

Harnett County Center

# Livestock News

October 2021



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NC State Extension works in tandem with N.C. A&T State University, as well as federal, state and local governments, to form a strategic partnership known as N.C. Cooperative Extension.

## The AgVentures Grant is Back!

NC AgVentures Farmer Grant Program will award grants up to \$8,000.

**Deadline for applications is 8pm December 15th, 2021.**

NC AgVentures is an NC State Extension program that provides grants to NC farmers and Community Groups for new and innovative agricultural project ideas that will increase farm profits. The program, which is supported by the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, will award a minimum of 40 grants to Independent family farms. This is a great opportunity for any producer who is thinking of diversifying, improving, or expanding their operation.

## 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 Classes and Updates**

*By: Eve Honeycutt, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Lenoir and Greene Counties*

### **Upcoming Classes for Animal Waste Management Credits:**

#### **ONLINE CLASS**

November 16 from 9am -12 pm

Go link for zoom registration - [go.ncsu.edu/oicnov16](https://go.ncsu.edu/oicnov16)

1 hour weather recording - Steve Pfaff, National Weather Service

30 minute safety - Robin Tutor, NC Agromedicine Institute

30 min hay management

1 hour Mortality Composting

#### **ONLINE CLASS**

December 7 from 1-4 pm

Go link [go.ncsu.edu/oicdec7](https://go.ncsu.edu/oicdec7)

applied for 2 hours of X pesticide credit

30 min - Farm inspection - Sam Edwards, NC Soil and Water

30 min - Changing Cropping system Recording - Stefani Kulesza

1 hour fly and rodent control

30 min on rodent control - Eve Honeycutt

30 min on fly control - Dr. Wes Watson

1 hour Weed id/control - Dan Wells

#### **FACE TO FACE CLASSES: All are 6 hour classes**

November 16 - Hoke - contact Liz Joseph 910-875-3461

November 17- Onslow- contact Melissa Huffman 910-455-5873

November 23 - Cumberland - contact Liz Joseph 910-321-6860

December 7- Duplin- contact Amanda Hatcher 910-296-2143

December 8- Wayne- contact Stefani Sykes 919-731-1520

December 9- Bladen- contact Becky Spearman 910-862-4591

December 10- Greene- contact Eve Honeycutt 252-521-1706

December 14- Sampson- contact Max Knowles 910-592-7161

December 16- Lenoir- contact Eve Honeycutt 252-521-1706

December 17- Duplin- contact Amanda Hatcher 910-296-2143

#### **Reminders:**

Sludge Survey- every year

Irrigation Calibration- every 2 years

Soil Samples- every 3 years

## A Case Against Calving Ease

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

I'm sure when you saw the title for this article you probably wrinkled your forehead and thought, "that man has lost what is left of his mind! First he likes Salers cattle, then he starts touting the wonders of bahia grass, and now he thinks we don't need calving ease". Well before you totally write me off, all I ask is that you finish the article and give it some thought. Then if you still think I am nuts, so be it!

First of all, I am not saying we don't need any calving ease at all. I am simply saying that calving ease is probably pushed too far. Case in point, I know a producer who has used calving ease bulls for years. I won't mention names and I hope he doesn't mind me using him as an example but it proves my point very well. He buys them for use on heifers and then rolls them over to his cow herd. He then keeps heifers sired by these calving ease bulls and breeds them to calving ease bulls. The cycle is perpetuated year after year and now he has finer boned, thinner muscled calves and his weaning weights are a good 60 to 100 pounds below what they were ten years ago. Perhaps that just means I have failed him as an Extension Agent but none the less, those are the facts.

So, what do I mean when I say we don't need as much calving ease? First, calving ease doesn't mean a bull with a minus EPD for birth weight. Theoretically, any EPD below average would be considered calving ease. In my opinion, a producer should purchase bulls that still have some growth potential while minimizing calving difficulties. I don't know why but pulling calves has become a stigma. It seems as though people are ashamed to say they pulled a calf. Pulling two or three calves a season should be rather commonplace. That just means you are pushing your herd to perform for you. And in truth, a mature cow that can't have an 80 pound or larger calf really doesn't need to be around anyway.

When breeding heifers keep in mind that they need to be pushed a little too. Don't try to make them have hundred pound babies but don't make it easy with 60 pounders either. Choose bulls that have acceptable growth numbers coupled

with a good calving ease direct (CED) EPD. If no CED value is available, stay between 0 and breed average. Ideally, you would AI your heifers to a bull with proven calving ease and growth performance but I know not everyone is willing to take that step. If not, try to use bull like mentioned above. Bulls with some growth and moderate calving ease. As I heard the ABS rep say, "if your bull adds two pounds to your calf's birth weight, is that really gonna make a difference?"

Also, when buying bulls for use on heifers, consider them a cost of doing business. Don't roll them over to the cow herd. Unless you get lucky and he proves to be a true curve bender bull you will just be causing problems down the road. I suggest buying good moderately priced bulls and use them two or three years and then move them on. Buy more heifer bulls to replace them. Buy growth bulls for your cows. Spend your money there to buy bulls that will give good replacement heifers but still provide excellent growth potential for their calves. These are the bulls that you should invest in and keep for many seasons, not the heifer bulls.

Finally, don't go overboard the other way either. You do need for them to be able to have the calves. Using a bull with an extremely large birth weight EPD could pose problematic in some cows. I have one that has a 90 plus pound calf every year when all the others average about 80 pounds. All from the same bull. So using a bull with a hefty EPD on her might be asking for trouble. Know your cows and know what they can handle. Push them but don't push them over the edge. You may find your cows are capable of more than you think. And those extra pounds at weaning time will add up when you go to the sale. Still think I have lost my mind? As always, if you would like to debate this topic further or have any other questions, feel free to call me at the office, 910-592-7161.

## Strategic Marketing of Goats

By: Kelly McCaskill, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Moore County

If you are in the goat world, you may have noticed the current market for small ruminants has never been better, but you can still take some strategic steps to try and steer your production to have what people want at the times when they want it. Dr Luginbuhl, formerly of NCSU, put together this helpful list of ethnic holidays that traditionally use goat in their celebration and what type of goat they look for. To view the entire document which includes a calendar and an in-depth explanation of the listed holidays click here >>> <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/consider-breeding-your-does-to-target-ethnic-holidays>

Taken from Consider Breeding Your Does to Target Ethnic Holidays Where Goat Meat Is Part of the Traditional Holiday Feast

### Western or Roman Easter

Type of goat wanted - Fleshy, milk fed kids with relatively light-colored meat, 3 months old or younger. Kids weighing less than 20 lbs. are generally disappointing to buyers due to low meat to bone ratios and high carcass drying losses. Kids gaining less than 10 lbs. per month or 1/3rd pound per day after accounting for birth weight are generally not fleshy enough to be considered prime. There generally is a slight price (per lb. of live weight) penalty for kids weighing over 40 lbs. Acceptable weights generally range from 20 to 50 lbs. with 30 lbs. considered optimum by most buyers.

### Eastern or Greek Easter

Type of goat wanted - Similar to Western Easter kids. A slightly larger milk fed kid (i.e., around 35 lbs.) is considered optimum.

### Cinco (5) de Mayo - Mexican Celebration

Type of goat wanted - Cabrito and larger goats

**Start of Ramadan (Muslim)** - can vary by a day depending on the actual sighting of the moon over the United States that year

Type of goat wanted - male and female kids with all their milk teeth (i.e., not older than @ 12 months). Males can be whole or castrated. Overly fat kids are discriminated against. Optimum live weight is about 60 lbs. but weaned kids from

45 - 120 lbs. are accepted by different buyers.

**Id al Fitr (Muslim)** - The Festival of the Breaking of the Ramadan Fast.

Type of goat wanted - same as for Ramadan.

**Id al Adha (Muslim)** - The Islamic Festival of Sacrifice.

Type of goat wanted - Prefer yearlings (i.e. animals with one set of adult teeth) that are blemish free. Animals with broken horns, open wounds, torn ears or physically unsound generally do not meet the criteria. In some cases, castrated animals or lambs with docked tails are frowned upon.

**Other holidays** when goat meat is commonly consumed include Christmas, the July 4th weekend, and the numerous Caribbean holidays in August - Carnival, Carifest, Jamaican Independence Day, etc.

The Christmas market is for milk-fed kids. These types of kids are rare, because these kids must be produced by out-of-season breeding in May for October kiddings. Kids as light as 18 lbs. are readily accepted and quality control is generally not as exacting as on Easter kids.

Goats for July 4th weekend are animals suitable for barbecue, generally cabrito kids or young bucks, does, and wethers with 1 or no sets of adult teeth.

Optimal goats for the Caribbean holidays are young, smelly 60 lb. bucks. However, older animals of all sexes are often in demand and customers may prefer to buy them rather than pay the extra price for prime young bucks.

The Chinese market for goat according to Frank Pinkerton, PhD, is "limited to the six colder months. The preferred weight range is 60 to 80 pounds live, and goats in good health are required."

The Hispanic market for goat is for 20 to 35 lb. live weight milk-fed kids for cabrito, and larger animals for seco de chivo.



## Dry Lots in Winter

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

With fall and winter approaching, this is the perfect time to talk about dry lots and what they can do for your horse pastures. The term “dry lot” refers to a space that has very little or no vegetation, a water source, and shelter.

In cattle operations, dry lots are commonly used for pasture preservation. Livestock producers can use these smaller paddock areas if their pastures need a rest or if they are waiting for new pasture growth to occur. In the winter, this can help prevent mud accumulation and compacted soil. For our horses, this is important. Muddy conditions can cause problems, like thrush, hoof abscesses, hoof cracks, and pastern dermatitis. Thrush is a bacterial and fungal infection of the soft tissues of the foot that results in the degeneration of the frog, left untreated it will penetrate the sensitive layers of the foot and cause lameness. Hooves will absorb water and become very soft in wet and muddy conditions. If the feet dry out quickly, the hoof may contract rapidly, resulting in hoof wall or sole cracks. Hoof infection and subsequent abscesses may occur when bacteria in the environment penetrate the cracks. The soles of horse's feet contract and expand, as does the hoof wall, but the sole periodically exfoliates. Persistent muddy conditions and wet-dry cycles may cause some horses to lose more sole than is normal, resulting in thin, sensitive soles. Overgrown hooves are at greater risk for cracking and infection. Less mud means less compacted soil and more pasture growth in the spring and summer. Compacted soil, especially in heavy-use areas, reduces aeration of the soil so any precipitation will sit on the surface; this causes the mud holes and non-vegetated areas we are used to using near gates and feeders.

During the winter, and wet fall, having a dry lot, can help prevent these problems in all of your pastures (since you are confining the mud and compaction to one area instead of all pastures) and can mean lusher pastures in the spring. While the idea sounds simple, it does require a bit of planning. You need to make sure the area can support the amount of horses you want to put in it—400 ft<sup>2</sup> per horse is the minimum amount of space required—and you want it to be

relatively close to the barn—you will probably be moving horses in and out in some colder weather and you'll be feeding a lot of hay. Shelter is imperative, as with any pasture area. A three-sided shed or lean-to is sufficient in a dry lot and a 12X12 lean to should accommodate 1-2 horses easily. Of course, the more horses you have, the bigger the shelter needs to be!

A water source is key, again in any pasture. If you spread these areas out, food in one place, shelter in another, you can somewhat control the movement of your horses. This can help decrease the total compaction of the soil or hopefully prevent huge mud holes from forming. Directing the rain water away from high-traffic areas is important to prevent the mud problem. Stone or gravel may be required in these areas to reduce erosion as well. Crush and run covered by screenings, ground limestone or gravel can provide some footing help and eliminates some of the mud.

Manure and old hay should be removed as needed, ideally every 1-3 days. Be sure your horses have enough hay since there is little to no vegetation in the dry lot, especially in the fall and winter. By using this one area, a sacrifice area, you should see improvement in your pastures. It may not look pretty, and it will take some extra work, but in the end your pastures (and your horses) will thank you for it!



## Want Grass for Your Livestock Year-Round?

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

If you own livestock, you have probably noticed a steady increase in feed costs over the last five or six months. Without getting deep into economics, there has been an increase in global demand of commodities, especially soybean meal and corn, which is used in most livestock feeds. This increase in demand has created a supply deficit which ultimately drives up the price of your animal's feed. If you're feeling the pinch of feed prices, a change in pasture management can help ease the cost of feeding your livestock through the winter. That management change sounds simple: Growing more grass by utilizing cool season forages as we go into the winter months.

Livestock owners blessed with bermudagrass pastures will be also be stocking up on hay to feed throughout the winter months when pasture growth slows. With the increase in diesel fuel prices, winter hay feeding will become a costly chore, especially if you have large amounts of livestock. Additionally, hay does not always meet your animals' nutritional needs and usually requires supplementation with grain-based feeds. Planting cool season annuals for forage production will also help cut your hay bill while reducing the amount of hay you have lug around every morning and evening.

**What to Plant?** Because of our relatively mild winters, there are several options of cool season forages to choose from! The staple of cool season forages are small grains which include oats, rye, wheat and triticale. Under proper fertilization, these grasses produce a large amount of growth throughout the fall and early spring. Another commonly planted grass is annual ryegrass. Although growth is low in the fall, annual ryegrass makes quality forage from March into May when cereal grains begin to mature and become less palatable. Other forages that can be utilized are legumes such as clovers, and winter peas. These species are generally high in crude protein and contain high levels of digestible nutrients. If legumes are going to be used, it is recommended they are planted as a companion crop with small grains, such as rye. Consuming large amounts of clover has the potential to cause bloat in cattle and goats which can be

deadly.

**When to Plant?** In our region, most cool season annual forages perform the best when they are planted between late September and late October. They can be planted successfully into November but productivity will be low until the early spring.

**How to Plant?** Before planting any crop, it is recommended that soil collect soil samples from your pastures and bring it to the Extension office where it will be sent for testing by the NC Department of Agriculture. This tells us what nutrients are available and lacking in the soil. Fertilizer recommendations are calculated so that amendments can be made to the soil. Making these amendments will help get your forages up and growing.

Establishing cool season annuals into dormant bermudagrass is called "overseeding". This is achieved by a couple of methods. The first is using a no-till grain drill. Which is a tractor drawn implement that cuts slits into the ground and plants the seeds. No-till drills can be expensive and are cost prohibited on small farms. To help with getting annuals established, there is an option to rent a no till drill. This is usually available through your local Soil and Water or NC Cooperative Extension office. A second alternative is broadcasting seed with a spreader and dragging the ground to help the seed contact the soil. This is a much cheaper option but seed germination is lower compared to using a no till drill so higher seeding rates are sometimes needed. Regardless of the method you choose make sure existing grass and weeds are grazed or mowed down to two inches so the seed can reach the soil.

While planting cool season annuals may not fit into everyone's management plan, it is a great option to keep feed costs down while increasing the productivity of your pastures. If you have any questions concerning pasture management or forage selection please contact your local Extension agent.

## LED Light Bulbs and Dimmer Compatibility

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

By now most poultry producers have switched to LED lights and the energy savings have been pretty significant. LED bulbs are longer lasting reducing the need for replacement, but lately many poultry growers have started seeing an increase in premature bulb failures and or loss of lumen output. While there are many reasons bulbs may fail; such as using bulbs not designed for the poultry house environment, where high temperatures, humidity and dust can cause overheating; corroded or damaged keyless sockets and wiring can also cause poor performance and premature failure. Mississippi State University has conducted independent research that indicates the likely cause of many of these failures not related to those issues is due to dimmer compatibility with LED bulbs.

There are two main ways dimmers are designed to work, both cut off a portion of the sine wave created by the Alternating Current. Leading edge or forward-phase dimmers cut the front part of the wave off and are popular because they are easier to design and build, but can create current spikes that are likely the main issue with LEDs. These types of dimmers were designed to work with incandescent bulbs and fairly large voltage loads; which is why some of the older ones would require an incandescent bulb be installed at each end of the light circuit to generate enough current to operate properly when switching to LEDs. Trailing edge dimmers or reverse-phases cut the back portion of the sine wave and do not produce the current spikes or need high voltage loads to operate efficiently and were designed to work with low voltage LEDs.

If you are experiencing premature failure or low light output from your LEDs it may be a dimmer compatibility issue, as LED technology improves and changes sometimes dimmers that may have worked well with bulbs 3-5 years ago do not work with more recent models. To learn more about this issue check out: Issues with Poultry House LED Lamps and Light Dimmers, at

<http://extension.msstate.edu/publications/issues-poultry-house-led-lamps-and-light-dimmers>

It is also recommended to use LED Bulbs from the same manufacture as different manufacturers may use different drivers and technology for bulbs of the same type. Be sure to also use the same wattage and Kelvin rated bulbs to ensure uniform lighting levels throughout the house and to prevent current spikes or deficiencies to some bulbs.

