Important Information

Stockpiled Grazing Demo
At Circle B Farms
March 15th, 10am

Improved grazing and winter feeding management has multiple benefits. This workshop will teach producers everything they need to know about stockpiling tall fescue for winter grazing and how to manage strip-grazing systems. The program will begin at White’s Chapel Church (1650 Low Bridge Rd., Liberty, NC) for the classroom portion of the program and lunch. From there we will travel to Mickey Bowman’s farm to see the stockpiled grazing demo. There will be a $5 fee to cover lunch. A van will be leaving from the Moore County office at 9:15am for those who want a ride. For more information or to RSVP, call the Moore County office at (910) 947-3188.

Horse Industry Referendum Vote!
March 15th
Moore Co. Ag Center, Carthage

Voting will occur between 8:30am and 5:00pm. For more information, see page 4 of the newsletter.

Horse Waste Composting Workshop
March 24th, 6:30 - 8:30pm

Composting and the use of compost offer several potential benefits including improved manure handling, enhanced soil fertility, and reduced environmental risk. This workshop will provide information on the scientific principals behind correct and efficient horse waste composting and compost use, as well as demonstrate several systems to better manage horse farm waste for both small and large farms alike. Results will also be presented from the on-farm composting trials conducted here in Moore County. To register for the class, please call the Moore County Extension Office at (910) 947-3188.

Beef Cattle Short-Course
March 15 - April 26

This spring Cooperative Extension in Moore, Randolph, and Chatham Counties will be offering a beef management short-course designed to improve productivity and profitability of North Carolina cattle operations. The classes will be held for 7 weeks, every Tuesday night from 6:30 - 8:30pm. Topics covered in the course will include farm management, cattle behavior and handling, reproduction and genetics, beef cattle nutrition, health management, forage production, and beef cattle marketing. Cost for the entire short-course is $30 and participants must pre-register. For more information and to register, contact Wanda Howe at (336) 318-6000.

For any meeting in this newsletter, persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate by contacting the County Extension Office where the meeting will be held by phone, email, fax or in person at least (7) days prior to the event.

Disclaimer - The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by North Carolina State University nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned.
Animal Waste Management

By: Becky Spearman, Livestock Extension Agent with NC Cooperative Extension in Bladen County

Inspection Issues

Keith Larick with the NC Division of Water Quality gave a presentation at the NC Pork Conference. He pulled information from their database on Notice of Violations (NOVs) since 2005 and compiled them by problem type. Below are some areas of concern:

- Records include incomplete or missing forms (IRR 1 & 2, freeboard, rainfall, crop yield, stocking), no Certificate of Coverage or Permit on site, or no OIC designation.
- Annual fees not paid or overdue.
- Improper Waste Application includes overloading on Plant available nitrogen (PAN), hydraulic overload, ponding, application on fields not in the certified animal waste management plan, and application outside of crop windows.
- Improper Operation & Maintenance (O&M) includes inadequate crop in sprayfield, irrigation equipment in poor condition, lagoon embankments in poor condition, missing or inadequate lagoon marker, failure to harvest crops.
- Sludge Survey not completed annually unless an extension is given.
- Calibration must be done every 2 years.
- Freeboard violations may result in Notices of Deficiency, unless the cause was deemed to be improper O&M based on rainfall, freeboard, and irrigation records.

He also noted some issues that do not usually receive a NOV, unless they are chronic issues. These included:

- Lagoon embankments
- Lime application - Permit requires that pH be maintained in the optimum range for crop production. In general, lime should be applied when soil report calls for over 1 Ton per acre. Keep records for inspector.
- Operator in Charge (OIC) – not receiving 6 hours credit every 3 years. If you don’t get your card, contact DWQ’s Technical Assistance and Certification Unit.
Selecting a Herd Sire

By: Dan Wells, Livestock Extension Agent with NC Cooperative Extension in Johnston County

For a cow-calf producer, selecting the next herd bull should require considerable thought and planning. The US Meat Animal Research Center estimates that 80 to 90 percent of the genetic improvement that takes place in a cattle herd is due to selecting sires that offer qualities needed in that herd. These days purebred breeders have a lot of tools at their disposal to provide information about the animals they are offering, and it can be difficult to wade through all the information available to determine what’s right for your herd. It’s important to evaluate your cow-herd and your recent calves to determine where they need the most improvement. Some areas to consider are size, muscling, soundness, udder characteristics, temperament, etc.

Usually the first decision to make is what breed of bull you want to use. It’s tempting to follow the trends, and the trend these days is certainly Angus. In the US last year there were more Angus cattle registered than the next six most popular breeds combined. But crossbreeding still has a place in the beef industry. Breeding to the same breed year after year will tend to move your herd toward the average of that breed. That may not be an improvement in all cases. Heterosis, or hybrid vigor, refers to the superior performance of a crossbred animal. Breed complementarity is the result of the strengths of one breed making up for weaknesses in another breed. British breeds, for example, are known to be early maturing, while the Exotics exhibit more aggressive growth, so crossing British and Exotic breeds often results in growthy calves with good fleshing ability. An example of this is the Angus/Charolais “smoky” calf. So one tried and true method of breed selection is to have cattle of a breed that match your environment, and select bulls of a breed to match the market.

EPD’s (Expected Progeny Difference) are measures of the expected performance of an animal’s offspring compared to other animals of the same breed. EPD’s are the most important tool available in examining herd sires. Most producers put a great deal of emphasis on selecting for low birth weight. This is important, because a large dead calf is worth a whole lot less than a small live calf. But it’s important to remember that often a bull with low birth weight EPD has lower EPD’s for weaning weight and yearling weight, as well. It’s also worth noting that smaller born calves are more prone to cold stress and starvation. Remember that older dams should be able to deliver calves with higher birth weights, so perhaps you might select a bull to breed to older cows that have a little higher birth weight, but also higher weaning weight or yearling weight EPD’s. You could expect to wean heavier calves, which means more pounds of calf to sell. Careful attention should certainly be paid to the birthweight of a bull used on heifers, but you are leaving money on the table if you breed all cows to a “heifer bull.” Having pelvic measurements of the cows in your herd can give you an idea of which animals should be capable of delivering larger calves.

It’s important to keep in mind that EPD’s are established for each breed relative to a base year for that breed’s average. So it’s not possible to directly compare birthweight, weaning weight, yearling weight EPD’s, etc. of one breed to another, because the breed averages are different. The US Meat Animal Research Center publishes adjustment factors to compare EPD’s across breeds, and these figures can be used to compare animals of different breeds on the same scale. With some experience using the adjustment factors a breeder should become comfortable in deciding on a range of values to consider in purchasing a bull for crossbreeding. Your Extension agent or a semen supplier should be able to provide a copy of the most recent crossbreed EPD table for you to use in selecting a bull for crossbreeding.

These are definitely not the only factors to consider in selecting a bull, but some of the most important. You should buy from a reputable breeder who has been in business for a substantial amount of time and selects for the traits you need in your herd. Cost is always a consideration, but a recent CattleFax survey indicated that the most profitable cattle producers spent more than the average on pasture leases, health products and herd bulls. The genetics of your next calf crop is a wise place to make a strong investment.
The Horse Industry Promotion Referendum will be conducted on March 15, 2011. North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service has assembled this fact sheet to inform horse owners of North Carolina about the Referendum.

Q. What is the Horse Industry Promotion Referendum?
   A. The Horse Industry Promotion Referendum is a vote by the horse owners of North Carolina as to whether they are willing to continue an assessment of $2.00 per ton of any commercial feed or supplements labeled for horse use (equivalent to 5 cents per 50 lb. bag).

Q. How was the Horse Industry Promotion Referendum established?
   A. The Horse Industry Promotion Referendum was established through House Bill 1529 - The Horse Industry Promotion Bill, which was passed by the North Carolina General Assembly on September 24, 1998.

Q. What is the purpose of the assessment?
   A. To provide funds to the North Carolina Horse Council for the purpose of promoting the interests of the North Carolina horse industry.

Q. What is the North Carolina Horse Council?
   A. The North Carolina Horse Council (NCHC) is the organization recognized as representing the interests of the horse owners in North Carolina.

Q. How would the assessment be collected?
   A. The assessment will be remitted by the feed manufacturer or distributor (not retailer) to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services who will in turn remit all funds collected to the North Carolina Horse Council.

Q. How long would the assessment be in effect?
   A. Three years.

Q. If the referendum passes, is it possible to receive a refund?
   A. Yes. The request must be submitted to the North Carolina Horse Council within one year of purchase and must be accompanied by proof of purchase.

If the vote is favorable on March 15, the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will continue to receive the assessment funds from manufacturers and/or distributors of horse feed, and will remit the money to the NC Horse Council. The Horse Council has indicated that the funds will be used for 4-H and other youth programs, REINS volunteer programs, trails advocacy, equine research, representation of horse interests in government, marketing programs, enforcement of horse laws, and improved public awareness of diseases and other threats to horses’ well-being.

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**Voting Details**

Date: March 15, 2011  
Time: 8:30am—5:00pm  
Polling Places: County Extension Centers  
Eligibility: Any North Carolina resident who has complete or partial ownership or lease of an equine (horse, pony, mule, donkey or hinny). Individuals must sign a statement of ownership/lease at time of voting.  
Age: Must have reached 9th birthday as of January 1, 2011.  
Ballot Specifics: “Yes” indicates a vote in favor of continuing the assessment. “No” indicates a vote against continuing the assessment.  
Absentee Voting: Until March 14, horse owners may visit or phone the County Extension Center and request a ballot and absentee registration form. These must be turned in to the Extension office by March 14, and will be counted along with others on March 15.
I had a call from a local goat producer who was ecstatic over the birth of four kids from one of his does. On a whole, it is pretty rare in goats and most sheep breeds for quads to occur. Dr. Niki Whitley, Extension Animal Science Specialist and Adjunct Associate Professor from A&T State University Cooperative Extension, said she saw a lot of quads and even some quints when she worked in Maryland. At the research farm, she had some really fertile Boer x Spanish crosses that were flushed for maximal ovulation rates and were in really good body condition scores before they were bred. Dr. Whitley also said that there are some sheep breeds, like Romanovs, that have quads and quints regularly. So as exciting as it is, a producer must be conscience of this rare event and be proactive to ensure the health of all the babies and the mother.

Dr. Whitley has some pointers that can be used for goats, sheep, and even hogs if you ever find yourself with quads or quint. First of all, when your doe has the kids, make sure each kid is actively nursing. Dr. Whitley once found success by putting a quad mom in a 10' x 10' pen inside a barn and allowing her to eat alfalfa/grass hay and grain, free choice. Start the mom out slowly on the feed, she points out, and increase the amount of hay and grain until the doe leaves some. When the kids get about three weeks old or once they are all strong and it is apparent they are starting to "fight" for milk because they are eating a lot, she recommends taking two kids out in the morning and letting them run around in the rest of the barn. Allow the two to run around the barn but stay close to the mom's pen. Then at night, switch out the two nursing kids for the ones who have been free to run around in the barn. Basically, this allows the doe to nurse only two at a time but still feed all four.

Dr. Whitley also recommends supplementing the ones that look hungry. Usually, once they get used to nursing a teat, they don't like the bottle unless you really work with them, and sometimes they would rather starve than nurse a bottle.

Some producers are proactive by removing the biggest kid off the doe and make it a bottle baby. This leaves the smaller/weaker ones on mom, because they usually do better, unless they are already too weak to fight enough for food. If you can leave bottle babies with other goats, they learn to eat solid food faster and are less of a "bother" as they grow, though they likely will be very friendly anyway. Whatever you do, make sure your doe gets plenty to eat. Remember to increase her food slowly over time so she doesn't get sick.

Dr. Whitley has used the following milk replacers but does not endorse one over the other or over ones not mentioned. She says that most common milk replacers work fine. She has used Merrick (Premier sheep supply), Sav-a-kid, and Land O'Lakes. Just make sure to follow the directions, and the kids usually will do fine on the replacers. An interesting note about Dr. Whitley’s rotating method is she actually came up with it when working with hogs. She had what she calls a “pig issue,” when two sows in a room both died after giving birth, but the sow in-between them survived. So she made two litters out of the three litters and had the babies share the remaining momma sow. Much to the surprise of Dr. Whitley, that sow raised over 30 babies! She was worried the sow would disregard the babies who had been taken away after each rotation. Sometimes we have to be inventive, but the main thing is to be proactive and watch the health of our animals and their young.

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**Forage Management Tips**

*From Production and Utilization of Pastures and Forages in North Carolina.*

**March**
- Fertilize cool-season grasses to increase production.
- Dig weed free bermudagrass sprigs and plant them before growth begins. Consider using a herbicide.
- Control winter annual weeds in dormant bermudagrass with herbicides, burning or grazing pressure.
- Watch for grass tetany as rapid grass growth and cool, wet weather prevails-supplement with high mag mineral.
- Scatter manure from areas where animals congregate.

**April**
- Fertilize cool-season grasses if not already done.
- Fertilize warm-season grasses when dormancy breaks.
- Establish hybrid bermudagrass unless irrigation is available.
- Plant crabgrass and switchgrass. Plant seeded varieties of bermudagrass at the end of the month.
- Graze cool season grasses down to 2-4”. Harvest for hay if growth is too rapid to maintain grazing pressure.
- Completely graze or harvest winter annuals before grazing other pastures.