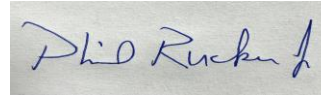




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RUCKER'S RAMBLINGS
ANIMAL AGRICULTURE INFORMATION
LIVESTOCK, HORSES & FORAGE
OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2022



Phillip Rucker, Jr.
Extension Agent, Agriculture-Livestock

CATTLE PRODUCERS MEETING: There will be a Cattle Producers meeting for Davie and Yadkin producers, Tuesday, November 8, at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Yadkin County Agricultural and Education Building, 2051 Agricultural Way, Yadkinville. We have had meetings where we discussed marketing, organizing truck load lots, herd health to meet specialized health protocols and general herd health. All have been interesting and well received. We have had requests for programs on minerals and basic cattle nutrition. A nutrition program to help cattle perform their best, help calves meet the goals of the truck load sales and a mineral program to meet the needs of our herds. For this meeting, we have a livestock nutritionist coming to discuss different nutrition needs and strategies for the cow herd and weaned calves. What minerals are needed for your herd and answer questions about minerals and nutrition issues that you might have.

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 **NO LATER THAN 3:00 PM Friday, November 4, 2022**, to reserve your meal or for more information. Food will be ordered based on reservations. It is IMPERATIVE that you make reservations by the deadline. We want to order enough but not over order.

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.

****Many of the programs listed in this newsletter require using a web site to register. If you have problems registering, contact me and I'll see what I can do to help you.**

****Please visit our websites at davie.ces.ncsu.edu or 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: I'm hearing through the grapevine that some folks are wondering if they will 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. Some folks made a good hay crop and some suffered through some dry weather reducing their harvest, Hay supplies could be inconsistent but we know fuel and other input costs have increased and so has the price of making hay. It would be wise to line up any hay source you need soon to make sure you don't get caught short when the cold winds are howling. Contact the Extension office and I can try to help.



HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE: A backyard poultry flock in Wake County has tested positive for High Path Avian Influenza (HPAI). The positive sample was identified by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Raleigh. This is the first confirmed positive in a backyard flock in the state. In late spring and early summer, HPAI was found at nine poultry farms in Johnston and Wayne counties. “We have had evidence that the HPAI virus has remained in our resident wild bird population and in migratory waterfowl, so confirmed reports of a positive flock is unfortunate, but not surprising,” said State Veterinarian Mike Martin. “ Go to the NCDA press release for additional information.

<https://www.ncagr.gov/paffairs/release/2022/BackyardflockinWakeCountytestspositiveforHPAI.htm>

A few 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

Go to <https://www.ncagr.gov/avianflu/index.htm> for more information on HPAI and biosecurity measures to help keep your flocks safe.

MANAGEMENT TIPS (Many are from the last newsletter. Never hurts to repeat)

- # Soil Test to know what your forage needs to be productive this Fall and for 2023.
 - # Submit soil samples by November 15 to avoid the \$4 per sample charge from Dec. 1 – March 31
 - # Check your feed inventory now and purchase supplemental feed to assure you have enough for the winter.
 - # Prepare for calving, foaling, lambing or kidding season. Have supplies & the veterinarian’s number close at hand.
 - # If in need of a new herd sire, don't wait until the last minute. **Start Looking NOW!**
 - # Reduce Stocking Rate, if possible, to reduce stress on grass and improve forage vigor.
 - # Test your hay to make sure of its nutrient content before you start to feed it.
 - # Keep livestock healthy, they will utilize feed more efficiently. Don't waste feed on non-productive animals.
 - # Attend educational meetings to learn new strategies and methods.
 - # Plan to stockpile forages to extend the grazing season and reduce hay needs.
 - # Be careful if feeding stressed forage. Some millet, sorghums, johnsongrass and some weeds can accumulate nitrates and prussic acid. Contact me if you need forages tested.
 - # Make sure ALL LIVESTOCK have fresh clean water available at all times.
 - # If you need hay or have hay for sell, contact me and I'll add you to my hay directory.
 - # Formulate a plan to help you better prepare for future decisions.
 - # It's getting cooler and livestock will need more calories/energy/feed to meet their production needs plus stay warm.
 - # Start checking all facilities, equipment, water supplies, etc. to make sure your operation is prepared for winter.
 - # Calculate stocking rates for ALL pastures and make sure you do not overgraze. That causes the spring growth to be slow, allowing weeds to get a head start. Properly grazed pastures respond well to spring fertilizer and water.
 - # Keep your horses coat clean from mud. Mud reduces the natural insulation properties.
 - # Get your veterinarian to give your horses a good “going over” to evaluate body condition and general health. This helps you make good decisions about adding supplements to the feed regime. Check those hooves for cracks and other issues that need attention, before winter hits.
 - # Utilize feeding strategies to reduce wasted feed
- Push a pencil to be COST EFFECTIVE in your operation.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS:

***CHANGES TO OVER THE COUNTER ANTIBIOTICS:**

In case you have not heard; there will soon be a change in how you purchase over the counter (OTC) antibiotics for livestock. In 2023 (talk about happening in June), you will no longer be able to purchase many OTC antibiotic like LA-200, penicillin and other similar products without a veterinarian's prescription. Having a Veterinarian/Client/Patient relationship is more important than ever.

For more information on this change, please watch the statewide webinar for producers on **The Last Of The "Over The Counter" Antibiotics**. It will be held on **Tuesday, November 01, 2022 from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. via zoom**.

In a nutshell: Medically important antibiotics used to treat livestock will soon not be available over the counter. Learn about which antibiotics will be impacted and how you can prepare for the transition.

Register online at: <https://go.ncsu.edu/otc>

***UNDERSTANDING MEAT LABEL CLAIMS:**

Join N.C. Cooperative Extension for an hour-long "Lunch-N-Learn" in a virtual webinar on November 2nd at 12 p.m. EST on "Understanding Meat Label Claims - For Consumers". This webinar will help you understand what meat label claims really mean and if the claim has to be verified before being on the label. *This presentation focusses more on the consumer. Farmers, please share with your customers.*

Register online at <https://go.ncsu.edu/labelingforconsumers>. Registered participants will receive an email with the meeting link.

For more information, email, April Bowman, Extension Agent, Livestock, Forages, and 4-H Youth Development at awbowman@ncsu.edu or call 336-703-2855.

McMAHAN FARM & HANCOCK ANGUS ANNUAL BULL SALE

Many beef cattle producers are searching for their next great herdsire. If you are looking for a herdsire that has been raised on forages, not been overfed, has solid records and genetics as well as raised in an environment similar to yours, make plans to attend the McMahan Farms & Hancock Angus Registered Angus Bull Sale. The sale will be Saturday, November 12, 2022, at McMahan Farms in Mocksville. Come early to view the bulls and be ready for the sale starting at 12:00 noon. All bulls in the sale have passed a breeding soundness exam. Bulls are forage fed with little supplement. Records and EPD's are available on the bulls. For more information, contact Steve McMahan 336-998-2695 (home), 336-909-1494 (cell) or Mark Hancock 336-909-1082 (cell). Remember that the calves from cows being bred now will not be sold for at least a year and a half to two years. Prices should change so don't value a bull on today's calf prices. Realize the added value and higher revenue potential this new herdsire will provide your program.

NC SMALL RUMINANT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM WINTER WEBINAR SERIES: Mark your calendars and register today! The Extension Small Ruminant Program Team has organized a 5-part webinar series on management practices to improve the productivity and profitability of your flock! These webinars will be held at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month starting in November. Registration information can be found below! Contact me if you need help registering for the programs.

November 17: Feeding for Success: Nutritional Considerations for Small Ruminants- To Register
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/44034881457>

December 15: Getting Off to the Right Start: Small Ruminant Health and Lambing/Kidding- To Register
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/440350529287>

January 19: Taking the Next Step: Small Ruminant Post-Weaning Management- To Register
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/440351141117>

February 16: Marketing Considerations and Genetic Improvement for Small Ruminants- To Register
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/440351682737>

March 16: Reproductive Management for Improved Small Ruminant Flock/Herd Productivity- To Register
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/440352154147>

NICKELS FOR KNOW-HOW REFERENDUM: The Nickels for Know-How Referendum will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2022. Davie and Yadkin County Cooperative Extension offices, will serve as polling places. Polls will be open from 8:00am to 5:00pm.

The referendum is being held to let users and producers of feed or fertilizer decide if they wish to continue the self-assessment program. This program has been in place since 1948, and the law requires that a new referendum be held every six years. A 2/3 favorable vote will mean that growers are willing to continue to assess themselves to support agricultural research and education. The assessment is fifteen cents per ton on feed and fertilizer produced in North Carolina.

The funds, about \$1.4 million annually, are collected by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and then allocated by the North Carolina Agricultural Foundation, Inc.'s 148 volunteer Board of Directors to support agricultural research and extension projects at NC State University benefitting agriculture in North Carolina.

To vote on the referendum on Nov17, go to your Extension office. For more information call the Extension office.

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BACKYARD FLOCK AND POULTRY WINTER TIPS: Winter can be a very tough time for backyard poultry flocks. Cold temperatures, less sunlight, the need for increased nutrition and plenty of water. To help your flock better tolerate the cold and possibly not drop off too much in egg production, see if some of these management practices might help. Add some supplemental light for some warmth and hens will potentially lay more with increased lighting. Don't overcrowd the birds as this leads to stress and reduced production (even cannibalism). Provide proper ventilation but reduce major drafts that could chill the birds. Provide proper and adequate nutrition for best performance and good health. Watch for scales, mites, other skin issues and diseases and treat as necessary. For more information or if you have questions, contact me at the Extension Office.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct – Dec	Lots of educational programs on Zooms and Webinars. Information about the programs and links to join are in this as well as past newsletters
November 1	Over the Counter Antibiotics webinar 7:00 – 8:30 PM. Read the article for more information and to register for this important webinar.
November 2	Understanding Meat Label Claims webinar 12:00 Noon
November 4	Deadline to RSVP for Beef Producer Meeting
November 8	Beef Producer Meeting, 6:30 PM, Yadkinville
November 12	Steve McMahan/Mark Hancock Angus Bull Sale, Mocksville 12:00 noon
November 17	Nickels For Know-How vote at your local Extension Center
Nov 17 – Mar 16	NC Small Ruminant Improvement Program Winter Webinar Series

MARKETING TRUCK LOAD LOTS

Over the last few months there has been lots of talk on marketing truck load lots of calves. A group has met a few times and is in the process of trying to organize producers to make this come true. The group is looking at breeding, size, when calves are born, vaccinations, if males are castrated, when/how weaned, bunk broke and more. The group is trying to help piece similar cattle together to make uniform lots. The group is also working with producers to help them improve herd health, genetics, feeding and more so their calves will better fit these opportunities and improve their bottom line. If you are interested in working with this marketing group, contact me at phil_rucker@ncsu.edu with some information on your herd: calving season, herd size, vaccination protocol, weaning system and we can start the process of working to fit your cattle on a load or help you meet the qualifications.

WINTER WILL COME, ARE YOU READY?

Even though fall just came a few weeks ago, winter is not too far away and we need to prepare. Don't wait till it is bone chilling cold and the snow is blowing sideways to check your operation and make sure you are ready for the elements. Evaluate your stored feed supplies so you don't run out. Make sure the water supply will be adequate and remain accessible. Prepare shelter for your livestock and make sure you have somewhere for those "mamma's to be" to go when time to calve, foal, kid, lamb, etc. Check antifreeze levels in tractors, trucks and other necessary equipment. Keep a watchful eye on your livestock for ones who might seem a little "gimpy", thin, or not quite as healthy as the rest of the herd. Winter is not the best time to be trying to put weight on livestock, nurse one back to health or be working on a sore foot. **MAKE** the time to give your farm and livestock a good going over to prepare for any bad weather we might have. A little preparation now could mean more time in front of the fire place this winter.

Below is just a brief list of additional things to check-on and help you and your livestock survive the winter elements. Life's little surprises are easier to handle when you are better prepared for issues.

- * Take a feed inventory and obtain more feed as needed.
- * Adjust stocking rates in accordance to pasture available and feed resources.
- * Check animals overall health.
- * Prepare equipment and facilities for feeding, housing and extra abuse from animals.
- * Assure water supply will be adequate during extended cold periods.
- * Check your attitude. Make sure you WILL properly care for your animals no matter the weather.

These are just a few things to consider. I'm sure you have many others. Please make adequate preparations now. "People don't plan to fail, they fail to plan".

YOU KNOW THIS BUT JUST REMINDING YOU:

Don't overgraze pastures!!! The grass will be slow to come back reducing grazeable forage and allowing weeds to get a head start and be more competitive with your grass. The grass you see, mirrors your roots. Short weak grass plants usually mean short weak roots that are not efficient at taking up nutrients so the grass never reaches its potential. Just a vicious circle. Make plans to properly manage your grazing. The results will be amazing.

Toxic weeds are everywhere and can cause issues for most any species of livestock. Most toxic plants are unpalatable but can be consumed accidentally. SO it is in your best interest to scout and control toxic weeds. Many weeds used to be isolated to certain areas and didn't venture out too far. Now many toxic weeds can be found in all parts of pastures and hay fields making them more of a risk for livestock to consume. Many plants are very toxic when mature and going to seed. If you have toxic weeds, remove livestock (if possible) and spray or mow the weeds. Many herbicides will work. Much better to control when small and vulnerable. Contact me if you have questions about control or need help identifying weeds.

WINTER TIME HORSE TIPS

As outside temperatures continue to drop, remember that horses prefer to drink water that is between 42 and 45 degrees. Add warm water to their buckets or purchase a bucket heater to encourage horses to drink enough water.

Get your veterinarian to give your horses a good "once over" to evaluate body condition and general health. Talk with your farrier about getting your horses feet ready for the change in temperature and the upcoming winter weather. Have your farrier examine your horse's hooves to avoid any unexpected surprises later in the year. Winter is tough on feet and legs.

Make sure you have an ample supply of quality hay to get your equine friends through the winter. Not sure how this winter's weather is shaping up but if you have now contacted a hay supplier, make arrangements NOW! Don't get caught short of hay and have to take what you can find.

The horse has two natural defenses against cold, a long hair coat and a layer of fat beneath the skin. Both provide an excellent means of insulation against the cold. The long winter hair coat serves as insulation by reducing the loss of body heat and provides the first line of defense against the cold. Its insulating value is lost when the horse becomes wet and/or is covered with mud. This is why it is important to provide a dry sheltered area in cold wet weather and regular grooming. In damp weather, be alert for skin problems. If unchecked, problems can result in hair loss and irritation to the horse. It's important to keep the horse from losing its "insulating" hair coat. It's also vital to be sure the horse is properly fed to avoid losing body weight & approaching an energy deficient state.

Please make time to evaluate, with your veterinarian, your herd health program and any changes or updates that are needed to assure your horse stays healthy. Evaluate your feeding program to see if any adjustments are needed.

When roughage is digested, a great deal of heat is produced in this process providing a source of body heat. Horses might also need more energy to generate enough heat to provide body warmth during the coldest of weather. Even if it looks like the ration needs adjusting, Don't change a horse's feed ration without advice from a veterinarian, Extension Agent or another qualified source. Even small changes in the ration can offset delicate mineral ratios that could negatively affect your horse.