

Livestock News

October/November/December 2014

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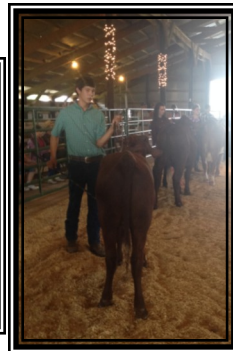


Moore County 4-H Heifer and Goat Show a Success!!

"Thank you to all the volunteers!"

Moore County Cooperative Extension and the Growing Farmers 4H Club hosted the Moore County 4H Heifer and Meat Goat Show on September 13, 2014 at the Moore County Agricultural Fair Grounds in Carthage, NC. The competition is part of the Farm Credit Showmanship Circuit; this circuit provides the youth with an opportunity to compete at shows throughout August, September, and October to work towards the title of best showman. There were more than 50 youth from counties across the state that came to present their projects to the judge. The youth were able to present their projects on heifers, meat goat does, and meat goat wethers.

There were seven members of the Growing Farmers 4H Club that competed in the show; *Rebecca Carson, Emily Carson, Kodi Johnson, Tyler Johnson, Camryn Johnson, Madison Adams and Austin Cameron.* Congratulations to the club members on a job well done!



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Farm Tax Exemption Number **Important !**

Effective **October 1, 2014** all old exemption numbers will be invalid. This process began on July 1, 2014 with the new House Bill 1050. If you qualify for a number you must reapply! The NCDOR website has the form and Frequently Asked questions.

<http://www.dornc.com/taxes/sales/farmers.html>

If you have questions please let me know!

- Please remember to look on the back page for upcoming meeting dates and educational opportunities!!!
- The **Moore County Cattleman's Association** is selling raffle tickets for a Browning shotgun to raise money for youth scholarships. If you or someone you know would like to purchase a ticket please see a member!

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Reproductive Management in Goats and Sheep

By: *Becky Spearman, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Bladen County from Reproductive Management in Sheep and Goats from Alabama Cooperative Extension*

This is the time of year that most goat and sheep producers are gearing up or have already started their breeding season. This article will focus on some basics of goat and sheep reproduction and preparing for the breeding season.

Puberty is the time when an animal reaches sexual maturity for the first time. The ages range from 5-12 months in ewe lambs, 5-7 months in ram lambs, 7-10 months in doe kids and 4-8 months in buck kids. Puberty is influenced by age, body weight, nutrition, breed, and season of birth. For example, spring born ewe lambs usually exhibit puberty earlier than fall born ewe lambs. Lambs and kids born early in the season reach puberty earlier than those born late in the season because of increased age and body weight. General recommendations are that young does or ewes reach 60-75% of their estimated mature weight before being bred.

Estrus or heat is the time when the female is sexually receptive to the ram or buck. Goats and sheep are seasonal breeders and most breeding seasons are August to January. Lambs and kids will be born January to June. Some breeds can breed year round. The estrous cycle is the length of time from one heat period to the next and there is a difference in the length for does and ewes. The average cycle for a doe is 21 days with a range of 18 to 22 days. The average cycle for a ewe is 17 days with ranges of 14 to 20 days. Estrus will last from 24 to 48 hours in does and 24 to 36 hours in ewes. Ovulation normally occurs towards the end of estrus. Ovulation times for does are 24 to 36 hours from the beginning of estrus and for ewes it is 24 to 27 hours from the beginning of estrus.

There are signs of estrus that you can look for in your breeding herd or flock. A doe is restless, bleats, urinates frequently, wags her tail, may not eat, rubs against other goats, stands to be mounted, and may have a red, swollen vulva with a mucous discharge. Signs of estrus in the ewe are less noticeable than does. Ewes will seek out the ram and stand still for him to mount. Ewes may wag their tails, nuzzle the ram around the belly or scrotum and even try to mount the ram. Young ewes rarely exhibit these behaviors.

The gestation length or time that the ewe or doe is pregnant is an average of 150 days with ranges being 142-155 days. Maternal recognition of pregnancy in sheep occurs by day 13 following conception and by day 15 in goats. There is a difference in implantation of the

embryo in goats and sheep. Implantation occurs by day 21 after conception in sheep and by day 52 in goats. Implantation allows nutrient exchange and hormonal communication between the developing embryo and the uterus.

Timing of breeding depends on several things including the weather and how you market lambs and kids as the biggest two factors in our area. Weather can be a two fold concern. Heat stress from high temperatures and high humidity can affect fertility, embryo survival and fetal development. The first 30-45 days after fertilization is the most critical time due to implantation and this is the time when most embryonic mortality occurs. It is not just the female that suffers from heat stress, but rams and bucks are susceptible too. The fertility of males can be affected within days of exposure to extreme heat and may take 6-10 weeks before sperm quality returns to normal. Also there is a concern for the kidding and lambing season. Offspring born in January and February have a greater chance for freezing and getting frostbite. If you kid or lamb in colder months, make sure you have good facilities to house the newborns.

Some producers will plan their breeding season around when they want to sell or market their animals. Selling kids and lambs for specific ethnic holidays requires you to plan your breeding season in advance and knowing what your customer wants. For example, Easter is two weeks earlier in 2015 than it was in 2014 and it was three weeks later in 2014 than it was in 2013. So planning is critical to meet your target weights.

Male to female ration will vary with the age of the ram or buck. Yearling or two year old males are still growing and we generally recommend a lower ratio of 1 buck or ram to 15-30 does or ewes. Mature animals can service more animals and recommendations are 1 male to 35-50 females.

The body condition score (BCS) is important in both females and males. BCS is a term that describes if the animal has enough fat cover and is in good condition. The ideal BCS just before breeding is a 5 to 6 on the 9 point scale. Thin animals can fail to reproduce, have low twinning rates, and low weaning rates. Fat animals can suffer from pregnancy toxemia or problems birthing. Pay special attention to younger animals because they are still growing.



Contact your Livestock Extension Agent for more information on any of these recommendations.

Animal Waste Management News

By: Amanda Hatcher, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Duplin County

**CONTINUING
EDUCATION
CLASSES**

Date	Location	Time	Contact
October 30th	Duplin County	9 am (6 hrs)	910-296-2143
December 9th	Bladen County	9 am (6 hrs)	910-862-4591

Upcoming initial training classes:

- ◆ 10-hour Animal Waste Operator Class in Kenansville on October 21 & 22. Contact Amanda Hatcher or Wanda Hargrove at 910-296-2143 to sign up.
- ◆ 10-hour Animal Waste Operator Class in Elizabethtown on January 22 and 23, 2015. Contact Becky Spearman at 910-862-4591 to sign up.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Peak-season Soil Testing Fee - \$4

NCDA will be charging a \$4 fee for all soil samples processed by the lab during December through March. There will be no fee from April through November. So take your samples now.

Waste Analysis Fees are \$8 per sample.

Change in Soil Sampling Frequency for Swine Farms

A change in legislation in 2013 states that the **soil testing frequency has been changed from annually to every three years**. Farms that soil tested in 2012 are good until 2015 and farms tested in 2013 are good until 2016.

Storm Warning Permit Information

On October 1, 2009, your general permit changed and some of the permit conditions changed too. Below is the new land application rule in regards to a Hurricane Warning, Tropical Storm Warning or a Flood Watch. If you have any questions, call your Livestock Agent.

Section II 22. Land application of waste is prohibited during precipitation events. The Permittee shall consider pending weather conditions in making the decision to land apply waste and shall document the weather conditions at the time of land application on forms supplied or approved by the Division. Land application of waste shall cease within four (4) hours of the time that the National Weather Service (NWS) issues a Hurricane Warning, Tropical Storm Warning, or a Flood Watch associated with a tropical system including a hurricane, tropical storm or tropical depression for the county in which the facility is located. Watches and warnings are posted at www.weather.gov or by calling your area NWS office.

Hay Directories are below for people selling hay or looking for hay to buy. 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

OCTOBER

- Finish using summer grasses before grazing the cool-season ones.
- Watch for prussic acid poisoning when grazing sudan and sorghum-sudans after the first frost.
- Overseed warm-season grasses with winter annuals.

NOVEMBER

- To improve feeding efficiency, test forages before winter feeding begins.
- As winter feeding begins, separate the herd into lactating and dry cows so the best-quality pastures and hay can be fed to the cows with nursing calves.
- Do not graze fall-planted perennial pastures until growth reaches 6 to 8 inches.
- Winter annual pastures that were planted early (September) may be responsive to an additional application of nitrogen (30 to 50 pound/acre).
- Weed control in fall plantings of alfalfa and other legumes should be completed between now and December or January depending on herbicide selection.

DECEMBER

- Limit the grazing of winter pastures by feeding hay on pasture or restricting acres available to animals.
- Feed hay stored outside before using hay stored inside.
- Weed control should be completed on seedling legumes, especially for certain herbicides.

Yes, Our Horses are FAT!!!

By: Tyrone Fisher, County Extension Director and Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Harnett County. From the article *Easy Keepers: Managing Horses Prone to Obesity* from Virginia Cooperative Extension

“Easy Keepers” are horses that will maintain or even gain weight under conditions where other horses will lose weight. They are often considered a pleasure to own because they need less feed to maintain an appropriate body condition; however, these horses can easily become obese, which leads to other potentially life-threatening conditions.

Summary Tips on Managing the Easy Keeper

1. Start or increase the level of exercise. Begin slowly and work up to longer or more intensive activities.
2. Get rid of high calorie concentrates. Easy keepers do not need the extra energy.
3. Get rid of high fat supplements. Again, easy keepers do not need the extra calories.
4. Feed grass forages and hay rather than legumes. This will decrease the caloric intake.
5. Limit access to pasture to less than 4 hours a day. Use a grazing muzzle if a drylot is not available.
6. Limit the amount of hay fed to 1-1.5% of the target body weight. Divide this amount into several feedings a day in order to extend the amount of time the horse spends eating.
7. Make sure the horse has access to salt (straight salt or a trace-mineral salt) and clean water.

Causes of Obesity

Horses evolved grazing forages like those in our pastures today, right? Wrong. Forages in our pastures today are much higher in calorie content than the types of grasses that horses evolved on. They grazed on moderate to poor quality forages, often covering several miles a day to find feed in sparsely vegetated areas. Modern management practices have placed horses in unnatural confinement situations that restrict grazing activity within the limits of pasture fences while providing easy to find, high quality forages. The ultimate confinement with limited access to forage is represented by horses that are stall-kept with limited turnout. These horses do not have to travel at all to find forage, and thus do not expend any calories looking for food. Despite this, many people still believe that horses need concentrates as part of the diet. Combined with decreased exercise, this creates an equine lifestyle that results in weight gain and obesity. Interestingly, a recent survey done in Virginia found that many obese horses are getting very little or no concentrate and still battle weight issues, adding emphasis to the lack of exercise as a contributor to obesity.

Effects of Obesity

Sometimes owners think that “a little extra weight” on a horse isn’t a bad thing. What one person considers obese another might call a little plump. The difficulty lies in defining what “a little” means and whether or not that’s actually healthy for the animal. While some body fat is essential, excess reduces a horse’s capacity for exercise. The extra weight requires more exertion to move and added fat layers insulate the body, reducing the horse’s ability to dissipate heat which can lead to heat stress. The extra weight may also predispose an animal to musculoskeletal injuries or exacerbate arthritis, resulting in decreased performance.

Monitoring for Obesity

Weight gain usually occurs slowly, and without an appropriate monitoring system your horse may become obese before you realize there is a problem. While most people don’t have access to a livestock scale, there are other ways to assess your horse’s level of obesity. Weight tapes, available at most feed and tack stores, are useful for generating an approximate bodyweight and are very good at helping you monitor changes. Using the tape accurately and consistently will allow you to track increases or decreases in your horse’s weight and give you time to adjust feed intake and exercise accordingly.

Reducing Obesity

Obese horses will only lose weight if their energy expenditure is greater than their intake. This can happen by increasing exercise and/or decreasing calorie intake. However, caution must be used. An unfit, obese horse can be easily and quickly overstressed by too much exercise and proper nutrition must be maintained to prevent nutritional deficiencies.

Maintaining the Easy Keeper

The diet utilized for losing weight will not be the same as the one used for maintaining weight. Once the horse has lost the appropriate amount of weight, slowly increase the amount of grass hay fed or increase access to pasture until the horse can maintain the target weight. Grazing muzzles or limited turnout may still be required, particularly during times when pasture forages are lush (spring and fall). Keep up the exercise and monitor the horse’s weight regularly to maintain a trimmer, healthier animal.



Late Summer Bermuda Management

By: Randy Wood, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Scotland County

This time of year (early September) is often one of the most difficult times to manage Bermuda during the summer growing season. How late in the fall can I mow hay? When should I stop fertilizing? When can I expect my Bermuda to stop growing? Are all questions that get discussed this time of year.

How late in the fall will Bermuda grow?

Bermuda will technically “grow” all the way until the first killing frost of the year. Normally this occurs late October/early November. While it will still be green, Bermuda growth will start to slow significantly by late September. The reason is partially because of lower night-time temperatures as well as declining soil Nitrogen (N) rates. Mainly however, Bermuda slows down because of decreasing day length. While every farmer hopes for a really warm September with plenty of rain, once day length starts to noticeably decrease Bermuda growth will follow suite.

How late in the year can I/should I fertilize?

It depends of two factors.

- 1) what type of fertilizer will you be using?
- 2) will your Bermuda field be overseeded with some type of small grain?

For the first item, what type of fertilizer will you be using?

By the end of the growing season, most Bermuda fields will benefit from a late application (30-60 pounds/acre) of Potassium (Potash). Potash helps Bermuda root systems stay vibrant during the winter and overcome cold soil temperatures. This is especially true for newly planted Bermuda that has a shallower root system. If your fields go into the fall and winter with depleted Potash levels, the root systems will have that much more of a difficult time coming through the cold weather unscathed.

Conversely, Nitrogen has the opposite effect if applied too late in the season. The more Nitrogen your fields have applied to them, the more your grass is going to try to grow. The problem is that once we get late into

the summer/fall (late September and October) forcing your grass to keep growing through late Nitrogen fertilization will not do it any favors. Ideally Bermuda will be well fertilized through the majority of the growing season (May-August) then will start to slow down in September once day length and temperatures tell it that it's time to go to sleep for the winter. This helps the grass stay healthy and avoids winter-kill situations. Late season applications of Nitrogen, and late season can be very loosely defined as anything after the middle of September, will force your Bermuda to try growing and utilize the soil Nitrogen as long as it's present. Every little 2-3 day warm-up we get in the late fall will see the Bermuda struggling to turn back green and start growing. This keeps the grass from going naturally dormant, which is its way to protect itself through the winter. Excessive N late in the year prevents this from happening.

In summary, if you are using a fertilizer with significant N (poultry litter, lagoon effluent, 34% liquid N, etc ...) than the old rule of thumb is no later than Labor Day. While there are years and individual circumstances where this could be extended a week or two, more often than not fertilizing past mid-September does not pay for itself and does not help your Bermuda stay healthy the winter.

The other part of this question was are you going to overseed your Bermuda fields? If you are, than the late application of Nitrogen will not hurt your bermuda nearly as much as discussed above. In fact it will probably help your small grain crop get established more quickly. Your small grain crop will step in and utilize the residual soil N that your bermuda was not able to take up in the late summer. So while small grains will hurt your bermuda in the spring, they will actually help it out in the fall. This is why most swine nutrient management plans allow for “bermuda” fertilization to take place into October. While this practice is not especially good for your bermuda, the small grains that have been or soon will be drilled in to these fields help overcome this overlap in soil Nitrogen.

POULTRY LITTER APPLICATION SETBACKS

By: James Parsons, Area Poultry Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension

I continue to get complaints from citizens about land application of poultry litter to crop and pasture land. A few of the complaints appear to be justified, and include spreading litter across property lines, close to homes, and the over application of litter on a field. I want to take this opportunity to review regulations pertaining to spreading litter for crop production. Please make sure you apply litter according to regulations. If you use a third party applicator (commercial clean out crew), be sure that the owner and truck drivers are familiar with the regulations.

Animal waste (poultry litter) shall not be applied more than 30 days prior to planting of the crop or 30 days prior to forages breaking dormancy. Animal waste can be applied to actively growing crops in such a manner that the crop is not covered with waste to a depth that would inhibit crop growth.

Setback regulations MUST be followed when applying poultry litter. Waste Utilization Plan – (Required Specifications) state that animal waste shall not be applied closer than 25 feet to perennial waters, animal waste shall not be applied closer than 100 feet to wells and animal waste shall not be applied closer than 200 feet of dwellings other than those owned by the landowner. One of the more confusing setback regulations relate to property lines. The required specifications state that animal waste shall not be applied in a manner to reach other property and public right-of-ways.

This is also a good time to remind poultry farmers that ani-

mal waste (litter) must be sampled within 60 days of application. The cost of litter analysis has increased to \$8.00 per sample. This information will tell the farmer utilizing the waste precisely what the nutrient content is in the litter and will enable the farmer to correctly land apply the litter. If a third party applicator is used, the poultry farmer should present a copy of the waste analysis to the applicator. It is ultimately the responsibility of the poultry farmer to have the waste analyzed. Normally, waste analysis results are available in about a week from the time it is received at the NCDA&CS lab or commercial lab.

Soil samples shall be tested at least every three (3) years at crop sites where waste products (litter) are applied. The NCDA&CS Agronomic Division now charges \$4.00 per sample for samples received between December 1st and April 31st. Soil samples received between May 1st and November 30th are still analyzed at no cost. The length of time to receive soil sample results varies much more than waste samples.

Please remember that neither waste nor soil sample results are mailed to farmers anymore. You need to go the NCDA&CS website (www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/) to get these results.

If you have any questions about the above information feel free to call me, James Parsons at 910.296.2143. I will do my best to answer your questions.



Upcoming Dates!



- **November 10, 2014**– Buck Collection Day– *Johnston County Cooperative Extension, Contact Dan Wells for more information.*
- **November 17, 2014**– Moore County Farm City Banquet at 6:30pm – *Moore County Agricultural Center*
- **December 2, 2014**– Eastern Carolina Cattleman's Conference– *Clinton, NC*
- **December 15 & 16, 2014**– NC 4-H Youth Livestock Agent Training & Volunteer Training– *NCSU Beef Education Unit*
- **February 24, 2015**– Piedmont Regional Beef Conference– *Guilford County Cooperative Extension*

For more information about any upcoming events please contact Kaitlyn Johnson at 910-947-3188.

Moore County Cattleman Association Meetings:

All meetings begin at 7pm and are held at the Moore County Ag Center.

Important DATE!

- **October 2**– **Kevin Williams, Moore County NRCS** will be with us to discuss cost-share programs available to producers.
- **November 6**– **Eric Shupe, Purina Animal Nutrition** will be with us to discuss Mineral Programs for cattle and feeds available.
- **December 4**– Holiday Meal– **Bryan Blinson, Director of North Carolina Cattleman's Association**, will be on hand to discuss NC Beef Industry Updates and Changes. **PLEASE RSVP to Kaitlyn Johnson at 910-947-3188 or kaitlyn_johnson@ncsu.edu.**