

# LIVESTOCK & FORAGE NEWS



## SUMMER 2007

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### YADKIN VALLEY CATTLEMEN'S ALLIANCE HELPS YOU CUT COSTS

Production costs for cattle operations seem to keep increasing all the time. Market prices fluctuate making it more difficult to decide when to market cattle. If you are interested in trying to lower costs and increase marketing opportunities, make plans to attend the next meeting of the Yadkin Valley Cattlemen's Alliance. The meeting will be Thursday, July 19, at the Prime Sirloin, in Yadkinville. The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM.

This Alliance works hard to help reduce production costs for cattle producers. Some of their accomplishments are: Quality mineral supplements at several dollars (per bag) below retail price, dewormers at much lower than retail prices and building strong relationships with cattle buyers to organize marketing opportunities for members.

The meeting, Thursday, July 19 will be to fill a vacant director position, recruit new members, survey producers on available cattle for sale (color, age, breeding, etc.) for possible marketing opportunities and organize another mineral and dewormer order.

This a great opportunity to work with fellow producers, improve herd health and improve marketing opportunities. The Alliance will cover the cost of the meal for up to date members from 2006, 2007 and anyone who pays their dues that night. All others will be on their own.

Reservations are requested so adequate space can be arranged. Please contact Eddie Leagans at 336/998-2515, before Tuesday, July 17 to make sure you reserve your spot. For more information on the benefits on the Alliance or how to become a member, contact Eddie at 336/998-2515.

Working with fellow cattlemen, reducing costs and creating marketing opportunities; makes for a win-win situation. Make plans to attend Thursday, July 19.

## **FEEDER CALF SALES**

Start getting your calves ready for the Graded Feeder Calf Sales coming up. August 9 is the first sale for Statesville and the second sale will be September 20. The Wilkes Area Feeder Calf Sale is scheduled for October 3. Many of you have participated before and have seen the benefits. Let's show our support for these sales again. I will have entry forms in my office soon. Call me for more information or to get a consignment form.



## **MANAGEMENT TIPS**

1. Keep fly control program up to date.
2. Attend local field days and educational events.
3. **GET CALVES READY FOR STATE GRADED SALES!**
4. Provide free choice salt & minerals, water and shade.
5. **OBSERVE ANIMALS FREQUENTLY** for pinkeye, foot rot and other problems.
6. Clip/mow pastures to improve quality and reduce pinkeye incidence.
7. **HAVE YOUR HAY TESTED FOR NUTRITIONAL CONTENT.**
8. Make sure you have enough feed for the winter.

## **REDUCING HEAT STRESS ON LIVESTOCK**

During the summer months, you are not the only one heat effects. Heat and high humidity can slow down an animals production, inhibit growth of offspring or even cause death in extreme cases. Provide enough shade to allow the whole herd to get in out of the sun. Sources of shade can range from woods to a barn (use what you have available). Provide an unlimited supply of fresh, clean water. A cow nursing a calf can consume over 20 gallons of water per day, when the temperature is above 90. A dry cow can consume over 15 gallons. Deworming in the summer can also help. Livestock infected with worms are already stressed and the heat will only add to it. Younger livestock seem to hit a growth spurt after deworming the herd in the summer (females produce more milk, offspring have better appetites and feed efficiency). Take time to evaluate your plan to reduce heat stress for your herd.



## **GOAT AND SHEEP ROUNDUP**

The second annual NC Goat and Sheep Roundup will be held August 17 & 18 at the Lee County Fairgrounds in Sanford. This will be a good educational opportunity covering many topics including health, marketing, forages, nutrition, live animal evaluation and an optional FEMACHA certification training (for an extra fee). Saturday will be split with a hands-on youth track (evaluation and showmanship of lambs, meat goats and dairy goats), and a hands-on adult track (hoof trimming, Quality Assurance and more). There are registration fees associated with this program:

Adults: \$75 for both days (additional family members - \$50)  
\$45 for 1 day only

Youth: \$55 for both days or \$10 for Saturday only

FEMACHA Certification - \$12.00

Registration deadline is August 1, 2007. A \$10 late fee will be added after this date. If you want more information or to register go to the following website:

<http://franklin.ces.ncsu.edu/files/library/35/goatandsheep.pdf>

## **HEALTH TIDBITS FOR HORSE OWNERS**



Horse diseases like West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE, sleeping sickness) are more prominent in the summer months. These can be transferred by mosquitoes, so steps to control mosquitoes is important to reduce the possibility of your horses being affected. Other diseases also threaten horses but can be controlled with a proper vaccination program. Contact the Extension Office or your veterinarian for information on a health program to help keep your horse healthy.

Don't ride your horse during the hottest time of the day. If you must, don't push your horse to its physical limits. Make sure you give your horse plenty of rest time and watch for signs that the heat is having a negative effect. Give the horse a little extra cool down time after a ride before putting the horse in the stall or back in the pasture. Make sure he has access to fresh clean water to replenish the fluids lost during the ride.

With this year being so hot and dry, providing shade and plenty of fresh water is very important to keep horses healthy. Pay special attention to fly control and keeping the barn clean and reducing dust. Flies carry disease and torment horses. Dust can irritate the respiratory tract increasing the chance of illness and collect in water buckets making the horse less likely to consume adequate amounts of water. A little extra effort can keep your horses comfortable, healthy and happy this summer.



## **WATCH FOR POISONOUS PLANTS DURING DROUGHT**

Certain plants, like some weeds and ornamentals are toxic, and during times of dry conditions when no other pasture feed is available, livestock may be inclined to consume them. Toxic weeds are typically in the pastures all the time and livestock normally leave them alone. The concern is that such plants may be the only thing green still standing during drought situations, making them more desirable to grazing animals.

Producers should get to know the more common toxic weeds and plants and keep livestock well fed to ensure they aren't tempted to eat them.

Avoid grazing drought stressed summer annuals, including sudex, sorghums (including Johnson grass), corn and millets. Prussic acid is a problem with sudex and sorghums, and nitrate poisoning can be a problem with any of these plants. Wait until 2 weeks after moisture is adequate and growth resumes.

Producers can minimize livestock illness from poisonous plants by following these suggested guidelines:

- \* Learn to ID poisonous plants.
- \* Supplement feed with salt, minerals and other nutrients.
- \* Avoid grazing animals in areas of abundant poisonous plants.
- \* Provide adequate water to prevent non-selective grazing.

Contact the Extension Center for more information or a positive ID on a weed.



## **DROUGHT MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

\* Try not to graze pastures too low. That will decrease the potential for them to respond to rain, and severely thin forage stands. Producers must decide whether to cull livestock or start feeding to save what pasture is left. If you still have grass, rotational grazing can help stretch it. Providing supplemental feed, allows livestock to graze longer on the limited forage that is available.

\* Develop a long term management plan. The effects of the drought will last for a long time, and producers need to plan now, so they don't have to liquidate good cows when the market is at its bottom.

Some practices to consider are:

# Cull open, old and/or defective livestock immediately.

# Buy feed, either hay or commodities. Calculate rations to meet animal performance goals, and calculate the cost of various feeding programs.

# Creep feed young livestock to ease the pressure on mom. Wean early if possible.

# If adequate moisture returns before July 15, consider planting summer annuals.

Be prepared for normal planting dates (September) for over seeding winter annuals on cropland or summer perennial grasses if moisture returns in time. If moisture comes late, still plant your winter annuals, but no later than December 1.

If cool season pastures are severely damaged then stocking rate needs to be reduced for next year, and the opportunity needs to be taken to establish improved grasses (i.e. non toxic fescue). If producers are going to reestablish non-toxic fescue, they probably need to kill any remaining stand, plant winter annual this fall, summer annual next summer, and plant the fescue next fall.

Remember that producers have multiple options. Therefore, it is necessary to calculate the costs of alternatives to make sure you are choosing the lowest cost option. Enterprise budgets show that growing and baling hay can run over \$100/ton. Purchasing hay will be an alternative in some areas. Alternative feeds like soybean hulls or corn gluten feed might be more cost effective than purchasing hay, or importing hay from other states.

### **DATES AND EVENTS**

<i>July 19</i>	<i>Yadkin Valley Cattlemen's Alliance, Yadkinville</i>
<i>August 9</i>	<i>Statesville Area Feeder Calf Sale, Turnersburg</i>
<i>August 11</i>	<i>Yadkin/Davie 4-H Livestock Show, Winston-Salem</i>
<i>August 17 &amp; 18</i>	<i>NC Goat &amp; Sheep Round-Up, Sanford</i>
<i>September 1</i>	<i>NC Simmental Assoc. Fall Sale, Statesville, NC</i>
<i>September 20</i>	<i>Statesville Area Feeder Calf Sale</i>
<i>October 3</i>	<i>Wilkes Area Graded Feeder Calf Sale</i>