

Fly Control in Cattle – Seth Nagy, Livestock Agent, Caldwell County

Fly season is upon us, and we'll be dealing with them until it cools off this fall. Flies are just part of cattle production. The goal of a fly control program should be to keep flies below an economic threshold, not necessarily the complete elimination of all flies.



Horn flies are the costliest fly for grazing beef animals. They are about half the size of a typical house fly. They spend most of their time on the cow's back, legs, and belly. Horn flies leave the animal only when disturbed or when the females lay eggs in a fresh manure pat. Horn flies feed by biting the animal to get a blood meal. The economic threshold for horn flies is 200 flies per cow. Therefore, animals should be treated when there are more than 200 horn flies per animal. Face flies are the next most economically costly fly for grazing animals. They are about the size of a house fly. Face flies are found around the eyes and nose of animals. They irritate the soft tissues when feeding which can cause excessive tearing. Face flies can also spread pink eye. The economic threshold is 20 face flies per animal.

Cattlemen have several options for control. There are insecticidal ear tags, back rubbers, dusters, feed through insecticides, and insect growth regulators. Breaking up the manure piles disrupts developing horn fly larva. There are even walk through fly vacuums and fly zappers. However, don't overlook your mineral and nutritional program. Cattle can better face environmental challenges like, flies and parasites, when they are getting good groceries. Keeping flies below economic threshold is the best way to evaluate your current fly control program. Fly control can be achieved for around \$9 to \$20 per head per year. For further discussion about fly control strategies, visit (<https://cefs.ncsu.edu/resources/practical-fly-control-2012/>) or contact your local Extension Agent.

Cattle Prices and Trends - Carl Pless, Livestock Agent, Cabarrus County

Not long ago feeder cattle prices were above \$200.00 per hundred weight. Only a few years before that did feeder cattle prices get consistently above \$100.00 per hundred weight. Cattle numbers are increasing. The range areas of the west are receiving moisture and growing grass which is allowing them to feed more brood cows and produce more feeder calves. Grain feed prices are decreasing. Cattle feeders have long known that "cheap feed makes cheap cattle". Cattle are being fed to heavier weights. More pounds of beef are being marketed. There is downward pressure on cattle prices that may very likely continue for the next couple of years.

What management decisions can cattle producers make to maintain profitability? Producers have an opportunity to produce the most marketable product possible at the least cost. Know your cost of production. Cattle producers in North Carolina can't change the price of cattle. Producers can change where and how they fit in to the industry. Management and marketing strategies can be adopted to increase profitability. Markets are reporting increased quality spreads. Medium number one muscle cattle that are castrated, weaned, healthy, vaccinated and know how to eat from a feed bunk often receive a higher premium than those that can't meet that description. Produce the best quality forages possible and manage cattle as they graze them can lower feed costs. Marketing uniform truck load lots of cattle of the same weight, sex, genetics can offer higher prices. Producers may choose to use futures and futures options as a tool to manage price risk

Our Mission at North Carolina Cooperative Extension

The North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service partners with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolinians.

So contact your local office and talk with your livestock agent about any production questions or concerns you might have. We are here to help!

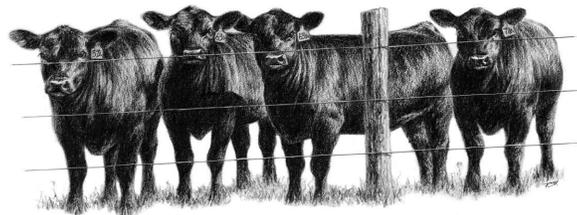
Reference to brand names or commercial services is for educational information only and should not be construed as an endorsement of the product or services by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service or discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned.

North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

Extension

June, 2016

Cattle Call



Wilkes NC State Extension, 416 Executive Dr. Suite B, Wilkesboro, NC 28697 PHONE: 336.651.7348 FAX: 336.651.7516

Storm Season Preparedness

John Cothren, Wilkes Extension Agent, Livestock

Livestock producers need to be diligent in checking livestock, repairing damaged infrastructure, and looking for possible hazards in pastures caused by storm damage. Whether the storm was a severe thunderstorm, a hurricane, or a tornado, storm damage can cause acute injury and further damage to livestock if tending to animals and pastures is made a low priority in the recovery process. At a time when there often is damage to personal property including dwellings, outbuildings, and other non-livestock facilities, sometimes the livestock and the pastures take a lower priority. The health and well-being of livestock should be the second priority after the health and wellbeing of farmers and their families.



Immediately after the storm subsides, producers should assess damage both to infrastructure and livestock. Cattle locations and records is an important part of this process. If animals were injured by flying debris, the farmer should contact a veterinarian immediately if the injuries were severe.

Next, they should check to make sure cattle have adequate water. If hauling water, make sure the amount delivered to the animals is adequate. Adult lactating beef cows of average size need to be provided at least 25 gallons per day of fresh water.

The perimeter fence should be checked to make sure fallen trees or branches have not downed the fence. If the system is electric, putting up temporary polywire and temporary posts may be the quickest way to restore the perimeter. If there is extensive damage to infrastructure, it may be most convenient to confine livestock to one pasture and feed hay / minerals until repairs can be made.

After assessing damage to the livestock and infrastructure, producers should assess other potential hazards caused by storm damage. Debris blown into pastures such as insulation and other building materials (common following tornadoes) may be eaten by livestock, leading to digestive upset and possibly death.

As producers check pasture infrastructure and scout for debris, they should also look for downed wild cherry tree limbs (or fallen wild cherry trees) and immediately either fence them away from livestock or remove them from pastures before livestock consume them. **PRUSSIC ACID POISONING FROM CONSUMING WILTED CHERRY LEAVES FOLLOWING STORM DAMAGE IS A VERY COMMON CAUSE OF DEATH IN CATTLE.** This is an especially great hazard if pastures are short and livestock are hungry, because they may rapidly consume a large amount of the toxic material.

Storms are an inevitable part of life, and managing damage means more than just cutting trees off fences and making sure livestock are not injured. Immediately following the storm, the safety and health of you and your family comes first, but remember to continue to protect the safety and health of the animals you care for as part of your livelihood.