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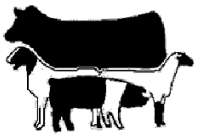
Johnston County Center

Livestock News

Sep Oct 2024



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Goat Producers Field Day Nov 2

New format for the Johnston County Goat Producers Field Day
The annual Hands on Goats Field Day will be held at the Johnston County Livestock Arena on Saturday, November 2. This year the field day will begin at noon and end around 5 pm. There will be demonstrations of hoof trimming and goat milking as in the past, along with seminars on topics such as forages and goat health. There will also be a kids zone with fun activities. We will have a raffle table and our grand prize raffle for choice of $200 cash or $200 worth of alfalfa hay. Check Johnston County Goat Producers on Facebook for more information.

NC State Fair Livestock Shows

October 17- Open Beef Cattle and Meat Goat Showmanship
October 18- Open Beef Cattle, Open Wether Dams, Junior Commercial Does and Market Goats
October 19- Junior Swine Showmanship
October 20- Jr. & Open Breeding Gilts, Beef Showmanship Feeder Calves, Jr Beef Heifers, Jr & Open Market Barrows
October 21- Jr. Market Steers, Jr. Beef Heifers
October 22- Jr. Lamb Showmanship
October 23- Jr. Market Lambs and Jr. Meat Breed Ewes
October 24- Open Dairy Cattle, Wool Sheep Clinic
October 25- Wool Breeds Showmanship, Jr. & Open Wool Breeds Jr. Dairy Cattle Showmanship, Jr. Dairy Goat Showmanship
October 26- Jr. Dairy Cattle, Jr. Dairy Goat, Special Awards Show Jr. Doe Open Dairy Goat
October 27- Sr. Doe Open Dairy Goat, Sale of Champions

Johnston County Cattlemen's Association Hats

We have new hats, all Richardson style, in a variety of colors. $20 each available at the Extension Office or at meetings.

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.

Swine Producer Guide to Hurricane Preparedness

By: Aaron Blackmon, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Columbus County

Long-Term Preparedness:

1. System Checks and Annual Reviews

Annual Emergency Planning: Review and update your Farm Emergency Plan. Ensure all employees are familiar with their roles and responsibilities. Update emergency contacts and verify vendor agreements.

Employee Training: Annually train employees on hurricane preparation and recovery tasks. Ensure everyone knows their responsibilities.

2. Recordkeeping and Insurance

Insurance Review: Update your insurance coverage to include adequate protection for all assets. Review policies annually.

Documentation: Maintain detailed records of all equipment, livestock, and supplies with photos or videos to support insurance claims.

3. Infrastructure Maintenance

Buildings and Facilities: Regularly inspect for structural integrity and perform necessary repairs, especially to roofing and electrical systems.

Drainage: Clear culverts and ditches to prevent obstruction. Maintenance drainage gates if you have them.

Tree: Prune trees to reduce risks to buildings and power lines. Clear any dead or leaning trees that could potentially block access to the farm.

Generators: Perform regular maintenance on backup generators and test generators weekly under normal energy load. Have spare belts and filters on hand.

Waste Lagoons: Inspect waste lagoons weekly for any structural damage. Maintain vegetation on top of the dike and base of Lagoons. Keep lagoons pumped as low as possible going into hurricane season.

4. Emergency Supplies

Medical and Food Supplies: Keep a two-week supply of emergency medical supplies, drinking water, and non-perishable food.

Short-Term Preparedness: 1–7 Days Before a Hurricane

1. Employee Safety and Communication

Evacuation Plans: Determine which employees will stay or evacuate and establish check-in schedules post-hurricane.

Communication: If growing for an integrator, communicate with your service person. I have a communication plan for employees.

2. Food, Water, and Cash Reserves

Supplies: Confirm a two-week supply of food and water. Secure cash for post-hurricane purchases as electronic transactions may be unavailable.

Feed Storage: Work with your feed supplier or integrator to maximize feed reserves on the farm.

3. Equipment and Infrastructure Preparation

Protect Equipment: Move non-essential equipment to secure locations. Ensure all essential equipment is fully fueled and operational.

Generators: Confirm backup generators are functional and have enough fuel to operate for at least two weeks. Check alarms and power outage fail-safes.

Secure Buildings: Protect windows and doors and ensure all loose items are secured and batten down.

4. Waste Management

Waste lagoons: Pump waste lagoons as low as possible while remaining in compliance with your nutrient management plan. Facilities with the *2019 State General Permits, 2022 NPDES General Permits, and 2022 Digester General Permits* must cease all waste applications **within 12 hours** of the first issuance of a Tropical Storm Warning or Flood Watch. Facilities with *Individual Permits* must cease all waste applications within **4 hours** of the same warnings.

By following these guidelines, swine producers can enhance their farm's resilience and ensure safety during hurricane season. For more detailed information and resources, consult the local Exten-sion office or refer to the Swine Producers Guide to Hurricane Preparedness. Stay safe and prepared!

Should I Calve on Hay or Grass?

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

I have been asked by several producers if they should pull their cows and heifers off pasture and feed them hay for the last thirty to sixty days of gestation to avoid calving trouble. The main reason producers want to pull the cows is to limit the size of the calf. This is possible as the calf does 75% of its growth the last 60 days of gestation and nutritional status play a big part. In reality, many factors influence the amount of difficulty at calving time, including breed of cow and sire, sex of calf, presentation of calf, and the age and size of the cow/heifer when calving. Additionally, difficulty is more likely to be from cows that are too fat or too thin than from large calves.

Cows should be a body condition score of 6 at calving time. Heifers should be a condition score of 6.5. This will insure adequate flesh to help meet the increased physiological demands on the cow as well as enable the animal to breed back in a timely manner. Cattle that are over conditioned, fat, will be subject to calving difficulty. On the other extreme are cows that are too thin at calving. Some producers feel by having their cow thin at calving they are eliminating the possibility of calving trouble. This is not true and, in fact, may add to the difficulty. Thin cattle tire easily and may not have the strength to deliver a calf. Also, thin cattle don't produce quality colostrum, breed back slower, and usually don't produce as much milk as cows that are in proper condition. Additionally, these females that are allowed to get thin before calving will become bigger problems later. It is extremely difficult to put weight on a lactating animal. Without proper nutrition between weaning and her next calf she will likely be thin when she calves again, assuming she bred back, and thus perpetuate the cycle. All this ties into the calving on grass or hay.

When cows are pulled off the grass and fed hay, they will lose weight if their nutritional needs aren't met. A heifer in the last trimester of pregnancy with an expected mature weight of 1200 pounds needs feed that is approximately 60% TDN and 10% crude protein. A mature cow would need approximately 50% TDN and 8% crude protein. Good quality hay will meet the demands of the cow but some supplementation is needed for the heifer. If medium to poor quality hay were fed neither animal's requirements would be met without supplementation. This supplementation can be in the form of a commercial feed, corn, soybean meal, cottonseed, or any number of other commodities. The key here is to offer the proper type and amount of supplement to balance the hay ration. In order to do this, producers should have their hay and supplements analyzed by the NCDA. This service costs $10 per sample but is worth much more. By knowing the analysis of the feedstuff offered, producers can be sure cattle requirements are met. While on the subject of supplementation, producers could even supplement with the forage that is available. Simply allow cattle access to the forage for a few hours each day. The cattle can consume adequate forage to meet their needs without having a surplus of nutrients. The hay then acts more like a filler to satisfy their appetite. The grasses that seem to concern producers the most are rye and ryegrass. Those who calve in the fall should not be too concerned. At this time, there will be limited amounts of the forage available so there won't be adequate time for trouble to arise. Some may question the time cattle are grazing millet in late summer. By then, the millet has probably become stemmy and less productive and will be of lower quality. Producers who calve in winter have little need for concern either. The cows may have an initial flush of forage in late fall but forage availability will be declining going into the winter months. Cattle will be on hay anyway and the forage will act more as a supplement than an actual forage source. Producers who practice spring calving may have some need for concern. The flush of new growth available along with the “maintenance” feeding of the cattle through the winter can lead to weight gains in the cattle and growth of the fetus. Producers who utilize the exotic breeds, especially those known for their growth, have experienced more trouble. The later in the spring animals calve, the greater the chance of possible problems.

Some experts say brood cows should never be allowed access to high quality winter forages. They suggest the grass is too good for them and is being wasted when fed to cows. Instead, they recommend feeding the cows hay or lower quality forages, supplementing to meet requirements, leaving the high quality forages for creep grazing nursing calves and for grazing weaned calves and yearling cattle that can benefit most from these forages. Another school of thought is to let the calves and yearling have first access to the forage and then allow the cows to finish what the younger cattle did not consume. Whether or not either of these systems is feasible will depend on the producer’s production practices and available resources.

So back to the question at hand. Grass or hay? Either one is possible as long as you meet the needs of the cow without providing too much or too little in the process. You can cause yourself problems in both scenarios. The key is to take all things into consideration and find the one that works best in your situation. There is no one size fits all in the cattle business.

Silvopasture and Upcoming Training

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

I admit that at first, I was skeptical about silvopasture, which combines trees, livestock, and forages into a single system on one site. I attended a silvopasture training in Pender County at the farm of Buren Lanier years ago and I was amazed by the amount of grass growing under a couple hundred acres of loblolly pine trees. Mr. Lanier's silvopasture looked really good, and if curb appeal can improve house values, I would assume pasture appeal could also improve farm values. Several years ago, Colby Lambert, Area Specialized Forestry Agent and I developed a silvopasture training that we will be presenting at the Harnett County Extension office on Tuesday September 24, 2024 from 6 to 8 pm. This training will offer 2 hours of X pesticide credits and 2 hours of Animal Waste Credits. Please join us for this training if you can. We have had many farms in NC and even other states develop silvopastures on their farms after attending this training. Harnett County now has six silvopasture sites with several more in the planning stage.

Silvopasture can be a way for landowners to diversify income sources. A possible win-win situation providing annual income from grazing as well as long term profits for fast growing, high value saw-logs. The farm owner mentioned that the shade from the pine trees extended the forage growing season and also improved the comfort levels and weight gains for summer grazing animals. The farm owner also mentioned that this was a good place to stockpile (store forage for later winter grazing). He mentioned that the trees provided very good shelter during high winds, rain, and snow. The canopy is usually managed at 25 to 45 percent cover for warm season grasses and 40 to 60 percent cover for cool season grasses. I could see hundreds of round bales of hay equivalent in forage under his trees. I know that some of the larger cattle farms can easily feed 500 or more round hay bales during the winter. Winter hay costs are one of the biggest expenses for cattle producers in our area of NC. Having this hay equivalent under trees on a farm each year could benefit many cattle farms in our area of NC.

There are so many benefits of silvopasture. Silvopasture helps protect and improve water quality and water holding capacity of the soil. Silvopasture also helps improve nutrient cycling and growth rates of the trees while reducing forest fuel loads. The increased biodiversity (plant diversity) that helps attract and hold wildlife species including wild turkey, quail, deer, and songbirds is another benefit of a silvopasture.

A silvopasture must be managed properly. Grazing animals should be moved from pasture to pasture in a rotational grazing system. Animals are typically left in a pasture for 3 to 7 days. The animals are removed, and the forage is then allowed to grow for at least 30 days before grazing again. Animals should not be left in the same area for long periods of time because soil compaction can damage the roots and promote insect and disease damage of the trees. These are just a few of the many basic principles of silvopasture. For more information contact Brian Parrish with the Harnett County office of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service at 910-893-7530 or 919-692-5845.

Overeating Disease in Goats and Sheep

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

As cooler weather starts to approach, the quality and quantity of pasture may decrease. Producers may begin to feed more grain and the sudden change of increase in grain can trigger a disease, called overeating disease in sheep and goats.

Overeating disease does not only occur from eating more grain, but can be triggered by a sudden change in diet that are rich in protein, sugars, and starches. Be careful to protect your herd or flock from overeating disease by monitoring the intake and type of feed consumed by your sheep and goats.

What is Overeating Disease?

Overeating disease is also known as enterotoxemia and is caused by bacteria, called Clostridium perfringens, strain types C and D. It can affect goats and sheep of all ages and is usually more devastating to younger animals. The bacteria are normally found in the soil and are also found in the gastro-intestinal tract of healthy animals but in small quantities. The bacteria can grow rapidly in number in the intestines if triggered by a sudden change in the animals diet. The biggest trigger is when the animal receives an **increase** in the amount of grain, protein supplement, grass, or milk or milk replacer for the kids and lambs. The feeds mentioned above are rich in protein, starch, and sugar. Changes made to the diet should be gradual, allowing the animal time to adjust to the change in type of feed, especially if it is a “rich” feed.

As the bacteria rapidly grow, they release toxins in the intestinal tract. The toxins can cause damage to the intestines, cause neurological effects, and is usually an acute, fatal disease.

What are the symptoms?

There are a number of different symptoms associated with the disease. These can include, off feed, lethargy, stomach pain, diarrhea, twitching, stargazing, teeth grinding, fever, convulsions, and death.

Depending on the severity of the case, treatment may not be successful. Veterinarians may treat less severe cases with electrolytes, antibodies that neutralize the toxins produced by the bacteria, and probiotics that help add “good” bacteria.

Prevention

Preventing overeating disease can be far more successful and cheaper than trying to treat the disease in a whole herd or flock or losing animals.

There are a number of different vaccines available for clostridial diseases. It is important to make sure that the vaccines are labeled for either sheep or goats and to follow the label. Most veterinarians recommend giving a three-way clostridial vaccine, *Clostridium perfringens* type C and type D and *Clostridium tetani*. The *Clostridium tetani* helps prevent tetanus, also known as “lockjaw.” Toxins that are released from clostridial bacteria cause tetanus. The bacteria enter through wounds after kidding, lambing, castration, debudding, etc. and cause neurological symptoms, similar to the overeating disease.

Ewes and does can be vaccinated before or after kidding or lambing and again four to six weeks later. Vaccination strategies will differ among producers. The best option is to have a working relationship with a veterinarian to discuss the best vaccination methods for your herd or flock.

Having smart feeding strategies and vaccinating are the best management practices to ensure prevention from overeating disease and have healthy sheep and goats.

Got Bermudagrass Pastures? Need Spring Forage?

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

Before long, North Carolina will begin experiencing cool enough weather that will send our warm season pastures into dormancy. This means pastures with perennial grasses like Bermudagrass or Bahiagrass will produce little to no forage until May so it's time to pull out the hay rings, hay huts, corner feeders! Horse owners who have the luxury to stack hay to the rafters of their barn will probably have enough to get through winter but those who cannot store large amounts could be hard-pressed to find a decent supply come February. As a hay producer, I can tell you that a hay season full of armyworms and drought will have a negative impact on hay production which leads to a limited supply, locally. The best way to curb our reliance on hay, is to consider overseeding our pastures with winter annuals. These are forage species that are planted in the fall (ideally mid-September through October) to help compensate for the winter slump that we experience with Bermuda and Bahiagrass pastures. Winter annuals are a one-shot deal which means come May and June they mature and die. When planning a winter annual overseed, there are a few things to take into consideration before pulling the trigger.

Species Selection:
There are several types of forage species on the market so it's good select the ones that fit both the horse and horse owner's needs. Make sure the species you select is frost/cold tolerant. Grasses such as ryegrass, cereal rye, triticale, and winter oats are some of the most commonly winter annual grasses utilized for pasture overseed.

Site preparation:
Ideally, we recommend soil sampling your pastures before planting any type of forage. The reports from the soil analysis give us a fertilizer and liming recommendation to bring essential nutrients and soil pH up to acceptable levels. Now is a great time to send in your soil samples for analysis because they are free. If you had your soil tested within the last couple of years, you can work of a previous report. Your County Extension Agent can help you come up with a fertility plan "prescription". A winter overseed will need some form of starter fertilizer in the fall and then more in early spring as growth increases with warmer temperatures. Splitting fertilizer applications allows the forage to utilize nutrients more efficiently which leads to thick, lush stands for your horse to graze. Alternative fertilizers such as poultry litter, and manure are great sources of nutrients and are inexpensive compared to our commercial fertilizers. The drawback with manures is they are harder to handle and apply without proper equipment.

Establishment:
To establish any winter annual forage in warm season pastures, we need to get any excess bermudagrass or bahiagrass growth out of the way. The best way to do this is through mowing or grazing down grass down to two inches. If time is of the essence, a mower is going to be quicker than a grazing animal. After pastures are clipped/grazed down, it's time to plant your seed.

There are generally two methods for planting. First is using a no-till grain drill. Although this is the best method to overseed your pasture, no-till drills require some horsepower and must be pulled by a tractor. Several County Soil and Water District offices rent no-till drills for a reasonable fee. If you do not have access to a large tractor or no-till drill, the next option is broadcasting with a spreader followed by dragging with a chain harrow or piece of chain-link fence with weights. This will help work the seed closer to the soil and increase germination.
For cereal rye, oats, or triticale the recommended seeding rate is 100-120 pounds per acre and for annual ryegrass you should plant 20-30 pounds per acre. If you are broadcasting, I recommend planting the high rate to increase your chances of establishing a good stand. If mixing two or more species reduce the seeding rate of each by 50 percent. For example, if want to plant oats and rye together, plant 50-60 pounds of each.

Grazing Management:
Depending on weather conditions, winter annual overseeded in pastures can be slow to establish. Generally, rye, oats and triticale are not ready to graze until February. Ryegrass develops much slower and is usually not ready to graze until mid-March but does produce large amounts of forage through May. Start grazing when plants reach 6 to 8 inches and stop grazing before plants reach 3 inches to keep from damaging stands! Winter annuals benefit from rotational grazing systems. Dividing pastures into smaller paddocks and rotationally grazing allows your forage to rest and recover before the animal returns. This increases forage utilization and lowers the chances of overgrazing. With adequate fertility and moisture, these winter annuals can produce 2-3 tons of dry matter per acre.

Overseeding bermudagrass pastures with winter annuals can help compensate for the winter slump in forage production and provide your animal with nutritious feed in the spring.

If you are planning to overseed your pastures for spring grazing, the window is closing quickly!
If you have any questions about pasture management please contact your local Extension office.

The Three Keys to Rodent Control

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

As we wait for the cool temps of fall to return and the change of the trees that follow it is important to remember that with the anticipated relief from the heat of summer comes the increased pressure from rodents looking for a winter home. While rodents are active year-round greater pressure is often placed on our control methods as they look for a place that provides protection from the elements and food to over winter. If the rodent control program is weak or not performing as needed this added pressure can quickly overwhelm it and create a situation that is very difficult to get back into control. Hopefully you are aware of the importance of rodent control to prevent damage to the houses, and profits as they eat feed and spread diseases. A good rodent control program needs three key components, prevention, exclusion, and eradication. All three areas are important to ensure successful control at a reasonable cost.

Prevention is often the most overlooked component of rodent control but it is often the easiest for producers to carry out and the one they have the most control over. Rodent prevention is mainly about reduction of habitat or favorable conditions that allow rodent populations to prosper. Rodents do not travel very far for food and water from their nest. In fact, as a general rule of thumb the smaller the rodent the shorter they roam. This means if growers remove and reduce habitat around houses, equipment, feed and litter storage there will be less pressure inside facilities. This requires removing junk and abandoned equipment from farms or at least within 200 feet of facilities. Keeping vegetative covers short and soils firmly packed. It is highly recommended to maintain a gravel dripline surface around houses this prevents erosion, makes it difficult for rodents to bury under foundations and exposes rodents to natural predators as they cross these exposed surfaces.

Exclusion of rodents is often the most difficult because they can enter through small openings, chew through a wide range of materials and climb most surfaces. Exclusion starts at construction of the house by choosing rodent resistant materials such as concrete and metal over wood, plastic, and foam. Making sure construction is done properly and gaps and crevices are sealed will reduce future entry points. It is important that houses are inspected regularly and any holes and entry points are sealed using metal flashing or hardware cloth. Often when updates or new equipment is installed new entry points are created when holes are made for wiring and piping. Sealing these holes with spray foams or insulation products is important for energy savings, but these products, when used alone will only become nesting material for rodents adding and outer layer of metal hardware cloth or flashing will prevent these from being rodent highways in the house.

Eradication is the step most people focus on but when proper attention is paid to the other control areas this one becomes easier and cheaper to perform. It is important to understand that rodents can live almost anywhere in a poultry house and because they do not travel far from the nest the entire house must have control measures in place including bait stations and traps. Rodents also cannot see very well and typically travel along walls pipes or other structures and will only move into open spaces when forced. Bait stations or traps need to be placed against the wall with no space to allow rodents to bypass the entrance. Stations should not be more than 100 feet apart to make sure they are in range of all rodent types. Do not overlook the attic areas as the insulation and seclusion makes it an excellent home; in fact, Roof Rats seek out raised areas for nesting. Bait selection is also important both in choosing active ingredients and the bait form. You need to select baits that work with your stations and that are consistent with your conditions. Some baits may melt in high heat conditions or become rancid very quickly. Selecting baits for active ingredients based on rodent species and susceptibility is also essential in a successful eradication phase. Proper rotation of active ingredients in baits to prevent resistance is required to keep this last line of defense effective.

Improper placement of bait station not against the wall with a gravel dripline

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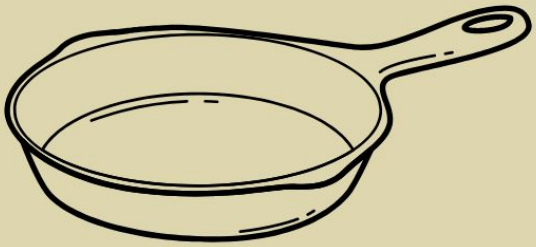

✦ OCTOBER 30, 2024 ✦

9AM - 10:30AM ✦ 2736 NC 210 HWY, SMITHFIELD, NC

This event is designed to connect Johnston County's local meat producers with restaurants, food trucks, and other food businesses. Whether you're a farmer looking to expand your market or a business interested in sourcing local meats, this event is for you.

Enjoy dedicated networking time to build meaningful connections with farmers, chefs, and other food professionals. The program includes guest speakers: **Chef Chad Blackwelder** from the NC Department of Agriculture, and **Farmer AJ Stanaland** of Northwest Land & Cattle. Be part of Johnston County's local food conversations and grow your network!

Register Here:

go.ncsu.edu/jocogrowsmeat