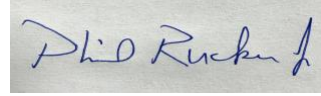




**N.C. Cooperative Extension**  
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P: 336.753.6100  
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RUCKER'S RAMBLINGS  
ANIMAL AGRICULTURE INFORMATION  
LIVESTOCK, HORSES & FORAGE  
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022



Phillip Rucker, Jr.  
Extension Agent, Agriculture-Livestock

**CATTLE PRODUCERS MEETING:** There will be a Cattle Producers meeting for Davie and Yadkin producers, Thursday, March 3, at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Davie County Senior Services Center, 278 Meroney Street, Mocksville. The meeting we had in October on Marketing Options was well received and producers asked for other programs on marketing. Harward Livestock has a new marketing program using tags to identify cattle that are adhering to a specific herd health protocol. These cattle will receive a preferred sale order on Mondays. The tags will be preordered and the proper forms will accompany the cattle for the sale. Harward Livestock will be on hand to discuss this new way to market your cattle. The protocol follows along with what the buyers are looking for and they will know the tagged cattle have had preferred treatment. We will also discuss the benefits of truckload lots and how to join some smaller operations to produce a load and reap the benefits of this marketing option. There is a difference in selling and **MARKETING**. When you sell, you pretty much take what the buyer is willing to give. When you **MARKET**, you utilize management practices to **ADD VALUE** to your cattle making them higher quality. Buyers desire these **VALUE ADDED** cattle and usually pay for the effort. We will also hit on some options like freezer beef and others for smaller operations.

The meeting/educational program is free to all who attend. There will be a charge of \$5 per individual, for the meal (if you eat). So the meeting and educational program are free, but if you plan to eat, there will be a \$5 per person charge. You can pay with cash or a check made out to Davie-Yadkin Cattlemen's Assoc. Due to this charge, **IF YOU PLAN TO EAT; RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED!!!** Please call the Extension Center in Davie 336/753-6100, Yadkin 336/849-7908 or email [phil\\_rucker@ncsu.edu](mailto:phil_rucker@ncsu.edu) **NO LATER THAN 12:00 NOON, Monday, February 28, 2022**, to reserve your meal or for more information. Food will be ordered based on reservations.

**The caterer has asked for this deadline** so enough food can be ordered early enough.

If you plan to attend only the educational portion, we would like to know so sufficient seating can be provided.

The educational portion is free and will begin a little after 7:00 PM. This will be a great program to help you improve your cattle's marketability and help them meet your production goals.

*Special accommodations will be made for the physically disabled, vision or hearing impaired person upon request. If special accommodations are required, please call Phil Rucker 753-6100 (Davie) or 849-7908 (Yadkin), at least one week before the scheduled event.*

\*\*Please visit our websites at [davie.ces.ncsu.edu](http://davie.ces.ncsu.edu) or [yadkin.ces.ncsu.edu](http://yadkin.ces.ncsu.edu) to see the many programs and events we offer. Bet you can find at least one program you will want to attend.

**NEEDING, BUYING & SELLING HAY:** The wacky weather of 2021 and the start of 2022 has some folks wondering if they have enough hay. I hear some producers say they will need a little to get them through. I know of a few producers with some for sale. If you know you need to purchase some hay, contact me and I'll try to help you fill that void. If you have some hay for sale, please let me know and that would help out some fellow producers. And even though spring is just around the corner, it would be wise for most producers to keep feeding hay to reduce the chance of livestock overgrazing the new grass and causing damage.



## **MANAGEMENT TIPS AND PRACTICES TO HELP STRETCH YOUR HAY (GRASS IS ON THE WAY)**

- \* Figure hay needs to avoid spending more than is necessary
- \* Supplement with silage, gluten feed, soyhulls or other products to reduce hay consumption
- \* Feed only what they will eat and in a feeding structure (ring, trailer, etc.) to reduce waste
- \* Reduce the number of head you are feeding: less to feed now and reduced grazing pressure will allow grass to regrow quicker in the spring

## **GENERAL MANAGEMENT TIPS**

- \* Keep your horse's coat clean from mud. Mud reduces the natural insulation properties.
- \* Make cost effective decisions on fertilizing grassland.
- \* Plan your war against flies now. Use the most cost effective method for your operation.
- \* Think about weeds that were a problem and make plans to control them in 2022.
- \* Reduce stocking rates to reduce stress on grass and improve forage vigor.
- \* Vaccinate equine (horses, donkeys, mules) against West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis and more.
- \* Start feeding cattle a COMPLETE mineral mix with Hi-Magnesium to help prevent grass tetany.
- \* Use good judgment & read labels when returning livestock to pastures that have been recently fertilized or treated for weeds.
- \* Work on hay equipment now instead of when you need it.

## **HERD HEALTH TO-DO LIST FOR LIVESTOCK**

- \* Vaccinate equine (horses, donkeys, mules) against West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis and other issues your veterinarian recommends. Take precautions to minimize standing water where mosquitoes breed.
- \* Feed cattle a COMPLETE mineral mix with Hi-Magnesium to help prevent grass tetany.
- \* Check pastures for toxic plants or trees and treat accordingly. Repair fences, barns and working facilities to reduce the chance of injury.
- \* Use good judgment and read the labels when returning livestock to pastures that have been recently fertilized or treated for weeds.

**DON'T SHORTCHANGE YOUR GENETICS:** I get numerous calls from cattle producers looking for a bull as "cheap" as they can get. For me, this is the wrong way to look at a herdsire. The bull's genetics makes up ½ (50%) of the calf crop. WHY do you want to skimp on such a major contributor to your operation? I know of producers who purchased lower genetic quality bulls because they were "cheap" and then complain because the buyers paid less for their calves saying they lacked quality. A bull is worth the price of 4-5 feeder calves (do the math). I hear that prices are low and "I can't afford to spend much on a bull". It will be at least 18 months from conception until you market those calves. Low prices now have a good chance of being higher when you market those calves. A high quality bull will help your calves be more in line with the buyer's needs so you can get those better prices. I also advise you to maintain that bull in the best condition possible. When a bull loses condition, his fertility can suffer. He has a harder time covering the cows in the herd. You will spend more money to get a bull back in breeding shape than maintaining him. If he becomes infertile, how much time and money have you thrown away? Don't cut corners to save a little \$ up front because it might cost you more \$\$\$ on your bottom line.

Bull sellers need to sharpen their knives and castrate low quality bull calves. Just because he is a bull, does not make him a future herdsire. The way to improve prices, reputation and the overall beef industry is to produce quality cattle. Selling a low quality bull, just because he is a bull, doesn't really help anyone. Selling quality bulls helps you, the buyer and the industry.

*The following article was written by NC State Extension Area Specialized Poultry Agent Jonas Asbill with contributions from Richard Goforth, Lauren Greene, and Margaret Ross.*

**HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA:** (HPAI or “bird flu”) is a real threat to the poultry industry in North Carolina, the United States, and other poultry producing countries around the globe. Surveillance testing by the USDA has confirmed the presence of the virus in at least five states already this year. Waterfowl in South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, and Maryland have tested positive in recent weeks. Now a commercial flock of turkeys in Indiana has tested positive as well. There is a need for immediate action from all of those associated with poultry and the poultry industry.

*“These findings continue to support evidence that high path avian influenza is currently present in the Atlantic Americas migratory flyway,” said State Veterinarian Mike Martin. “Wild birds can carry this virus asymptotically and potentially spread it to domestic poultry. We strongly encourage all poultry owners to follow strict biosecurity measures for at least the next 30 days, which is the time frame these birds are anticipated to be migrating through the state.” Biosecurity measures include keeping your birds isolated from other people and animals in an enclosed environment. Bird owners should also keep their flock away from ponds where they might encounter migrating birds. – NCDA&CS News Release January 27th*

Producers, both big and small, should continue to practice proper biosecurity protocols to keep commercial and domestic flocks away from areas frequented by migratory birds, all waterfowl, and other wild birds. The main point here is that they do not need to have free access to the outdoors in a way that is unprotected. HPAI could wipe out an entire flock when infected. In addition to routine biosecurity protocols, other things to consider at this time include: relocating flocks away from all natural bodies of water, covering the top of any open or screened runs with metal and/or plastic to prevent wild bird droppings from falling into the bird area, and removing wild bird feeders or distancing them from any backyard flocks as much as possible. Also, if your birds are more confined than usual, consider adding forms of enrichment to discourage birds from pecking one another such as tree branches, cabbage, melons, pecking blocks, hanging aluminum pie pans, etc.

Please [take a look at our HPAI educational resource page](#). Share this information with other poultry keepers that you know as well. We all need to know the facts and be extra cautious during this time to protect our flocks and our industry. If you have any specific questions or concerns not addressed in this article, please don't hesitate to reach out to your local Poultry ASA. You can determine the appropriate contact for your county by reviewing [this map](#).

With the looming threat of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, the Poultry ASAs have compiled a list of HPAI resources and authored an article outlining the importance of being vigilant during this disease threat. Cross-pull to your county pages if desired and share these resources with poultry producers in your areas. Encourage producers to continue to practice heightened biosecurity. It is still the recommendation of NCDA&CS to keep backyard flocks in an enclosed area until further notice. Producers, both big and small, should continue to practice proper biosecurity protocols to keep domestic flocks

Other things to consider at this time:

- limit visitors to flocks
- if your chicken coop/run has an open or screened top, cover with metal or plastic to prevent wild bird droppings from falling into bird area
- remove wild bird feeders or distance them from any backyard flocks as much as possible
- provide "enrichment" if your birds are more confined than usual to help prevent birds from pecking one another

## **UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS:**

**\*EXTENSION FARM TAX WEBINARS:** The North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Chatham County Center is conducting a **Farm Tax Webinar Series** as part of its *Enhancing Sustainability Series* starting on February 15 and ending in early March. All webinars will be from 6–8 p.m EST. The webinars will be taught by Guido van der Hoeven, Agricultural Tax Specialist with the Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation at Iowa State University.

**Here is a list of the 2022 Farm Tax Webinars:**

- February 15, 2022: Farm Tax and Business Info 101
- February 22 and February 24, 2022: Schedule F Income & Expenses
- March 8, 2022: Sales and Property Tax Issues for Farmers

You must register for each webinar separately (the two Schedule F webinars are taken together so you only register once for those). [Visit the Growing Small Farms website](#) for detailed agendas and links to register.

**\*POULTRY PERMITTING & LICENSING:** Join us on February 23rd at noon for a webinar on the permits and licensing required to sell poultry and hatching eggs in North Carolina. Our speaker will be from NCDA&CS Poultry Health Division.

The webinar will be presented over Zoom. This webinar is free but registration is required. Registration will close at 6pm on February 22nd, with the Zoom link being emailed out after registration closes. Please register at the EventBrite link below!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/backyard-flock-series-poultry-permitting-and-licensing-tickets-247340260377>

**\*BASIC PASTURE MANAGEMENT FOR LIVESTOCK:** Join NC Cooperative Extension for this free virtual webinar. On Thursday, March 10. This webinar will focus on how best to manage your pastures for grazing livestock or equine. We will discuss various forage options, rotational grazing, sacrifice areas, and best management practices.

The workshop will be held Thursday, March 10, online, through Zoom from 6:30-8:00 p.m. EST.

[Register online.](#)

**\*SMALL RUMINANT HEALTH CARE WORKSHOP:** There will be an in-person Small Ruminant Health Care Workshop in Gaston County on March 11. Please see the attached flyer for more information on the program and how to register.

**\*POULTRY PROCESSING FIELD DAY:** Stokes County will be holding a workshop on poultry processing and how to use a mobile poultry processing unit. The event will be on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. The attached flyer includes a schedule and registration information. Planning on capping registration at 20. [go.ncsu.edu/poultryprocessing](http://go.ncsu.edu/poultryprocessing)

**\*EQUINE PARASITE MANAGEMENT WEBINAR:** This is a joint effort of several agents and will be held on Thursday, April 21 at 6:30PM. I do not have the registration website yet but as soon as I do, I'll get it sent out. So for now, put this webinar on your calendar.

**CATTLEMEN'S CONFERENCE FEB 25 & 26, 2022 IN HICKORY:** The 2022 NC Cattlemen's Conference will be held Friday and Saturday, February 25 & 26, 2022. Once again it will be held at the Hickory Convention Center. They are planning for a full blown, in person conference this year. This year's educational program is just what most of us need. Some of the topics are How to optimize resources to keep inputs as low as possible while optimizing the outputs of our farms; Producing and Marketing Freezer Beef and much more. The trade show is a great place to meet industry representatives and learn about new products. Just getting together with your cattle friends is a great way to network and share ideas. The NC Cattlemen's have sent information to members. If you are not a member, no time like the present to join. To see more details for the conference go to [www.nccattle.com](http://www.nccattle.com).  
<https://www.nccattle.com/news-events/annual-conference>

**GRASS TETANY:** When the grass starts to turn green and grow, grass tetany is a threat, especially to cows nursing calves. Magnesium in commercial mineral supplements or home mixtures should be provided. Your goal is to get one ounce of magnesium oxide in the cow each day. Also a mixture of 3 lbs. magnesium oxide with 97 lbs. of grain or protein supplement fed at 2 lbs. per head per day will work.

Start feeding high magnesium now, if not already. It takes a while to build the levels high enough to resist grass tetany. It's not an overnight thing and good preparation can save you some headaches later on this spring.

**PASTURE AND HAYLAND PROJECTS:** Inconsistent weather has been tough on our pastures the last couple of years. Most of our forage land needs some management, if not some renovation to be able to meet our grazing needs. Make plans to address these issues with cool season grasses in the fall.

Fertilizer is a necessity this year to help with forage growth. Yes, it appears it will be more expensive but without the proper nutrients, your forage will not produce well. This is why I have stressed SOIL TEST for all of these years. It will tell you a cost effective fertilizer plan to accomplish your goals. Cutting costs can be good, but being more efficient is better. Proper grazing and harvesting management, along with a good weed control program also strengthens the forage stand, which increases the effectiveness of fertilizer applications. You must look at ways to be more cost effective with the applications. Applying when the forage is ready to take it up reduces the chance that the weeds will STEAL your fertilizer and profits. This is a year that fertilization will be important! Trying to STARVE A PROFIT into forage production will eventually lead to a weakened stand and unwanted expense to try to save it or start over.

Control weeds to help grass thrive. Now through late March/early April is a good time to spray many cool season weeds. After three days of high temperatures in the 60's, the old standard of up to 2 pints of 2,4-D per acre for buttercup and a few other weeds provides benefits. This rate of 2,4-D will not kill established clover but can damage seedling clover. Mixing additional herbicides, such as dicamba, will help control a wider variety of weeds but increases the risk of clover injury. There are numerous broadleaf herbicides on the market that will control a wide variety of weeds. Many will also damage you're your clover. Decide what you need the herbicide to do and make your selection based on your needs. When utilizing any herbicide; READ and FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS. Be sure to treat these annual weeds before blooms appear or you will be disappointed with the results. REMEMBER that good forage management to improve your grass stand is one of the best ways to help control weeds.

Develop a grazing plan for your operation to help you utilize the forage efficiently. Overgrazing as well as undergrazing will reduce forage vigor and stimulate weed growth.

Sound management will help you keep a strong stand of grass that will work for you for years. With a few management practices, pastures and hay land can be very productive, providing abundant quality forage to our livestock. Isn't that what we want? Contact me if I can help or answer any questions.

Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact an agent of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension in your county.

**FOXTAIL CONTROL:** Foxtail has been making its presence known over the last few years and with the increasing amount of seed being dropped every year, Foxtail might be a little tougher weed to control this year. The best way to control foxtail is with a preemergent herbicide before the seeds germinate. Prowl H2O is a product now labeled for use in fescue pastures and hayfields. Prowl H2O can control a lot of weeds but for fescue pastures it does a good job on Foxtail. It will control annual weedy grasses and many broadleaf weeds. Read the label and make sure you don't kill something you want to keep. Foxtail germinates when the soil temperature warms up in the spring (usually mid April) so applying this product preferably before April 1, will help in your efforts to control. Prowl H2O needs to be rain activated within 2 days after application for best results. Results will be much less than expected without rain activation. Be sure to read and follow the label directions for all pesticides. Read the supplemental label for Prowl H2O <http://www.cdms.net/ldat/ld6CT019.pdf>

Some suggest to make 2 applications for full season control with the second application being made in late May/early June right after the first hay cutting. It is suggested to split the 4 quart per acre maximum annual load in half and apply 2 quarts to the acre in each application. The 2 quart rate should allow residual action that should last through the entire growing season. I advise you to Read the Label and contact BASF for more information or if you have additional questions.

More than likely, thick areas of foxtail have choked out other desirable grasses. So killing the foxtail could leave bare spots. When using Prowl H2O or other pendimethalin products, it takes about 10 months or so before grasses can be planted and germinate. Other weeds could try to take over those bare spots. Be prepared.

**PESTICIDE SAFETY:** Weeds are getting ready to pop and bugs are looking for somewhere to land. This usually means that folks are beginning to make their pesticide choices. Now is a good time to learn about these products and how to use them efficiently and more importantly - Protect yourself and the environment from the potential dangers pesticides can present when misused, mishandled or incorrectly stored. Remember that pesticide is a broad general description for many products (herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and even cleaners and disinfectants).

For maximum protection: Read the Label, Read it Again and Follow the Directions!!! The label is the law and is there for a reason. It tells you all you need to know about the product: what's in it, how much and how to use it, proper storage, potential dangers and much more. When you follow the label, you are using the product in the safest and most effective manner and not wasting the product.

Use the recommended rates. Using more than the label states is usually a bad idea. You will rarely get better results. Most of the time you will not improve the results. Sometimes too much product can actually decrease the effectiveness which wastes money and increases the potential of environmental consequences. Product overuse could leave residuals that could have a negative effect on your health, your family, your pets and more.

Some good pesticide awareness practices are:

- \* Store pesticides in their original container with proper label. Soda bottles or food containers are Bad Ideas!
- \* Store pesticides out of reach of children & pets and preferably behind a locked door.
- \* Use the recommended amounts listed on the label.
- \* Wash your hands with soap and water after any contact with a pesticide and its container.
- \* Keep children and pets from entering sprayed areas until the withdrawal time from the label has passed.
- \* Keep pesticides away from food and dishes.
- \* Wash clothes that come in contact with pesticide immediately and separately from other items.

The label is actually a federal law set forth by the EPA. So in a nutshell, the best way to educate yourself on the proper use of any pesticide is the READ and FOLLOW the LABEL DIRECTIONS!!