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RUCKERS RAMBLINGS
LIVESTOCK/FORAGES
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PLEASE HELP SPREAD THE WORD

As a show of public safety during the Coronavirus situation, Cooperative Extension is working more remotely than we ever have. Extension Agents are doing more emails, webinars, phone calls, texts, etc. With the "Stay at Home" Order, we are not in the office on a regular basis. This makes it more difficult to mail information, especially mass mailings like newsletters. There are still quite a few individuals who do not regularly use email and providing current information becomes challenging. There have been times information changes several times during the week or a program with a short deadline is announced and getting a mass mailing out is not an option. To write up, copy, stuff envelopes and stamp a mass mailing takes time, people and postage dollars. With a skeleton staff, this is hard to do on short notice. We are still mailing newsletters, we just have to plan a little further in advance. Because of this, PLEASE talk with family, friends, neighbors, customers and others who do not regularly use email to join the technology crowd so they are better prepared to receive up to date information. They can email me phil_rucker@ncsu.edu to be added to my email list and receive information. I do use the blind copy function (BCC) so no one's email is plastered for all the world to see. I would appreciate your help to keep producers informed.

PASTURE PORK ONLINE WORKSHOP

Have you thought about raising pigs? Whether you want to raise pigs for you and your family or as a small business, join us for this workshop to explore the basic considerations you need to contemplate before starting a Pastured Pork Enterprise. This webinar workshop was organized by Sara Drake, April Bowman, Phil Rucker and Lee Menius.

There is no registration fee, but registration is required. Choose the session that fits your schedule & register online.

- [Session A: Wednesday, April 29 @ 12 p.m.](#) OR
- [Session B: Thursday, April 30 @ 6:30 p.m.](#)

This hour long session will provide a broad overview including production systems, budgeting, processing, and marketing with time allowed for a Q&A session to help you decide if this enterprise is right for you.

Based on interest, this introductory workshop will be followed up with production based webinar series. For questions regarding this workshop or the future webinar series, please [email Sara Drake](#).

The series will be held through the [Zoom](#) platform. If you have any questions about the conference or using Zoom, please [email Sara Drake](#), Livestock Extension Agent.



FINANCIAL RELIEF POSSIBILITIES

USDA announces the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) to support farmers and ranchers during the COVID-19 pandemic. CFAP will use the funding and authorities provided in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), and other USDA existing authorities. There is talk of direct payments to farmers/ranchers as well as purchasing agricultural products (meat, dairy and produce) to support producers and provide food to those in need. A little more information was released but no specifics yet. The relief will be for numerous aspects of agriculture (livestock, row crops, fruits/vegetables, etc.) so there are quite a few details to work through.

This is a USDA (Federal) program and decisions on how much, who gets what and who distributes the program will be decided by the USDA. New information on this program is constantly surfacing. Cooperative Extension is a State/County based agency and not Federal. As we receive information, we will pass it along as best we can. As for now, please don't call the Extension office with questions as we do not have any specifics and as I said, USDA will be in charge of this program. We just want you to know something is in the works.

Other financial assistance possibilities are:

RAFI-USA COVID-19 Farmer Emergency Grant Application

<https://www.rafiusa.org/blog/applications-now-open-emergency-relief-mini-grants-for-nc-farmers/>

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association posted an article about COVID-19 Relief Funds Available to Farmers Starting April 3. [Click here to find out more.](#)

American Farmland Trust has set up a [Farmer Relief Fund](#).

Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) has a new [mini-grant program for livestock and poultry producers](#).

COVID-19 N.C. Rapid Recovery Program Launched for Small Businesses (Golden LEAF)

Read more at: <https://covid19.ces.ncsu.edu/farms-agribusiness/>

Maintaining your health during this COVID-19 situation needs to be a priority. With more folks staying closer to home and not getting out as much, regular daily activity could slow down. To help you stay in shape and avoid adding a few extra pounds, here are a few things to look at adding to your normal routine. Get out and walk fence lines to make sure they are in good shape and to get some exercise. Walk the pastures to check on livestock instead of driving through the pastures. It's good exercise and you can get a better look at your livestock. Get some healthy snacks to eat when you might be bored, and sometimes we eat just because. Healthy snacks are much better than junk food with empty calories. Take walks with your family to help keep

weight off and reconnect. Watch your stress level. Work in the garden and the list goes on and on. If you find yourself at home more than normal, think about ways to help you maintain your good health.

ASIAN LONGHORN TICK

We recently saw a very informative webinar about the Asian Longhorn Tick. Excellent up-to-date information was presented by several knowledgeable speakers. In order to be informed and prepare to control this tick, we want to make this information available to everyone that needs it. It is in Virginia and surrounding counties.

This information will help with basic understanding of the biology of the new tick, the experience in VA over the last several years with the tick and the related cattle disease Theileria, and how to practically prevent outbreaks at the farm level. This information will be of value to anyone that might encounter the tick or that might be asked about it by landowners.

The webinar may be accessed at: <https://go.ncsu.edu/whjcmqu>

For the most part, the Asian Longhorn Ticks found in the US have been females. Bad thing is the females are parthenogenic meaning they can reproduce without mating (males are not needed). They can lay 1000's of eggs and they can attach to livestock, wildlife, pets, humans and other animals, making it easy for the population to expand.

Backrubs, sprays and observation are some of the best methods for control. Use pyrethroids, permethrins and other products that specifically list tick control. Some fly tags are labeled for ticks but keep an eye on your livestock to make sure the belly and legs are remaining tick free. Some spot treatments might be necessary to make sure your animals are covered. Read and FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS no matter which product you use. These ticks can latch on to most animals so observe your livestock, pets as well as yourself.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL FARMS

Does your farm provide direct to consumer sales? The N.C. Cooperative Extension Local Food Program is collecting marketing information from NC farms that are interested in being listed in statewide local food maps. Information is being gathered at the state level to account for farms that distribute food to multiple counties and to have information to support regional food systems. The information will also be used at the county level to promote local foods like farm raised eggs, meat, vegetables and more.

Please complete this short [Google Form](#) by April 25 to be included in these statewide local food mapping efforts. It only asks for marketing information. No personal information is collected.

There has been an increase in folks wanting to purchase local foods direct from the farm and they are looking for sources of farm raised meat, eggs, vegetables and more. Looks like a good opportunity for a win-win.

I do get calls from individuals looking for farm raised meat, eggs and other products. Let me know if you do direct market products to customers. Remember all licenses/certificates (meat handlers license, etc.) must be obtained and food safety rules and regulations must be followed.