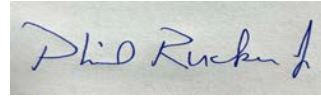




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RUCKER'S RAMBLINGS  
ANIMAL AGRICULTURE INFORMATION  
LIVESTOCK, HORSES & FORAGE  
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022



Phillip Rucker, Jr.  
Extension Agent, Agriculture-Livestock

**CATTLE PRODUCERS MEETING:** There will be a Cattle Producers meeting for Davie and Yadkin producers, Thursday, September 29, at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Davie County Senior Services Center, 278 Meroney Street, Mocksville. 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 to continue with the herd health discussions and stress cow herd health to enhance reproduction and improve the marketability of the calves in the process. Discuss protocols that will help improve production by keeping the herd healthy and better able to withstand the normal stresses they face. Dr. Truman Sanner with Rocky Creek Veterinary Services will talk with you about different vaccine options for the cow herd, for calves, best time to vaccinate, killed vs modified live and answer your questions about the best vaccination protocol for your operation.

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 3:00 PM Tuesday, September 27, 2022**, to reserve your meal or for more information. Food will be ordered based on reservations. This is short notice but it is IMPERATIVE that you make reservations by the deadline. We want to order enough but not over order.

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 operation's herd health and your cattle's marketability. Helping 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 on into 2022 has some folks 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:** There have been NO new (HPAI or “bird flu”) cases in North Carolina in quite some time. There have been new cases in other states so it is still a threat to the poultry industry. Producers, both big and small, should continue to practice proper biosecurity protocols to keep their birds as safe and disease free as possible.

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**

- # 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.
- # Don't waste expensive 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.

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Sept– Nov	Lots of educational programs on Zooms and Webinars. Information about the programs and links to join are in this as well as past newsletters
September 27	Deadline to call in reservations for Cattlemen’s Meeting
September 29	Cattlemen’s Meeting for Davie and Yadkin Counties, 6:30 PM, Mocksville
October 4	Chronic Wasting Disease forum in Yadkinville 6:30 PM
October 6 - 9	Beef Cattle Shows at the Carolina Classic Fair (Formally Dixie Classic)
October 6	1 <sup>st</sup> session of Business of Farming in the Triad, 4 part webinar series
November 1	Over the Counter Antibiotics webinar 7:00 – 8:30 PM. Read the article and see the flyer for more information and to register for this important webinar.
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

## **UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS:**

**\*CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE FORUMS:** NC Wildlife will be holding public CWD forums in the coming weeks, times and locations below. I'd like to extend an invite for either of you to attend as you see necessary. These forums will be similar to the spring forum held in Yadkinville. CWD is a disease that affects deer and NC Wildlife is working to track this issue. The forums will be generally led by the local staff in that area. Contact your local Wildlife Agent for information.

Much of the focus of these forums will be to run through questions and answers specific to hunter harvest testing this fall and to set the expectations for hunting season.

Sept. 29, 6:30-8:30 [Wilkes County Cooperative Extension Center](#): 416 Executive Dr, Wilkesboro, NC 28697

Oct. 04, 6:30-8:30 [Yadkin County Cooperative Extension Center](#): 2051 Agricultural Way, Yadkinville, NC 27055

**\*BUSINESS of FARMING in the TRIAD:** Join us for a live instructor-led 4-week webinar series designed for new and beginning farmers who want to explore their options in farming, ranching, and agriculture. In this program, we'll help you cultivate a strategic plan to validate your goals and engage with a community of entrepreneurs just like you.

Classes begin on October 6, 2022, at 6pm (held virtually).

What you will learn:

- Legal Structures
- Site analysis & Exploring your Potential
- Financial planning - Grow your numbers
- Understanding Your Marketing and Customers

The Business of Farming in the Triad of NC collaborates with Davidson-Davie Community College, Davidson County Local Food Network, and NC Cooperative Extension and Access to Capital Community Partners to provide a robust gap-free opportunity for ag-curious students and small businesses.

A **Certificate of Completion** will be presented to participants at conclusion.

### **Curriculum**

- **Week 1 - Legal Structures and Business Framework** - Kick start or expand your farm business by finding which business structure works best for your goals. Learn the fundamentals of the business operations and how they work. Learn to think outside of the box on which business entity might be best for you.
- **Week 2 - Site Analysis & Exploring Your Potential** – Explore how you can learn your farms potential through analysis of all land and equipment so you can explore and move your business to its full potential. You will learn to think strategically in making decisions that will enhance your capacity.
- **Week 3 - Financial Planning for Your Business** - You will learn how to understand your business financials so that you can make smart and strategic decisions that will make you profitable. You will explore all areas of business finance so that you are confident in your decision making as you move your business into a profitable venture.
- **Week 4 - Understanding Your Market and Customers** - Learn how to find your niche, business concept and opportunity. Explore how you can fine tune your value proposition and begin to explore which customers are best for your business. Learn how to find the right customer for you –and keep them.

[Register online here.](#)

All registered participants will receive the link to the class upon registration. For more information, email Roxanne Bailey-Reed at [Roxanne@granittraining.com](mailto:Roxanne@granittraining.com).

**\*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**. Please see the attached flyer.

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>

**\*WESTERN NC MEAT GOAT CONFERENCE:** The Western NC Meat Goat Conference will be October 28 in Fletcher, NC. There is a great educational program planned followed by the Carolina Kiko Classic Goat Sale on October 29 at the same location. More information can be found in the attached flyer. For information on the sale, go to <https://www.carolinakikoclassic.com/>

**\*POULTRY PROCESSING WORKSHOP:** Stokes County will be organizing a workshop on poultry processing and how to use their mobile poultry processing unit (MPU). The event will be on October 8<sup>th</sup>, starting at 9:00 AM, at NC A&T in Greensboro. Join them to learn to use the MPU unit to process poultry for consumption. Topics include processing management, the exemption and inspection process to sell meat, as well as the opportunity for hands-on processing. There will be a cut up and deboning demonstration, as well. Registration is \$25 and includes lunch. **This training is required to rent the Stokes County MPU.**

Go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/poultry-processing-training-tickets-403453559457> or contact Cooperative Extension in Stokes County 336-593-8179.

These trainings fill up fast so reserve your spot quickly.

### **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). We know cattle prices seem to be getting stronger, and 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.

## **YOU KNOW BUT JUST REMINDING YOU:**

# Weeds have been bad this year and if weeds have gone to seed over the years, control just gets harder. Make a written list of weeds, population, when first noticed and how you treated them. Use this to help you plan your battle against the all the dreaded weeds next year.

# 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 it's 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.

## **CALCULATE YOUR FEED RESOURCES**

Be sure to evaluate your feed resources to see if you have adequate amounts and the quality is sufficient. Purchasing feed "spur of the moment" can be costly and you might not get what you need/want. Having plenty of low quality feed can be just as bad since livestock can have difficulty consuming enough poor quality feed to meet their nutritional needs. Check your supplies, test forages if you have questions, figure up the number and size of animals to feed and performance expectations. It takes more, high quality feed for mamas nursing babies, young growing livestock, females trying to rebreed and first time mamas trying to raise a baby and breed back. Sorting livestock to match feed with needs can help reduce feed usage. Marketing low performing or livestock you really can't justify keeping, is a good option as well.

When grazing gets short, there are basically three options to look at: Find more grazeable land, Supplement with hay/other feeds, and/or Market/Sell livestock. Plan now to provide enough quality nutrition to keep your livestock at the proper body condition and health status. It's easier and cheaper to maintain livestock at the proper condition than to try to feed weight on them during stressful times. Contact the Extension Center if we can help with your options.

## **NC FARM SCHOOL**

Have you ever thought about farming, but didn't know where to begin? Maybe you own property, and want to know what you can do with it. Perhaps you already have an idea of what you want to do, but need help formulating a plan. Or maybe you have already started farming, but are looking for ways to make your farm more profitable.

If you want to start a small agriculture enterprise, improve your operation or know someone who is interested in farming, consider attending the NC Farm School. Cooperative Extension in Stanley and Bladen Counties will be hosting NC Farm School in 2023. This series of courses and field days starts in February 2023 and runs through May. You meet twice a month for educational classes and there will be different field days to visit different operations. A great way to see different agricultural enterprises and gain valuable information from different speakers with lots of expertise to share. Participants will gain basic information in management, marketing, finances record keeping and more. Attendees are able to make important connections in business and networking and receive mentoring as they build their new ventures. For more information, visit <https://ncfarmschool.ces.ncsu.edu/2023-nc-farm-school/>

### **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](mailto: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.

### **WANT TO SAVE MONEY?**

Be prepared to give your grass what it needs to recover and produce quality forage in 2023. 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 be productive. A Soil Test helps you apply what the forage needs, in proper amounts so you will spend your fertilizer dollar more wisely. Come by the office to get soil test boxes and help your pastures work more efficiently for you. Remember that there will be a \$4 fee per sample starting December 1 so get your samples in by November 15 to make sure your samples are logged in to avoid the fee.

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. Make sure you are meeting your animal's nutritional needs. Sample your hay to see what they are actually consuming. If hay is lacking vital nutrients, production will suffer. If you feed more than needed, you will be wasting valuable feed resources. 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 ten (\$10) dollars but the information you receive can save you resources you can use to meet other needs.

### **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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## **HORSE OWNERS**

**Horse Management Tip:** 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. Discuss your feeding program and if any adjustments are needed. Don't change a horse's feed ration without advice from a veterinarian or other qualified source. Even small changes in the ration can offset delicate mineral ratios that could negatively affect your horse.

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.

Fly and mosquito season is not over yet so keep up the good work of keeping those pesky bugs away. There have been some eastern horses confirmed with mosquito transferred diseases. Not much longer and they will be gone.

Make sure you have an ample supply of quality hay to get your equine friends through the winter. Some say this will be a normal winter but some rumors are flying around that this winter could be worse than last year. Hay could be in short supply, in some areas, so make arrangements NOW! Like everything else, expect to pay more for hay this year.

Check the barn and other facilities for wear and maintenance needs. Loose boards, nails that stick out, broken gate hinges and other hazards could cause potential injury for your horse. Loose roofing materials that flop in the wind could startle your horse. Take the time to look around and fix any potential issues before they become a problem.

## **WINTER WILL COME, ARE YOU READY?**

Even with the heat, humidity and the other signs of the summer season, winter is not too far away and we need to prepare. ALL livestock producers need to begin looking at their own individual situation NOW so you will be ready when "Old Man Winter" makes his appearance. This is just a brief list of things to check-on and help you and your livestock survive the winter elements.

- \* 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".

## **WHERE DOES YOUR INFORMATION COME FROM?**

Internet and social media users NEED to learn to question what they read and to become detectives in ferreting out truth on the internet. "Dr. Google" can tell you what you think you want to hear. It's easy for people to post opinions as truth. You need to be careful of the conditions (location, climate, etc.) before thinking an idea will work for you. It's smart to research further before taking anything as truth. When searching for information on the internet, utilize links that end with edu. These will be universities and educational institutions who have completed unbiased research and their information is not trying to sway you or sell you anything. They just want to provide factual information to help you make wise decisions. So yes you can get good information from the internet, just be careful what you take as truth and what you need to follow.