

RUCKER'S RAMBLINGS

ANIMAL AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER

FALL 2008

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Our New Website: <http://yadkin.ces.ncsu.edu>



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MANAGEMENT TIPS

- # Reduce Stocking Rate to reduce stress on grass and improve forage vigor
- # Soil Test to provide what your forage needs to be productive
- # Push a pencil to be COST EFFECTIVE in your operation
- # Keep livestock healthy. They will utilize feed more efficiently
- # Utilize supplements to reduce grazing stress
- # Be careful if feeding stressed forage. Some millet, sorghums, johnsongrass and some weeds can accumulate nitrates. Contact me if you need forages tested
- # Utilize feeding strategies to reduce wasted feed
- # Be open to trying different feeds and feeding strategies
- # Be realistic and honest with your situation and be ready to adjust as needed
- # Attend education meetings to help you learn new strategies and methods
- # Don't waste expensive feed on non-productive animals
- # Formulate a plan to help you better prepare for future decisions

BEEF PRODUCERS MEETING

The NC Cattlemen's Association is hosting a BQA Cattle Handling Workshop, Thursday, Nov. 13, 2008. This event will be held at the Mt. Airy Stockyards, beginning at 6:00 PM. Management practices to be covered will include: castration, dehorning, vaccinations, marketing, transportation, handling and others. With the economy and fluctuating cattle prices, producers MUST do all they can to improve the quality of their cattle to increase their marketability. Also with the implementation of COOL, it will be a great time to ask questions about the implications COOL will have on you. This event will take the place of the Yadkin Beef Producers regular meeting.

There is a sponsored meal and **RESERVATIONS ARE NEEDED!!!** I'm planning to drive (leaving about 5:00 PM) and can take a limited number. Please call the Extension Center (336/679-2061) NO LATER THAN Monday, November 10, to make reservations, request a ride or for more information.

Special accommodations will be made for the physically disabled, vision or hearing impaired person upon request. If special accommodations are required, please call 679-2061, one week prior to the event.

HAY DIRECTORY

So far this year I have had only a few requests to purchase hay. Along that same line, I've only had a few individuals tell me they have hay for sell. If you have hay for sell or are needing to purchase hay, contact the Extension Office and maybe I can assist folks meet their needs. Hay seems a little more plentiful now than at this time last year but don't wait until you are feeding that last bale to start hunting.



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ODDS AND ENDS

Looking for a herdsire? Contact me. I know of several. Various breeds, colors and ages.

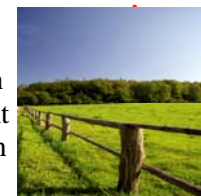
Farm Bureau is hosting a Farm Energy Efficiency Project. You can attend a meeting Wednesday, Nov. 5 to learn more about this program and how it could save you money. The meeting will be at the Iredell County Agricultural Center, in Statesville at 7:00 PM. There will be a dinner so please contact Scott Welborn 919/782-1705, ext. 8209 or scott.welborn@NCFB.org. to reserve your seat.

There are workshops planned for individuals planning to direct market beef, especially forage fed beef. The workshops will cover issues like forage production systems, risk management, finishing cattle on grass, direct marketing and other related topics. Right now the closest training will be January 14th in Lexington. I will send more information later. Contact me if you might be interested.

The NCDA&CS will be conducting an Agricultural Water Survey in January of 2009. Public perception is agriculture water use is excessive while in reality it is much less than thought. The survey will provide accurate facts about agricultural water use. When you receive the survey, please take the time to fill it out, helping clear up a public misunderstanding about agricultural water use.

PASTURE MANAGEMENT TIPS

Two years of drought has hurt most pastures and hay fields. Even with adequate rainfall, grass can make a temporary recovery but will probably struggle to be productive due to the stress the drought has inflicted. Be prepared to give your grass what it needs to recover and produce quality forage in the future. Take the time to test your fields so you will know what fertilizers will give you the most bang for your buck. Don't look at fertilizer as an expense but more as an investment in the future of your grass land. Without the proper nutrients, grass will not be productive and applying proper nutrients this coming year will be very important to help your forage try to recover as well as be productive. At the very least, apply the recommended lime to correct pH problems so whatever nutrients are in the soil can be utilized by the plant. A Soil Test will help you apply what the forage needs, in proper amounts so you will spend your fertilizer dollar more wisely. Come by the office to get your soil test boxes and help your pastures work more efficiently for you.



KNOW WHAT YOUR ANIMALS ARE EATING

While we are in the testing mode, forage quality has been compromised this year and grazing as well as hay may not pack the nutritive punch it normally does. To make sure you are meeting your cattle's nutritional needs, sample your hay to see what your cattle are actually consuming. If cattle are lacking vital nutrients, production will suffer. If you feed more than needed, you will be wasting valuable feed resources. This is the year to be cost effective and feed what the animal needs: nothing more, nothing less. Contact the Extension Office to see how to get your hay tested. It only costs \$10 dollars but the information you receive can save you resources you can use to meet other needs.

ACORN POISONING POTENTIAL

This time of year livestock will often head for woody areas to graze (mostly cattle). This could turn out to be dangerous because acorns are plentiful this year and can be toxic if enough is consumed. Not sure how many must be consumed before the animal is effected but it is a good idea to not find out.



If the pastures contain a large number of oaks, the easiest quick fix is to fence them out. An alternative is to set up a management program to keep the animals off those pastures from the time the acorns start to fall until several weeks after the leaves have fallen. Acorns retain high levels of tannic acid for several months so the management plan needs to address this length of time. Contact your veterinarian if you have questions concerning whether or not your livestock have acorn poisoning.

COOL IS HERE, ARE YOU READY?

The Mandatory Country Of Origin Labeling (COOL) is a federal law and began October 1, 2008. Retailers must label certain products with one of 4 labels : U.S. Origin, Multiple Countries of origin that include the United States, Imported Direct for slaughter and Imported Beef. Of course there are some exemptions. This is a law for retailers, not farmers. It is a marketing program, not a food safety program. It is based on source verification and farmers will more than likely be asked to sign an affidavit verifying where the cattle they are selling were born or purchased from. This is where some farm records come in handy. With basic records, you can show that your calves were born on your farm or where your cattle originated. Without the affidavit, cattle will receive a serious discount if they are sold at all. Contact me to see an affidavit or for more information.



STATESVILLE AREA BEEF CONFERENCE

Make plans to attend the Statesville Regional Beef Conference, Thursday, January 8, 2009. The program offers something that every cattle producer can use. Some of the topics that will be covered are: Drought Recovery, Update of Animal Health Products, New Technologies in the Beef Industry, Beef Production in the New Economic Environment and Trends in Cattle Marketing. This conference has been very useful and educational for the many participants. This conference will provide information to help producers make wise decisions concerning their operations.

The conference starts at 3:30 PM at the Iredell Agricultural Resources Center, 444 Bristol Dr., Statesville, NC. There will be a sponsored meal at the conclusion of the conference. Please mark your calendar to attend this event. It looks like a program that you don't want to miss.

POULTRY LITTER REMINDERS

The high price of commercial fertilizer has increased the demand for poultry litter. A few years ago, some poultry farmers considered litter to be a liability. Now, poultry litter is in high demand for its fertilizer value. This is a good time to review some regulations related to poultry litter.

1. Poultry litter cannot be stockpiled closer than 100 feet from a perennial stream or perennial water body or well.
2. Each field where poultry litter is applied must be included in a nutrient management plan.
3. Poultry litter cannot be spread within 25 feet of perennial waters.
4. Poultry litter cannot be spread within 100 feet of wells.
5. Poultry litter cannot be spread within 200 feet of a dwelling other than those owned by the land owner.
6. Poultry litter must be sampled within 60 days of application.
7. Litter must be applied at nitrogen agronomic rates or phosphorous agronomic rates if the phosphorous index is above the trigger value for the soil type receiving the litter.
8. Poultry litter must be applied to fields with an actively growing crop, a crop that will break dormancy within 30 days or on a field where a crop will be planted within 30 days.
9. Litter that is stockpiled more than 15 days must be covered. Plastic covers will suffice.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 336/679-2061.

EQUINE COURSES TO BE OFFERED



The 2008-2009 Equine Short Course & Clinic Series is accepting registrations. This annual event is a series of educational programs designed to provide the most recent information and technology concerning horses.

Some of the topics to be covered are: Horse Breeding, Hoof Care & Shoeing, Judging, Judges' Certification Training, Foaling and Foal Management, Feeding, Animal Cruelty Issues and the 4-H Horse Leaders Conference. The classes start in December 2008 and run into May 2009. Most of the classes are held in the Raleigh area. There is a registration fee to attend and you will be responsible for most of your meals, travel and lodging expenses.

For more information or a registration form, come by or call the Extension Center (336/679-2061) or contact the Extension Horse Husbandry Dept. (919-515-5784) or www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/horse/hhmain.html.

BLUEGRASS SHOW TO SUPPORT YOUTH

A Bluegrass Show & Dance will be held with all proceeds going to help support local youth with 4-H Livestock projects. The musical event will be Saturday, November 8 at the Farmington Community Center. The music will start at 7:00 PM and go until about 10:00 PM. There will be several bands and lots of delicious snacks and drinks for sale. All proceeds go to support Livestock Judging, Skillathon, Clinics and other Educational Livestock Projects.

The Bluegrass Show & Dance is sponsored by the Yadkin-Davie 4-H Livestock Association. For more information or to purchase tickets (cheaper if purchased in advance), contact the Extension Center at 679-2061. Come out November 8, listen to some great music, get a little exercise and help our local youth to have a brighter future.

Dates To Remember

November 5 Farm Bureau Energy Efficiency Project Information Meeting

November 8 Bluegrass Show and Dance to support youth livestock projects, 7:00 PM, Farmington

November 13 BQA Chute-Side Cattle Workshop, Mt. Airy Stockyards, 6:00 PM

