-security since they move from animal to animal, contaminate food and water sources. Biting insects are especially troublesome since they pierce the skin, inject bacteria and viruses during the feeding process and leave a wound that can become infected easily.

Finally all animal equipment, cages, and transports should be washed and disinfected before and after use to make sure you minimize any chance of transfer of disease organisms. If you would like to learn more about bio-security addition information can be found at NCSU Prestage Department of Poultry Science Extension website: http://poultry.ces.ncsu.edu/ under the technical information tab. There is a downloadable Poultry Farm Biosecurity Field Manual (Dept. of Poultry Science) in English and Spanish for commercial growers. Small and Backyard flock owners can find links for practical control recommendations in their flocks as well from the site http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/birdbiosecurity/ or Backyard Biosecurity Practices To Keep Your Birds Healthy (USDA/APHIS).