Small Flock Poultry Meeting

There will be a meeting on Tuesday, March 11 starting at 6:30 pm at the Bladen County Cooperative Extension office located at 450 Smith Circle Drive in Elizabethtown. Speakers and topics are Dr. Donna Carver, NCSU Poultry Extension Veterinarian, will discuss chicken anatomy and physiology including reproduction topics. James Parsons, Area Specialized Poultry Agent, will discuss Breeds of Chickens and Evaluating Hens for Production. Please call the office at 862-4591 to register by March 7th. Feed and Garden Center will sponsor refreshments.

Wild Foods Cook-Off

The Wild Foods Cook-Off will be held at the First Presbyterian Church located at 133 W. Ballard St. across from the Junior High School in Ellerbe on Tuesday, March 18th. Dish registration will start at 6 pm. Don McKay, a Survival Specialist, will give a presentation about living in the woods at 6:30 pm. This will be a very educational and useful presentation to all! Mark your calendar now so you won’t forget to cook a delicious dish or come join the tasting party for only $5 per person. If you would like to register a dish or receive a flier with categories and rules, please call 910-997-8255 or email Tiff.Conrad@ncsu.edu.

Richmond County Pasture Walk

There will be a Richmond County Pasture Walk and weed identification meeting on Friday, March 21st from 2-4 pm. Two hours of animal waste continuing education credit and two hours of X pesticide credit will be given. The location is the Dale DeWitt’s Farm, directly across the street from 326 E. NC Hwy. 73, Ellerbe, NC 28338

Shred It Day (Protect your Identity and business documents)

When: 22nd 10:30 am until 1:30 pm
Where: Walgreens (Highway 401)
What: Scotland CES will be offering a personal document shredding service for Scotland County Citizens. All personal and financial records will be securely shredded at no charge. Limit of 100 lbs per person. Call (910) 277-2422 for additional information.

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

News Continues for Pig Diseases

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) recently completed genetic sequencing on a new strain of PED (Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea) virus, adding to the scientific knowledge that can assist in the development of a vaccine.

In a February 11, 2014 press release, the ODA’s Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (ADDL) virologist, Dr. Yan Zhang and other ODA scientists completed the sequencing of the new PED virus that differs in a fragment of one gene (1,170 nucleic acids in the S1 domain of the Spike gene) encoding a surface protein. The rest of the genome sequence is identical to the originally emerged PED virus, which was first confirmed in the U.S. in 2013. PEDv is similar to TGE (Transmissible Gastroenteritis) and causes diarrhea, vomiting, dehydration and high mortality in pigs, particularly affecting very young pigs and older hogs.

PEDv does not spread to humans or other animal species – it specifically affects pigs – and poses no risk to food safety. According to a National Pork Board (NPB) swine health guide, PEDv is a coronavirus that can be spread through contaminated feces, and can cause clinical signs within 12-24 hours after exposure to the virus. Pigs can infect other pigs for up to 3-4 weeks. There is no cross-protection between TGE and PEDv (even though both are coronaviruses). The NPB guide notes that sows can pass protection through colostrum to their piglets but that herds can re-break with PEDv.

Treatment and prevention include providing supportive care for infected pigs, limiting cross-contamination with any suspected pig’s feces, following proper cleaning and disinfection procedures, as well as providing clearly defined barriers of protection between production areas and other farm areas. For more information visit pork.org or contact your veterinarian.

According to the ODA, the discovered sequencing will assist in production of a vaccine, which could be given orally to a sow, and then passed on to piglets through nursing. Through a vaccine, mortality rates could be significantly reduced.

In other news, the ODA released information about a new non-PED coronavirus detected on Ohio farms through the ADDL. This virus, named Swine Delta Coronavirus (SDCV), cannot spread to humans or other species and poses no risk to food safety. The SDCV was found in pigs with diarrhea in January and February 2014. The SDCV is distinct from PED and TGE viruses, but clinical signs appear similar to that of PED and TGE.

*Follow protocols recommended by your integrator and/or

Animal Waste Events
March 21- 2-hour Richmond County Pasture Walk, contact: 910-997-8255
April 29-30 – 10-hour Animal Waste Operator Class, Onslow County Center, contact: 910-455-5873
May 6-7 – 10-hour Animal Waste Operator Class, Sampson County Center, contact: 910-592-7161

Hay Directory

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. It lists people selling hay or looking for hay to buy. It is free to list your hay for sale on-line.

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.
• Watch for symptoms of grass tetany.
• 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.
Winter Weed Control in Bermuda
By: Randy Wood, Extension Director and Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Scotland County

When will spring get here? This question has been discussed a lot recently. The past few weeks have given us a taste of winters’ past, and by now, most of us are ready for some 70 degree days. While we do not know when spring will truly be here, we need to make sure we do not miss the opportunity for early spring weed control in our Bermuda fields.

Every year in February and March, late winter/early spring weeds are quick to take advantage of the changing of the season and get a head start on bermudagrass that is struggling to wake from winter dormancy. Henbit, Chickweed, Wild Garlic, Italian Ryegrass and several other early season weeds are making an appearance all around us as we close out February.

Please note on Wild Garlic control, Glyphosate gives fair control at best. Adding Cimarron Plus at .2-.3/acre plus a good rate of surfactant will greatly improve Wild Garlic control to a dormant burndown mix.

For those of you who want to start off the coming summer as weed free as possible and hope to salvage an early hay cutting, the next couple of weeks will be your best chance at doing so a little bit more economically. For the next couple of weeks, we have an arsenal of “burndown” herbicides, such as Glyphosate and Gramoxone, to choose from that will not be options for us once bermuda finally breaks dormancy and starts to green-up in the coming weeks.

Glyphosate is especially popular to use this time of year. The generic formulations make this herbicide fairly inexpensive while still killing a wide range of most of our late winter weeds and troublesome winter grasses such as Italian Ryegrass and Little Barley. The one drawback to remember about Glyphosate is that you do not get any residual control with it. You will only kill what it hits, but if something emerges afterwards you will miss it.

The other opportunity we have this time of year is to try to control sandspurs (annual Sandspurs, not perennials) and crabgrass with a pre-emergent herbicide, namely Prowl H2O. Prowl H2O will give fair to good control of sandspurs and crabgrass if applied prior to these grassy weeds germinating. The difficulty is trying to gauge when germination will actually occur in this up and down weather we have been experiencing. Technically, these weeds will germinate when soil temperatures are in the range of 55-62 degrees. Usually we will see these temperatures by late February, but this is not a normal winter. You still have time to use this product, but how much longer is anybody’s guess.

I have heard of very good results and also very poor results with Prowl H20. The problem is not with the product, it is with trying to determine when to apply it. The key point is not to wait too late in the spring to put it out.
Body Condition Scoring Cattle

Adapted by: Becky Spearman, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension from an article written by Dr. Matt Poore, NC State University Ruminant Nutrition Extension Specialist

This year we have the potential for cows to be in very poor condition. A combination of poor quality hay from a very rainy growing season last summer, little fall growth on winter annuals, and now a lack of pasture due to the bad winter weather can set cattle producers up for thin cows. A lot of hay from last year has poor nutritional quality. Even though cattle may be eating all the hay they want, some older cows, timid animals, or first-calf heifers are usually the first to become malnourished. Some producers are starting their spring calving season and thin, lactating cows will have a hard time rebreeding and are not going to raise a calf to pay her winter feed bill next year.

Here are some things to consider:

Body condition score your cows now. If you don’t know how or would like some help, contact your Extension Agent. Your ability to judge the health and body condition of your cows comes with experience but regardless of level of expertise, reassessment of body condition after a few weeks on winter feed is a good practice. While you are evaluating your herd, go ahead and separate any animals that are thin.

Separate heifers, thin cows, and old cows from the main cow herd for feeding purposes and separate lactating cows from dry cows. Most cases of severe malnutrition come from these weaker animals. In smaller herds, these animals may be grouped together to assist in supplemental feeding. In larger herds, consider feeding heifers as a group and older and thin cows as a group so you can meet the nutritional needs more economically. It is not too late in the winter season to separate these animals. Separating lactating cows from dry cows is important because the needs for a lactating cow are different than for a dry cow.

Yearling heifers should be grouped together for feeding because they are still growing and have higher nutritional requirements. Feed management of heifers is especially critical in the last 60 days before calving. Proper heifer nutrition can increase colostrum and milk production, which are critical for health and growth of calves.

Cull chronically thin cattle, old cows, and cows with teeth or health problems. Thin and old cows should be culled if they cannot maintain their weight after separation and proper feeding. Keeping thin, old cows, or cows with missing/worn teeth, without feeding them enough to maintain body condition is inhumane. Cattle with worn or missing front, lower incisor teeth graze less efficiently and are usually the thinnest cows. Check teeth annually when cattle are restrained in a headgate. Cull cows when their teeth start to show advanced wear to get a better price for them.

It is critical in food animal production that there is a good culling program to enhance profit. Income from cull cows is significant on cow-calf farms, accounting for 15 to 20% of gross income. Appropriate preemptive culling may also prevent suffering in aged or otherwise debilitated cows. The trick is to cull a cow near the end of her productive life, but before she loses potential value as a beef animal. With profitability in mind, older or weaker cows may fail to calve, may raise lighter calves, and can result in higher veterinary costs and/or death loss. Old, arthritic, and/or crippled cows cannot move about to graze as efficiently as the younger stock. They also have trouble competing with the younger and stronger cows at the round bale feeder or feed bunk.

Adjust rations as needed as the calving season approaches and when the cows are lactating. When cows calve, they need increased protein and energy intake to support milk production. Energy and protein deficiencies can have a prolonged effect on the cow herd. Cows that calve in poor body condition do not breed back as quickly. Thus, planning for the next breeding season should begin well before the calves are born this year.

A high percentage of cattle that fail to breed are open due to nutritional problems. Cows nursing their first or second calves are often the most severely affected, and account for most of the open cows in the group. If you need help with your cattle herd, please call your local Extension Agent.
Control of Internal Parasites in Small Ruminants Using Sericea Lespedeza

By: Rebekah Ray, Intern with NC Cooperative Extension in Johnston County


Spring is finally on the horizon and with warmer, wetter weather comes preparation for internal parasite season for goat producers. Haemonchus contortus (barber pole worm) is always a primary concern as an infection of 1000 worms can suck up to two ounces of blood per day from a single goat, and one barber pole worm has the ability to lay between 1000-6000 eggs a day. Severe infections of these worms can cause anemia, bottle jaw and death among untreated goats. For many years, the control and management of these internal parasites has primarily been the use of dewormers. However, with the high mortality rate of severely infected goats and the development of resistance to dewormers in barber pole worm populations, producers can no longer rely strictly on conventional dewormers to control internal parasites. It is as important as ever for producers to consider alternative management practices to reduce the frequency of dewormer use.

Management of Internal Parasites

As with any pest, parasite management starts with the integration of many different management practices to ensure the most effective and economically feasible levels of control possible for each individual herd. The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, ATTRA, suggests many different tools to manage internal parasites, such as: pasture management, elective deworming, selecting resistant animals, and alternative treatments. These alternative treatments include the supplement feeding of high-CT (condensed tannin) forages like sericea lespedeza.

Tannins are plant compounds found in a variety of plant species. They serve as protection from predation and also play a role in plant growth regulation. Some tannin containing plants have toxic effects on animals, but the condensed tannins found in forage legumes (especially sericea lespedeza) have been scientifically proven to reduce parasite loads in small ruminants.

Sericea Lespedeza

Sometimes considered a weedy, invasive or even noxious warm season legume in some areas of the United States, Sericea lespedeza shows great promise in the improved health of goats and control of internal parasites. Whether Sericea lespedeza is used for grazing animals or fed in hay form, or even pelleted, research has shown that lespedeza is effective against internal parasites. While producers should not rely on sericea lespedeza as the sole method of internal parasite control, it can be a useful part of a complete parasite management plan to reduce pasture contamination with larvae and, over time, reduce the number of adult worms.

A challenge with growing Sericea lespedeza is that it does not withstand the pressure of frequent or close grazing. However, in 2002 a new variety of lespedeza that keeps the qualities that makes it well adapted to the southeast, while increasing the plant’s hardiness to small ruminant grazed pastures. AU Grazer is drought tolerant and well adapted to the acidic soils of the Southeast and is a non-bloat causing legume that is very resistant to insect damage. That, along with the high tannin content and its ability to persist even under grazing pressure from goats, makes it worthy of consideration when choosing pasture forage. Sericea lespedeza is commonly planted at 20-30 lbs per acre and can even be drilled and over seeded with a cool season grass (like tall fescue) once it has been properly established, to achieve a mixed Sericea/grass pasture.

Summary

Goat producers, now more than ever, should seriously consider all options in the management and control of internal parasites. Responsible and selective use of dewormers, along with alternative parasite management practices are the best defense against dewormer resistance of these parasites. Grazing Sericea lespedeza is just one of the many parasite management techniques which can reduce serious infection of internal parasites and therefore increasing the health of your animals. Please contact the NC Cooperative Extension Office in your county and speak with your local livestock agent to build an internal parasite management plan that is right for you and your animals.
Horse Industry Promotion Referendum 2014
By: Kaitlyn Cranford, Livestock Agent for NC Cooperative Extension

Horse and other equine animal owners/lessors will vote across the state on March 11, 2014 to determine whether to continue to voluntarily assess themselves two dollars ($2.00) per ton of commercial horse feed in order to provide funds to promote the interest of the horse industry. The vote will take place at the County Extension Centers. Any North Carolina resident who has reached his/her 9th birthday as of January 1, 2014 and who has complete or partial ownership or lease of an equine (horse, pony, mule, donkey, or hinny) is eligible to vote.

Since many horse owners work away from home during business hours, a provision has been made for absentee voting. Between the dates of February 24 – March 10, 2014, 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 11, 2014 and will be counted along with others on March 11.

If the vote is favorable on March 11, 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 and educational programs, trails advocacy, equine research, representation of horse interest in government, marketing programs, enforcement of horse laws, and improved public awareness of diseases and other threats to horses’ well-being.

Q: What is the Horse Industry Promotion Referendum?
A: The Horse Industry Promotion Referendum is a vote by the horse owners of NC 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: What is the purpose of the assessment?
A: To provide funds to the North Carolina Horse Council for the purpose of promoting the interest of the North Carolina Horse industry.

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 NC Horse Council.

Q: Is the assessment a tax?
A: No. A tax is for the support of a government; the proposed self-assessment is for the interest of horse owners. The assessment is also fully refundable upon written request.

Q: How much would the assessment cost me?
A: Approximately $1.80 per horse per year.

If passed, the horse promotion referendum will be in effect for three years.

For more information regarding the vote please contact your local County Extension Center.
The Many Benefits of Youth Livestock Judging, Skill-a-thon, and Quiz Bowl
By: Justin Whitley, Livestock Extension Agent for NC Cooperative Extension

First, I’d like to introduce myself as a new writer for Livestock News. My name is Justin Whitley and I am a Livestock Extension Agent in Duplin County. My primary responsibilities are beef cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and 4-H Youth Livestock programs. I’m excited to be contributing to such a great newsletter and hope that you get something helpful out of this article and ones in the future!

As we get really geared up for the year in Youth Livestock, I think it’s important to take a step back and look at what these kids are getting out of these programs to benefit them now and in the future. A well rounded kid who is involved in showing, judging, skillathon, quiz bowls, and other livestock projects will be prepared for a successful future. First of all, judging teaches kids how to evaluate livestock, which is a skill that they will need if they plan to have a future in livestock production. Livestock judging also teaches these youth decision-making skills that are difficult to replicate. They are presented with four animals that they have to evaluate and rank in a matter of 12-15 minutes and then take notes and prepare a set of reasons to defend that ranking. This requires a great deal of time management and organization in a short period of time and is really impressive for a young kid when you stop and think about it. Giving oral reasons is one of the best ways to develop public speaking skills at a young age. Having to develop a roughly 2 minute “speech” in a short amount of time and then present it to an, often times, total stranger provides more public speaking experience than most Public Speaking classes in college!

Skillathon and Quiz Bowl give youth an opportunity to develop a very extensive knowledge of animal husbandry. They have to learn about tools and equipment, feed ingredients, meat cuts, and many other areas of livestock production. Both of these contests force kids to be quick thinkers to be successful. They also develop teamwork skills by working with their team members to practice and study the vast amount of information they are required to know. The information that these kids learn for these contests will prepare them for any animal science classes they may take in the future and will put them way ahead of their classmates!

All of these programs help youth to build confidence in themselves and their abilities. They will one day look back on their participation in livestock judging as the reason they’re able to hold a conversation with a stranger or why they were able to sell themselves in an interview. They will fondly remember all the fun times they had at practices or on trips to contests with their teammates who will inevitably become some of their best friends. If they are successful enough in livestock judging, they could even earn a full-ride scholarship to be on a collegiate judging team. The possibilities and the benefits are endless!

Here are some local upcoming Livestock Judging, Skill-a-thon, and Quiz Bowl opportunities. If you have youth that are interested in participating, contact your local extension office.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Clover Classic Livestock Show and Skill-a-thon Contest</td>
<td>Dixie Classic Fair Grounds</td>
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<td>March 16</td>
<td>Wilson County 4-H Skill-a-thon and Livestock Judging Contest</td>
<td>Wilson County Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Eastern Carolina 4-H Livestock Show and Sale Livestock Judging Contest</td>
<td>Eastern Carolina Ag and Education Center, Tarboro, NC</td>
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<td>May 31</td>
<td>NC Junior Beef Round Up Skill-a-thon Contest</td>
<td>NC State Fairgrounds, Jim Graham Building</td>
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<td>June 26</td>
<td>Livestock Judging Clinic</td>
<td>NCSU Beef Educational Unit</td>
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<td>June 27</td>
<td>Skill-a-thon Clinic</td>
<td>NCSU Beef Educational Unit</td>
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<td>July 15</td>
<td>Practice Classes of Livestock</td>
<td>NCSU Beef Educational Unit</td>
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<td>July 16</td>
<td>State 4-H Livestock Judging Contest</td>
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<td>July 17</td>
<td>State 4-H Skill-a-thon and Quiz Bowl Contest</td>
<td>NCSU Beef Educational Unit</td>
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"Judging instills the confidence in those people who may be timid and humbles those who tend to be conceited." —Harlan Ritchie—a Distinguished Professor of Animal Science at Michigan State University
Avoiding Snow Disasters with Poultry Houses
By: Richard Goforth, Area Poultry Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension

sNOw FUN!

While most of the State’s children and kids at heart enjoyed the recent snow, for farmers, especially livestock producers, snow days are no break. Frozen precipitation in any form just increases the worry as well as slowing down the everyday workload. Poultry producers face many challenges during these events even know the birds are hopefully warm and dry inside the house, you wonder if you will have enough feed and propane to last until a delivery truck can get to your farm or worse you have to hold birds past their processing date or are due to get chicks. Of course, there is always the concern if the power will stay on and your generator will work fine if it does fail but the biggest concern that is often overlooked with all the work is the weight of all that snow and ice causing a structural failure.

After consulting with colleagues around the state there were at least 50 poultry houses collapsed or damaged during the last weeks snow and ice events and there is a good chance that many others may have been strained and compromised leaving them more susceptible to future stresses from mother nature. For any growers out there that have sustained a loss it is important that you keep accurate records of expenses for demolition, removal and reconstruction or repair. Also, document bird losses and have your service person sign and validate your mortality for the flock prior to the collapse. These records will be needed for insurance claims, and any possible disaster relief. I also encourage growers to make sure they or the integrator reports the losses to the county Farm Service Agency FSA office so they can track total losses for the state and will have contact information if disaster funds become available. Unfortunately currently funding for the LIP (Livestock Indemnity Program) was cut a couple of years ago and poultry producers are not covered in current crop insurance plans, although there has been some discussion about including poultry producers in some way with the new farm bill program for crop insurance.

There are several questions for those producers that made it through this weather event need to ask themselves. First, were any of my facilities compromised?