New Laws Affect Hog Farms

By: Lynn Stillwell Sampson County Livestock Agent Swine and Waste Management

At the conclusion of this years congressional session, several laws were passed that affect hog farms, from inspections to reconstruction.

The big one that passed was the Appropriations Act of 2011, despite the Governor vetoing it. This bill reduced our State’s budget by enforcing a reorganization of State Government Agencies. One in particular was the Division of Soil and Water Conservation (DSWC), which moved from the Department of Environmental, and Natural Resources (DENR) to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS). Included in the budget was a section to end DSWC role regarding Animal Waste Management Systems. Technical assistance will still be provided, but annual inspections by DWSC have been eliminated, two inspectors positions have been retained for any producers wishing to participate in voluntary inspections. The Division of Water Quality (DWQ) will now provide inspections of hog farms once a year.

The budget also restricted DENR’s rule-making authority. They are no longer allowed to adopt any rules that are more restrictive than federal law. There are few exceptions to this rule, one being if the rule is required by a court order.

Senate Bill 501 was also passed into law. This bill allows for construction or renovation of swine farms constructed prior to October 1, 1995 when the Swine Farm Siting Act was enacted. Renovations and reconstructions on these farms can only occur if they do not increase the permitted capacity of animals on the farm, or increase the capacity of the lagoon or other waste management system. No houses may be reconstructed if it results in the structure being located in the 100-year flood plain, or...
if the updated or reconstructed part of the structure is located any closer to buildings or property covered in the Swine Farm Siting Act. For more information you can visit the NC General Assembly’s webpage http://www.ncleg.net and read over the bills.

Animal Waste - Temporary Adjustments in Lagoon Stop Pump Level: The NRCS Technical Guidance Document allows an optional, temporary adjustment in the lagoon operating procedure. This adjustment allows the operator to pump into the top 8 inches of the treatment volume from June 15th through October 31st to provide irrigation water during drought periods to establish/maintain vegetation in application areas and allow additional temporary storage for excessive rainfall during the hurricane season and winter months. There are several restrictions to the rule. For more information, call your Extension or NRCS Office.

Managing Forages for Dry Weather

Amanda Hatcher- Livestock Agent Duplin County

1. Before dry weather hits:
   - Have a good maintenance program for your pastures and hayfields. Conduct a soil test and follow recommendations though guidance from your Extension Agent for nutrients and lime. Good weather is a great time to manage troublesome weeds. During bad weather those weed problems tend to worsen. Organic matter increases soil’s water holding capacity so adding it to soil can help long-term but be mindful of nutrient buildup. When pH is too low or high, many nutrients are not available to the plant. Adding nitrogen during drought can be costly and counterproductive. Lime won’t dissolve very quickly without rain.

2. When dry weather hits:
   - Don’t graze or cut grass too short – Bermudagrass in dry weather is best kept at 3” tall vs. in good weather at 2” tall. Fescue: 6” is optimum, especially if the weather is beginning to get dry. If you allow cut or graze too closely, this removes too much of a plant’s reserves and it takes longer for the plant to grow back. Rest periods are especially important, more so during droughts. Just like we need extra rest when it’s hot and dry, so do our forages.
   - According to Liebig’s Law of Minimum, lack of moisture is the first priority for our crops. If our forages do not have adequate moisture, then worrying about insects and diseases (priority number 7) is not significant compared to the other things plants need (Source: Havlin, J. L. et al. 2005. Soil Fertility and Fertilizers, 7th ed.).
   - Check nitrates before feeding and/or cutting for hay. You can take a forage sample before cutting or after hay has been baled. If sampling in the field, randomly snip grasses from the field at mowing height and add
these clippings to a gallon-sized Ziploc bag. If sampling from the bale, it’s best to use a hay corer and randomly remove about 20 cores. Mix the hay cores and add to a quart-sized Ziploc bag. Submit the samples with proper forms to your Extension Agent for analysis at NCDA & CS Forage Lab. You can use private labs for analysis as well. Your Extension Agent can provide you with a list. If you do have high nitrates, check with your Extension Agent and talk about where your current levels are. There are options of using the hay if nitrates are elevated: mixing with another hay to dilute nitrate, add alternative feeds (besides hay), or wrap to ensile hay. Do not turn hungry animals onto high nitrate hay!

• Watch fertilization timing and rate. Sometimes it’s not too much nitrogen; it’s the wrong time. Use your soil test to help determine the proper amount of nitrogen but do not apply nitrogen when plants are experiencing stress due to heat and/or low rainfall.

• Watch for toxic plants! Many plants that are toxic are drought-tolerant, some, such as horsenettle, even keep their green color during drought and may look more attractive than forages. Weigh the pros and cons of weed control methods. Many herbicides are not effective or very effective when soil is very dry, and plants will need adequate rain even when water is applied through spray solution. Sometimes the dryness causes forages to absorb too much of the herbicide and there is more damage to forage than usual. Wait until adequate rainfall for most herbicides. Mowing can give temporary control.

• Follow proper timing and rate for seeding and/or sprigging—for the coastal plain area of North Carolina (except heavy, darker soils), the best dates for seeding Bermudagrass are April 1-May 15 but possible dates are March 15-June 7. For sprigging Bermudagrass, best dates are March 1-March 31 and possible dates are February 15-April 15 or as late as July if irrigated. Sprigging or seeding later than these dates may increase the chances of dry and/or hot conditions interfering with establishment.

• Often when we experience prolonged dry conditions, seedheads form lower to the soil surface or stunting may occur. Even with adequate rainfall after seedhead has formed, growth could be significantly inhibited. It may be beneficial to graze the grass lightly to encourage regrowth.

• To maximize grazing, try controlled grazing or other similar grazing technique. The benefit is you can avoid wasting forages and give animals area to graze. The disadvantage is you have to move the animals from one section to another more frequently. Contact your Extension Agent for more information.

3. Recovery Period:

• Once rain finally falls, weeds can grow very fast – be prepared! Know what kinds of weeds you normally have a problem with. A number of weeds can grow extremely fast once they have rain. In fact, pigweed can grow 2 to 5 inches in 3 days or less. Once you know what you have, pick
a strategy: mowing, herbicides, and management. Always use herbicides according to the label, at the correct rate. A couple of reasons for using herbicides for pastures is to remove undesirable weeds to increase quality and to decrease competitiveness for forage. Weigh the costs and benefits of herbicides closely and consult your Extension Agent.

- Fertilization may depend on when recovery takes place. Don’t over-fertilize right before dormancy of Bermudagrass and don’t fertilize fescue in the heat of summer, particularly from April to August. If we are dry during May, June, and July then finally get rainfall in August, fertilize very lightly. Bermudagrass does not need a flush of growth just before dormancy.

- The rainfall may have kept hay yields low so hay may be difficult to find. Keep hay protected against wind, rain and other elements. Keep hay off the ground to reduce soil to hay contact. Protecting hay from the weather will reduce spoilage. Examples of storage tools include wooden pallets, tires, old hog slats for a barrier against the ground and secured tarps can protect the tops and sides. Don’t cover the bales completely and leave some space between the bales to allow for air circulation.

New Insecticide Labeled for Control of Fall Armyworms in Pastures

Prevathon insecticide has now been registered for use on pastures, cotton, and corn for control of Fall Armyworms, cotton bollworms and budworms, and many other pests. Prevathon contains rynaxypyr and is a Group 28 insecticide. It offers a new mode of action in these crops. It is NOT a restricted-use product.

Prevathon may be used on any variety of cotton, Bt or non-Bt to help control the worm complex. It also offers excellent control of armyworms in all types of pastures and hay fields, long-lasting residual, and has NO grazing restrictions. It has 4-hour re-entry period for workers. Animals can graze immediately after application in pastures. For a complete list of insecticides for control of Fall Armyworms in pastures please contact the Extension office.

Sludge Survey and Sprayer Calibrations

Your lagoon must be surveyed once every year and your sprayer, whether solid set or traveler, must be calibrated once every two years. Now is the time to sign up for your free sludge/lagoon survey and sprayer calibrations. Contact Lynn Stillwell at the Sampson County office to sign up for this free service. 910-592-7161

Hay Directories

There are two web site directories for people selling or buying hay. 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.
Forage Management Tips
From Production and Utilization of Pastures and Forages in North Carolina.

August
- Apply lime to pastures with pH below 5.8 to be overseeded.
- Start harvesting corn silage in the hard dent state and when the dry matter is between 35% to 40%.
- Fertilize warm-season grasses.
- Fertilize fescue and keep cattle off the pastures to be stockpiled.
- Scout for Armyworms

September
- Fertilize and lime cool-season grasses.
- Keep pressure on summer grasses and completely use them before grazing cool-season forages.
- Watch for fall insects (armyworms, grasshoppers, crickets) on forages.
- Overseed or no-till winter annuals into summer perennial grass.

Dear Reader,

If you have any questions about any of the information in this article or any upcoming events with Extension please contact the Sampson County Cooperative Extension Office at 910-592-7161. This newsletter and more information is also available on our website: http://go.ncsu.edu/sampsonswine
And my blog: http://go.ncsu.edu/sampsonhogblog

Thank you,

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