



N.C. Cooperative Extension
Davie County Center
180 South Main St., Ste. 210
Mocksville, NC 27028
P: 336.753.6100
davie.ces.ncsu.edu

N.C. Cooperative Extension
Yadkin County Center
2051 Agricultural Way, Ste. 201
Yadkinville, NC 27055
P: 336.849.7908
yadkin.ces.ncsu.edu

RUCKER'S RAMBLINGS
ANIMAL AGRICULTURE INFORMATION
LIVESTOCK, HORSES & FORAGE
SPRING 2022

Phillip Rucker, Jr.
Extension Agent, Agriculture-Livestock

CATTLE PRODUCERS MEETING: There will be a Cattle Producers meeting for Davie and Yadkin producers, Thursday, May 5th, at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Yadkin County Agricultural and Educational Building in Yadkinville. The program will cover: Herd Health for Production and Marketing. Topics will be Cattle Vaccinations, The Difference in Live, Modified Live and Killed Vaccines, Why Buyers Want Modified Live, How to Transition to Modified Live. We will also discuss a little on Deworming and External Parasite Control. Matt Hannah with Merck Animal Health will be presenting the program. Come listen to Matt and have your herd health questions ready so Matt can help you understand why good herd health is imperative to a good producing herd. We have been discussing marketing and herd health is so important to your marketing plan. Herd health is becoming much more important to buyers so it's time to add value to what you market.

There is a sponsored meal so **PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS by 12:00 NOON on MONDAY, MAY 2.** Please contact the Extension Office, Davie (753-6100) or Yadkin (849-7908) or email phil_rucker@ncsu.edu to make your reservation or for more information. **The caterer has asked for this deadline** so enough food can be prepared.

Food will be ordered based on reservations. SO if you plan to attend, Call In Your Reservation. If You Call In, **PLEASE Make Every Effort To Attend** So There Won't Be Unclaimed Meals.

I know we are busy this time of year BUT this is a VERY IMPORTANT topic, if you are serious about marketing cattle instead of just selling them. It will be worth your time to attend this meeting. Many local producers have requested a meeting on this topic so now is your time to get your questions answered.

Special accommodations will be made for the physically disabled, vision, or hearing impaired person upon request. If special accommodations are required, please call Phil Rucker at 753-6100 or 849-7908, a week before the event.

CATTLE MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

Producers have discussed putting together truckload lots of calves to market to order buyers. These calves needed to be similar in size, body type, weight, condition and prefer all the same sex. Lots of talk but the loads never transpired. With cattle prices where they are, input costs climbing and the need to add value to your calves has never been more important, a group of producers are asking for individuals interested in beginning talks again about marketing truckloads. Will take some time to organize, see what calves are available and if there is enough numbers to accomplish this goal. The group is trying to ask and see what interest there might be. Comingling calves allows producers with smaller herds to market their calves in larger loads creating more value for everyone's calves. Right now we are gathering names of interested producers and one day soon, we will get together and start making plans. Contact me if you have an interest.



****UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:** Make plans to attend these educational opportunities

DAVIE MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE: The Davie County Master Gardeners will hold their annual plant sale on Friday, May 6. This is a great time to purchase a wide variety of healthy plants to decorate your landscape and get some wonderful presents for Mother's Day. All proceeds are used to support the Master Gardeners and their projects. The sale will run from 8:00AM till 1:00 PM at the Masonic Picnic Grounds, 201 Poplar St., behind the Brock Center in Mocksville. Call the Davie Extension Center at 336/753-6100 for more information.

SAVE THE DATE - MEAT BIRD PRODUCTION WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS - August 25, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.;
NC A&T Research Farm Pavilion, Greensboro. This in person workshop will cover the basics of meat bird production including establishing your operation, caring for and protecting your flock, and profitability and sustainability. Registration will be opening soon. Spaces limited.

HORSE MANAGEMENT TIPS: Spring is here and summer is not far behind. Warm weather calls for management practices to help keep horses healthy and ready for those pleasurable riding experiences. Grass will soon be actively growing and full of nutrition. Talk with your veterinarian about the possibility of nutrition issues to reduce the risks of digestion, hoof or obesity problems. The age, size and activity of your horse goes a long way in determining the nutritional needs.

Be careful grazing your horses this spring. The insulin resistant horse or a horse prone to laminitis or gastric issues is at a higher health risk during periods of lush grass growth. During photosynthesis, grass makes fructane (simple carbohydrate) all day while the sun is shining. High levels of fructans can cause hoof and other issues. At night, those fructans are used by the grass to grow or are stored in the root system. Thus, you can decrease the risks by grazing during the night and early morning while fructan levels are lower. During periods of lush growth, two options are to stable the horse during the day or maybe use poly-wire temporary cross fencing, allowing only a little fresh grass each day. This will help limit free access to pasture during lush growth. Using a grazing muzzle during daytime turnout would help reduce the risks also. Seek advice from your veterinarian, on this issue and the potential risk for your horse. Make sure your horse receives their daily nutritional requirements if you implement limited grazing. Low risk horses are better able to digest these sugars and are less prone to their effects

Have your horse updated on all necessary vaccinations if not already done. Mosquito season is not far off and these pesky insects carry numerous diseases that can be transmitted to horses. Spring is also a good time to deworm your horse. Contact the Extension Center or your veterinarian for more information on these management practices, forages, pasture management and other equine production issues.

NEEDING, BUYING & SELLING HAY: The wacky weather of 2021 and the start of 2022 along with higher input costs, has many folks wondering if they will make enough hay or can purchase enough for the upcoming year. It would be wise to survey stored hay resources and try to make contact with suppliers to organize your hay needs. This is the year to be proactive.

GRASS TETANY: When the grass starts to turn green and grow, grass tetany is a threat, especially to cows nursing calves. Magnesium in commercial mineral supplements (10% magnesium) or home mixtures should be provided. Your goal is to get one ounce of magnesium oxide in the cow each day. Also a mixture of 3 lbs. magnesium oxide with 97 lbs. of grain or protein supplement fed at 2 lbs. per head per day will work. Start feeding high magnesium now, if not already. It takes a while to build the levels high enough to resist grass tetany. It's not an overnight thing and good preparation can save you some headaches later on this spring.

HERD HEALTH TO-DO LIST FOR LIVESTOCK

- * Vaccinate equine (horses, donkeys, mules) against West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis and other issues your veterinarian recommends. Take precautions to minimize standing water where mosquitoes breed.
- * Feed cattle a COMPLETE mineral mix with Hi-Magnesium (10%) to help prevent grass tetany.
- * Check pastures for toxic plants/trees. Treat accordingly. Repair fences, barns & chutes to reduce injury risk.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT TIPS

- * Plan your war against flies now. Use the most cost effective method for your operation.
- * Think about weeds that were a problem and make plans to control them in 2021.
- * Reduce stocking rates to reduce stress on grass and improve forage vigor.
- * Keep a close eye on ALL livestock grazing lush forage growth for potential problems.
- * Use good judgment. Read labels when returning livestock to pastures that were fertilized or treated for weeds.
- * Work on hay equipment now instead of when you need it.

ATTENTION: TO FARMERS WITH DEER DEPREDATION PERMITS

The NC Wildlife Commission has changed what is required from farmers receiving depredation permits for deer in certain counties due to the first positive Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) case in North Carolina, detected in Northern Yadkin County in March 2022, from a deer harvested by a hunter during December 2021. Farmers who have depredation permits for deer must submit the heads of any deer harvested on their land. To help manage CWD, sampling efforts are vital to determine the prevalence and distribution of the disease. So, in Alleghany, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Iredell, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin County we are requiring all heads from deer harvested under depredation permits be given to NC Wildlife Resources Commission staff for testing. Go to the press release [Wildlife Commission Announces First CWD-Positive Deer in North Carolina - N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission \(ncwildlife.org\)](#) Attached is a flyer explaining what parts of the deer are needed and names and phone numbers of wildlife officers in the area to answer your questions. Or go to [ncwildlife.org](#) for additional information.

AVOID HAY BARN FIRES

Hay making time is upon us, so it is time to not only think about harvesting, but also plans for long-term storage. Spring rains can rush farmers in the hay making process and bale hay a little wetter than normal and with this the possibility of spontaneous combustion and fires increases drastically. Hay fires usually occur within six weeks of baling but can happen at any time, even up to two months after hay has been placed in the barn.

They can occur with any “style” of hay: small bales, large bales, stacks, stored inside or outside. Hay baled with high moisture content provides the optimal condition for bacterial growth. As these bacteria multiply, they release heat into the bale. The higher the moisture, the longer the bale will remain at a high temperature which increases the chance for fire. Hay stored with moisture content above 20-25 percent favors the growth of fungi. These organisms generate heat due to their metabolic activity and can increase hay temperatures up to 150 degrees F. Once hay heats beyond this point, chemical reactions take over and can increase temperatures to the point of spontaneous combustion. With “wet” hay packed tightly in bales and stacked together in large quantities, fires are very possible. Whether the hay in this situation actually starts to burn or not depends mostly on the size of the stack and the material surrounding it.

If hay is stacked loose and sufficient cooling occurs at the same rate as the heat is generated, the hay may simply caramelize and turn brown or simply mold. However, if there is enough hay on the outside part of the hot spots to prevent the escape of the heat, and the carbon, nitrogen, oxygen and moisture levels are right, a fire will eventually occur due to spontaneous combustion.

Measuring Temperatures: If you suspect that your hay may be heating up, the temperature can be measured and monitored by using the following process: Drive a pointed two inch pipe into a hay bale and lower a thermometer on a string down into the pipe. Wait 10-15 minutes for the temperature to stabilize then pull out and read the thermometer. Repeat in several bales. If a thermometer is not handy, drive a solid rod or pipe into the center of the bale and after 15-20 minutes withdraw the rod and if it is too hot to hold in your hand, the situation is critical. The temperature should be determined and appropriate action taken.

Actions to Take: If temperatures are below 140 degrees F there is not any danger, unless it is early in the process. When the temperature is between 140-160 degrees F, you need to check bales on a daily basis. If temperatures rise above 160 degrees F, check it every two-three hours and prepare to move the hay from the building and spread out so that air can get around the bales.

If the temperature reaches 180 degrees F, notify the fire department, insurance company if the building is insured, and remove all equipment and/or animals from the area. With fire equipment on hand (not just a fire extinguisher), remove bales to the outside and do not stack, place in rows for easy access. During removal, be alert for burned out cavities. Also, hay under these conditions may flame up as fresh air strikes it or smolder in a pile for weeks. If bales ignite, soak with water and force some water into the center of the bales. If the bales do not ignite, try to save the hay by allowing the bales to simply cool down. Continue to monitor the internal temperature of the bales. The hay may be put back in the building after temperatures drop below 100 degrees F.

Prevention:

- The best way to prevent a hay fire is to bale at a 20% or lower moisture content. The microbial activity significantly decreases when the moisture content is lower. Some ways to decrease the moisture content in your hay include: baling under appropriate conditions, using proper equipment, and possibly using hay preservatives. Baling under appropriate conditions is one of the most effective ways to prevent moisture buildup. The recommended time frame for baling is later in the day, having a slight wind, and humidity of 50% or less.
- Separate wet bales or those with uncured hay in them and store outside. You may need to bust the bale so that additional ventilation and drying can occur. Check these bales periodically for heat buildup.
- Do not store hay with moisture content above 30 percent unless treated with a preservative.

This year, input costs are higher resulting in hay being more valuable. You don't want it to catch on fire, loose valuable hay and especially not burn down your barn. Take the time to check the moisture and make sure you don't burn up a hay supply that might be a little short this year anyway.

FLIES AFFECT EVERYONE: Flies are attracted to ALL livestock and poultry because manure and leftover feed are food sources for them. Flies can reduce animal performance as well as irritate human and animal alike. The recent weather has been pretty wet setting-up a potential banner year for flies. Make your battle plans now. Don't wait until the animals are covered, your outside activities are invaded or even worse, your neighbors complain and relationships might be strained. Please contact me for options to control flies before they become a major problem.

LOCAL SOIL & WATER DISTRICTS OFFER COST SHARE PROGRAMS

The Soil & Water Conservation Districts offer cost share programs to eligible farmers. There are some basic guidelines for each program and a deadline to submit an application. A flier is attached with several programs and descriptions. These programs are a great way to address conservation issues on your operation and add some improvements to your operation.

The application period for fiscal year 2023 is underway. Contact your local Soil & Water to discuss the program that fits your needs, get more information, see if you are eligible and submit an application.