

Harnett County Center

Livestock News

January 2022



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Register Now for the 2022 Cape Fear Cattle Conference

Which will be held on Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at 4:30 pm at the Southeastern Agricultural Center, 1027 US-74 ALT, Lumberton, NC 28358.

Dr. Brian Bolt, Livestock Extension Specialist, with Clemson Extension will be speaking about dewormer considerations and recommendations and dealing with hoof issues.

Ritchie Roberts, a professional hoof trimmer, will also be speaking about hoof issues and care.

Please contact Liz Joseph, 910-321-6862 or liz_joseph@ncsu.edu if you have any questions.

Follow the link below to register!

<https://go.ncsu.edu/2022cfcc>

Upcoming Events

2022 Southern Farm Show—February 2-4
Raleigh, NC

70th Annual North Carolina Cattlemen's Conference—February 25-26
Hickory, NC

Hay Directory

North Carolina Department of Agriculture's Hay Alert is at <http://www.ncagr.gov/HayAlert/>. It lists people selling hay or looking for hay to buy. It is free to list your hay.

For any meeting listed, persons with disabilities 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.

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Waste Management Updates

By: Liz Joseph, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Cumberland and Hoke Counties

Initial 10-hour Animal Waste Operator Class (OIC)

There will be an initial class on January 27 and 28 in-person at the Bladen County Extension Office from 10 am - 4 pm both days. Registration starts at 9:30am. Call the Bladen Office at 910-862-4591 to sign up by January 24. Snow dates are February 1 and 2. Participants will be able to take the March exam.

Swine and Dairy Covid Assistance Program- Phase 1 Application

Through S.L. 2021-180 (2021 Appropriations Act) the North Carolina General Assembly established the North Carolina Swine and Dairy Assistance Program, a one-time assistance program for swine and dairy producers who suffered a loss due to the shutdowns following the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant number of swine farms have lost contracts and dairies have been forced out of business due to the pandemic.

The \$30 million appropriated to NCDA&CS is to provide financial assistance for eligible swine and dairy producers for losses incurred as a result of termination of contracts or ceased milk production due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The application process will be handled in two phases. Phase I application process is currently underway and Phase 2 will be initiated at a later date for the purpose of infrastructure modifications - Information will follow early February 2022 . The first portion of the application is determination of applicant eligibility. All eligible applicants will receive a one-time financial assistance payment of \$31,500.

If the applicant/producer has questions about this program or qualifications for the program, please contact the NCDA&CS COVID Assistance helpline at 866-747-9823.

To apply for assistance the applicant/producer will need to complete the online application and submit the appropriate forms listed on the application website.

<http://www.ncagr.gov/CovidSwineandDairyAssistance.htm>

Inspector reminder:

Rodent control is vital to a hog operation. Rats can burrow and cause issues on lagoon banks and cause cracking and leaking around the foundation of buildings that can cause discharges. There are several options for rodent control and it may take several options depending on the severity of your problem. If you are a contract grower, contact your serviceperson about options that your integrator may be able to help you with.

Tolerating Aggressive Cows

By: Jessica Anderson, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Wilson County

We've all seen her. That one cow that marches to the beat of her own drum. She has a temper, some producers would say, others would call her crazy or just plain mean. But for some reason, she's still there, year after year prancing around a pasture. Why would a farmer put up with this ill-mannered cow? "She always has one heck of a calf," is the typical answer.

In the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention keeps up with injury reporting. They report that 14% of fatalities caused by cattle are due to beef cows in a cow/calf operation. Even with that said, a recent study has shown that producers are surprisingly tolerant of aggressive mother cows at calving time.

Because the purpose of a cow-calf operation is to have one calf per cow a year, producers believe that if an aggressive cow has a good calf, then she is doing her job. However, that is not counting the extra time and effort it takes for that one cow. Ever tried to bring the cows up to a holding pen just to have that crazy cow take off in the opposite direction and take half the herd with her? How about having an ill-tempered cow take off through a fence? What about trying to tag her calf and having to bring sweet feed, a walking stick, and maybe a suit of armor just to get charged at anyway? Here is a list of just some of the issues that aggressive cows can bring to a whole herd:

- Equipment costs (fences, chutes, gates, either replacing or fixing)
- Low performance- Mean cows can get the whole herd stirred up, that means cows and calves running during hot weather, which means they are excited, and not eating and growing or producing milk like they should.
- Time & Energy- Fixing fences, extra time it takes to bring the herd up, extra time to tag her calf or to deal with anything regarding that cow.
- Bad behavior- Like kids, cows are sometimes easily impressionable. Put some ill-mannered cows into an existing group and the behavior of the whole herd can change.

Tolerating Aggression

Surprisingly, producers are willing to keep a dangerous cow for multiple calvings. More than a third of producers admitted they believe dangerous cattle don't change and 22% believe they become more dangerous over subsequent calvings. Producers cite genetics as the greatest factor contributing to dangerous cows, and admit they are potentially selecting for more dangerous cows if they keep their daughters.

The facts are, no matter how good the cow and calf, there are other cows out there that are calm and can be excellent mothers. Producers can and should select cattle that are calm and tolerant of humans, and cull those that are causing all the headaches, and maybe save a few dollars in fixing fence.



Lambing/Kidding Season

By: Taylor Chavis, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Robeson County

It is hard to believe that we have already entered the year 2022. The new year usually gives us new opportunities and new life. Most goat and sheep operations will have new life born in just a few months on their farm.

The normal breeding season for sheep and goats is usually September through January. Gestation is 5 months for sheep and goats. Does or ewes that got bred in September will be kidding/lambing in the next month or so. Kidding/Lambing can be a stressful time for both the animal and the owner. Being prepared for kidding season can eliminate unnecessary stress and increase the chance of survival for the kids or lambs. The profitability of a goat and sheep operation depends on the number of kids and/or lambs raised, weaned, and marketed each year. Below are some things to keep in mind as we enter the kidding/lambing season to ensure a profitable operation.

Nutrition

During the last 4 to 6 weeks of pregnancy, the nutritional demands of the doe/ewe increase. Producers should start thinking about supplemental feeding if pasture, hay is limited and low quality, less than 10% protein. Does/ewes in the last 30 days of pregnancy as well as does/ewes that are lactating should be eating about 16% protein. Doe/ewe nutrition can affect the quality of colostrum. Colostrum is the first milk that the kid/lamb needs within the first 24 hours of life that provides immunity. Poor quality colostrum will not provide protection and decreases the survival rate tremendously.

Deworming and Vaccinations

Parasite load usually rises after parturition (birth) and implementing a deworming program is good to combat parasite count. Using the FAMACHA system can help reduce worm load.

Does/ewes should be vaccinated with C, D+T shot. C, D+T prevents clostridial diseases. Does/ewes should be vaccinated once a year, 4-6 weeks before kidding or twice a year, 4-6 weeks before breeding and then again 4-6 weeks before kidding. Kids should be vaccinated at week 8 and then boosted on week 12.

Facilities

Facilities are important to get ready before the first kid or lamb is born as they serve a vital role in housing the doe/ewe and kid/lamb. Pens should be clean and under a barn or shelter to protect from harsh weather conditions. Winter/early spring kidding/lambing may require the use of a heat lamp and should be in place

if needed. Some producers choose to use "kid incubators" to rig up a heat lamp so that the heat lamp is away from the hay and the kid has access, but the doe cannot get in. These can be made from 55-gallon plastic barrels with a hole cut out.

Kidding

When it is time for does/ewes to kid/lamb it is important to pay close attention to the herd in case you have to assist. The length of kidding can vary from 12 to 14 hours and consist of three stages: cervix dilates, water sac appears, kid is born. Once the water sac appears the kid should be born within 1 hour. If does/ewes appear to have difficulty pushing, assistance may be necessary. Most time does/ewes will not need assistance, but in some cases kids/lambs can be in an abnormal birth position and require the producer to help. Producers can check by inserting one hand inside the birth canal and determine the position of the kid and moving if necessary. Does/ewes that have to be assisted should be given an antibiotic afterwards to prevent infection. Producers should seek a veterinarian for proper dosage. Knowing the signs of dystocia (difficult birth) can help save both doe and kid.

Kid Processing

What should you do after a kid is born? The first thing is to make sure that the kid is dry and has had a chance to nurse. Getting colostrum is the most important thing and often times will die if they do not receive adequate colostrum. It is a good idea to have supplemental colostrum on hand in case the doe will not nurse. A bottle or syringe can be used to feed the kid. If the kid is really weak the kid may have to be stomach tubed (tube inserted in the esophagus down to the stomach) to receive adequate colostrum. A kid's navel cord can be dipped or sprayed in iodine to prevent bacteria from entering the cord and causing infection. Kids can also be ear tagged.

It is a good idea to keep a kidding/lambing kit that includes the following items:

- Ear tags
- Record sheets (herd notebook)
- Latex gloves
- Lubricant
- Iodine
- Feeding tube and syringe
- Colostrum supplement

If you have any questions about kidding/lambing, please contact your local extension agent.

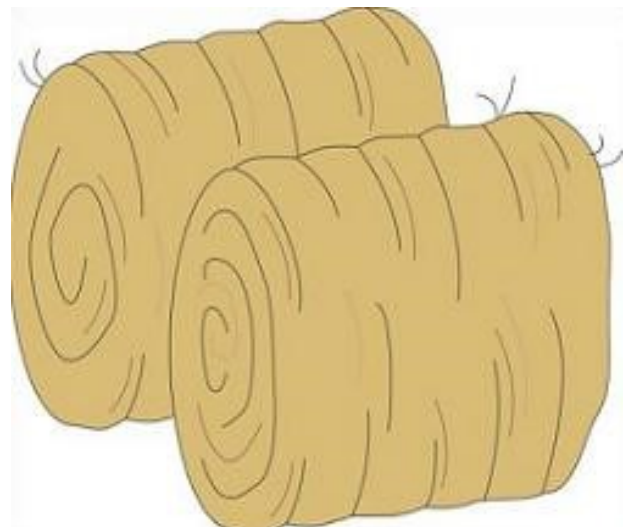
A Little Crabgrass in Coastal Horse Hay

By: Brian Parrish, Agriculture Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Harnett County

When I was growing up, we had a 5-acre coastal hay field behind our house that we cut for horse hay. I remember that there was always a small amount of crabgrass mixed in with the Bermuda and yes it would take just a little longer to dry but our horses loved the hay, and we never had any problems feeding it. During the 12-year period that our family fed the coastal / crabgrass mix hay to our horses we never had a horse to colic. With that said, crabgrass contamination of bermudagrass hayfields intended for horse hay can be a concern because the slower-drying crabgrass can create “green spots” in baled hay, raising the chance for mold or spontaneous heating. The darker color of crabgrass hay also has less eye appeal than the green color of well-cured bermudagrass hay.

Many hay producers that sell coastal Bermuda for horse hay try their best to get the crabgrass out. The crabgrass can be very hard and expensive to take out because the crabgrass is sprouting from seed at different times throughout the growing season. Many farms apply Prowl H2O, which is a pre emergence that prevents the crabgrass from sprouting. The Prowl H2O is typically applied at 2 qt/A in early March and then 2qt/A in mid-July (after a cutting in hayfields). Roundup (Glyphosate) is also commonly applied at 6 oz/A (after a cutting in hayfields) targeting crabgrass. Pastora is also commonly applied to Bermuda hayfields to help with crabgrass control. **(Always read and follow all chemical labels.)** It may take several years for a hay producer to get a bermudagrass hay field completely free of crabgrass. While I am talking about expensive, in 2022 fertilizer prices are predicted to go through the roof so to speak. Some fertilizers are already 210% higher than 2020 prices. So be ready to pay more for your horse hay in 2022.

Most horse owners really love their animals and want to give them the best. When I owned horses, I was picky about the hay that I fed them. The hay had to be good and dry and free of mold. If it was white dusty or had a musty smell I would not buy it or feed it. As an Extension Agent, I hear about very picky horse owners that refuse perfectly good bermudagrass hay that has a little crabgrass in it. Crabgrass as a forage and a hay is higher quality than bermudagrass. The point of this article is that bermudagrass with a little crabgrass can be excellent horse hay if it has been properly dried. From what I have observed horses will prefer the coastal hay with a little crabgrass in it over straight Bermuda hay. Many cattle producers in our area also prefer a coastal crabgrass mixed hay for their cattle. Again, from observations the cattle clean up the coastal crabgrass mixed hay much better with very little waste as compared to straight Bermuda hay. I encourage horse owners to work with their local hay suppliers and purchase good and well cured hay as early as possible in the hay season this coming year.



Tips for Cutting Fertilizer Costs

By: Anthony Growe, Livestock and Row Crops Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Richmond County

Over the last year, consumers have experienced a price increase in products they use in their daily lives. This price increase in common commodities is also affecting the agricultural sector. As of December, fertilizer prices have more than doubled compared to prices one year ago. As farmers gear up for the 2022 growing season, we can expect that these historically high prices will cut into the profits of the men and women that grow our food. Fortunately, there are some steps farmers can take to help ease the cost of their fertilizer bill for the upcoming growing season.

Take Soil Samples of Your Fields- For livestock producers with grazing animals, getting soils tested is the first step in the direction of lowering fertilizer inputs. Getting soils tested is a pretty simple task but it needs to be done correctly. If you need assistance with collecting soil samples, please contact your local livestock agent. After samples are collected from the fields, they can be taken to your local Extension office, from here we send them to get tested by the NC Department of Agriculture. Currently, the agronomic lab is in their peak season for sample submissions so there is a \$4 fee per sample. Testing tells us what nutrients, such as phosphorus and potassium, are available for the specific plants or crops we want to grow. Soil testing also quantifies our soil's pH and provides us with a baseline of the amount of nutrients we need to add to grow a successful crop. Soil testing allows us to fine tune our fertility plans so we don't overapply nutrients which can be costly during periods of high fertilizer prices.

Don't Skimp on the Lime- Although fertilizer prices have increased significantly over the last year, the price of agricultural lime, which is used to raise the soil pH, has remained relatively steady. Since the vast majority of our soils are acidic, applying the recommended amount of lime will bring the soil pH up to the desired range for our crops or pastures which is typically 6-6.5. Research has shown time and time again that greater amounts of plant nutrients are available when the soil pH is in the ideal range compared to soils with a lower pH.

Using manures- Another option to curb the sting of the fertilizer bill is to utilize animal manures. Poultry litter is one of the most common animal waste nutrients in North Carolina and when used responsibly it can serve as an effective plant nutrient source for pastures. Animal manures can vary in their availability of nutrients between sources so it is always good to submit a sample and have it analyzed for nutrient concentrations. This process is also carried by the NCDA and shares the sample principles as soil testing.

Planting legumes- Legumes are plants that convert atmospheric nitrogen into plant available nitrogen with the help of soil bacteria called rhizobia. When planted as a cover crop or in pastures some of this nitrogen will contribute to the following crops. Due to their low fiber and high protein content, legumes can be incorporated in pastures to increase forage quality which boosts livestock performance. Common legumes that can be grown in our area during the fall are: clover species (crimson, white, arrowleaf), hairy vetch, and winter pea. In the summer legumes such as cowpea, soybean, peanut, and sunhemp can be successfully grown. All of these plants ultimately contribute some nitrogen back to our soils which can help cut down the fertilizer bill.

As fertilizer prices stay on a steady upswing, now is the time for livestock farmers to begin implementing some practices to weather high fertilizer prices. If you have any questions about pasture production, please contact your county Extension office for assistance.

Livestock and Cold Weather

By: Paul Gonzalez, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Sampson County

The recent cold, dreary, rainy day we just experienced is a good reminder that we need to give our livestock a little extra attention during inclement weather. Animals such as hogs, turkeys, and chickens that are housed in buildings will need some attention, but the main focus today is livestock housed outside. Of course, those of you with poultry outside will want to take some precautions as well.

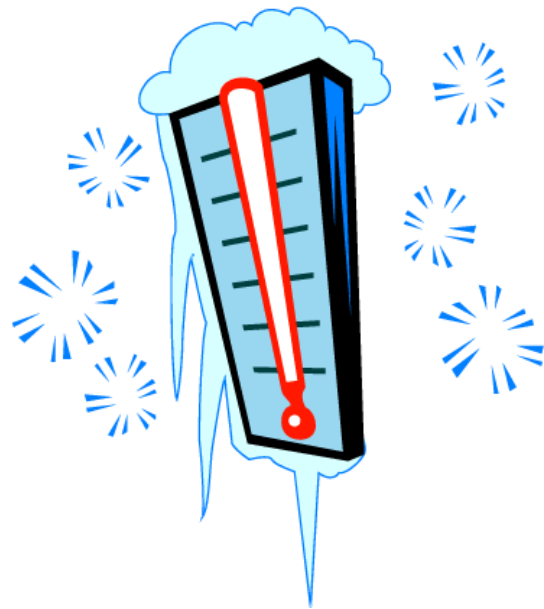
Cattle will use a shed or shelter if the weather is bad enough but really prefer a windbreak or area of woods to shelter them from the weather. Goats can get by with just a windbreak or wooded area but will definitely use, and prefer, a building or shelter of some sort. Generally, horse owners prefer to give their animals access to a barn or stall during bad weather. While this isn't absolutely necessary, some protection from the elements is recommended because horses do tend to be a little more sensitive to weather extremes.

Livestock nutritional requirements can increase significantly during cold weather and even more if it's wet and windy. Each species has their own lowest critical temperature. This is the lowest temperature a dry animal can tolerate without additional energy demands to support normal body temperature. Energy requirements for an animal with a dry, full winter coat increase one percent for every degree the wind chill temperature falls below the lowest critical temperature. Energy requirements increase by two percent for every degree the wind chill temperature drops below the animal's lowest critical temperature if their coat is wet. The accepted standard for cattle with a dry, full winter coat is 32 degrees Fahrenheit, 18 degrees F if the cattle have an extra heavy coat. That same animal with a wet coat now has a lowest critical temperature of 60 degrees F!

A key point to remember is that all of the species can get through some pretty rough weather with modest shelter as long as they have access to plenty of feed and hay. Ruminant animals produce heat from the digestion of forage. Horses not as much---since they are not ruminants, thus the need for a little more protection. A cow and goat consuming quality forage can generate am-

ple heat to stay warm, especially if they are out of the wind and have somewhere relatively dry to bed down. An animal lying on extremely wet ground or bedding can be expected to lose a lot of heat to the cold ground. During times of extreme weather, the addition of some grain to the diet to increase energy intake will help facilitate temperature maintenance.

One other point to remember --- water. I'm sure we will all have had to bust some ice a time or two this year. We need to realize that just keeping the water flowing may not be enough. If you were living outside in thirty-degree weather, would you want to drink nearly frozen water? Animals may not consume adequate amounts of water when the water is extremely cold. Keep this in mind if you use water hoses or exposed lines and open tanks to water livestock. I know it may be impossible to do anything in some case but there are options for keeping water tanks open and useable.



Where are all the Youth Showmen?

By: Tracy Blake, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Montgomery County

How many of you have found yourself asking this very question at the show pen? Where are all of the FFA jackets and 4-H clovers? Why are the same kids competing in every division? To better understand the current state of youth stock shows in North Carolina, we need to look at some agricultural history and statistics.

The year 1920 was a tipping point for American Agriculture. This was the year that urbanization resulted in more Americans living in cities than in rural areas. Just over 100 years later, the trend has continued and the gap has widened. According to 2020 census data, only 57.23 million Americans live in rural areas compared to the 272.91 million living in urban areas. Of those 57.23 million rural Americans, only 2.02 million own farms. These numbers indicate that only 17.34% of Americans live in rural areas and less than 1% are involved in production agriculture.

On the state level, North Carolina is more rural than the average US state, but according to 2020 census data, 57% of the population is classified as living in urban areas. With only 52,000 farms and a population of over 10 million people, less than half a percent of North Carolinians participate in production agriculture.

What does all this data mean for youth showmen? Less family farms and less access to livestock have resulted in a decline in youth interest and participation in stock shows. **Agri-culture** is aptly named, as it truly is a “**culture**.” There was a time when many non-farming youth knew at least one person at school living on a farm and thus made connections to the agricultural community. However, most youth today grow up completely outside that culture. Agriculture education, 4-H, and FFA still exist, but there is a steady decline in teachers qualified to teach these subjects. Many programs are small and unable to reach the majority of youth in their schools and communities. This issue is multi-generational, with most parents of youth having the same disconnect and being unable to support their youth's interest in animal agriculture. Without a personal connection, youth are not seeking opportunities to participate in stock shows.

In addition to this agricultural disconnect, many youth are living in housing that is not suitable to raise livestock. In 2019, the average lot size in the southeast was .2 acres. Many town and city ordinances do not allow animals within city limits. Without space or zoning on their side, youth are forced to house their livestock elsewhere if they wish to participate in shows.

Though the data suggests we have barriers to overcome, there is a lot we can do to support youth showmen. The future of the livestock industry relies on youth finding their passion for animal agriculture. Adults with a connection to the livestock industry need to help. If you own livestock and don't have youth at home to show your stock, make a connection at the local middle or high school. Invite youth to come out to your farm or offer to come speak at the school. Connect with the local 4-H to recruit youth showmen or conduct livestock interest programs. Offer to sponsor FFA chapters so that they can raise their show animals at school. Work with local leadership to change town ordinances so that youth can house livestock in town for show purposes.

We are not going to protect our future interests by waiting on youth to come to us, we must seek out opportunities to engage with them. Anyone who has showed an animal knows the impact it has had on their life and likely remembers the person that inspired them to enter the ring for the first time.

As we kick off the New Year, I challenge each of you to recruit one new showman this year. Let's make 2022 the year we grow youth stock shows in North Carolina.

Sources

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<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/2020-census-main.html>