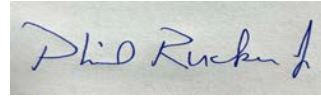




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RUCKER'S RAMBLINGS
ANIMAL AGRICULTURE INFORMATION
LIVESTOCK, HORSES & FORAGE
MARCH 2023



Phillip Rucker, Jr.
Extension Agent, Agriculture-Livestock

CATTLE PRODUCERS MEETING: There will be a County Cattle Producers meeting for both Davie and Yadkin producers, Thursday, March 23, at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Yadkin County Agricultural Building in Yadkinville. Topics of discussion will be: Getting More From Your Forages. We will learn about different forages, their purposes, best times to plant and fertilize them, grazing/haying management to get more forage yield as well as a little about weed control. Come, be ready to join in this discussion as we can always learn lots of good information from each other.

The meeting/educational program is free to all who attend. There will be a charge of \$10 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 \$10 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 12:00 NOON, Monday, March 20, 2023,** to reserve your meal or for more information. Food will be ordered based on reservations.

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 forage production, utilization and help you 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 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.

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

NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET! Even though we have had some warmer temperatures and sunshine in the last couple of weeks, we are still in winter's shadow. DON'T BE FOOLED. We are probably not done with winter yet. Use management practices to help livestock perform well, and prepare pastures for grazing. Don't skimp on feed now. Keeping your livestock well fed, helps them stay warm, function better, maintain production levels, handle the extra water in fresh grass and reduce damaging your grass by grazing too close.



GENERAL MANAGEMENT TIPS

- * Keep your horse's coat clean from mud. Mud reduces the natural insulation properties.
- * Make sure livestock have plenty of clean water, feed and adequate shelter.
- * Make cost effective decisions on fertilizing grassland.
- * Think about weeds that were a problem and make plans to control them in 2023.
- * Reduce stocking rates to reduce stress on grass and improve forage vigor.
- * Start feeding cattle a COMPLETE mineral mix with Hi-Magnesium to help prevent grass tetany.
- * Use good judgment & read labels when turning livestock on pastures that were recently fertilized or treated for weeds.
- * Work on hay equipment now instead of when you need it.

HERD HEALTH TO-DO LIST FOR LIVESTOCK

- * Work with your veterinarian to get a Coggins pulled on your equine. Equine Infectious Anemia has been detected in surrounding counties. Get your equine tested. Contact your veterinarian if you have questions
- * 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.
- * Implement a GOOD Biosecurity plan for your whole farm, if you have not already done so. This is a Great idea if you have poultry since High Path Avian Influenza is still in the news. BUT all livestock need a biosecurity plan to help keep them safe from diseases. Contact your local Extension Center or veterinarian for more information.

HORSE MANAGEMENT TIPS: Spring is close and warm weather calls for management practices to help keep horses healthy and ready for those pleasurable riding experiences. Grass will soon be actively growing and full of nutrition. Talk with your veterinarian about the possibility of nutrition issues to reduce the risks of digestion, hoof or obesity problems. The age, size and activity of your horse goes a long way in determining the nutritional needs.

Be careful grazing your horses this spring. The insulin resistant horse or a horse prone to laminitis or gastric issues is at a higher health risk during periods of lush grass growth. During photosynthesis, grass makes fructan (simple carbohydrate) all day while the sun is shining. High levels of fructans can cause hoof and other issues. At night, those fructans are used by the grass to grow or are stored in the root system. Thus, you can decrease the risks by grazing during the night and early morning while fructan levels are lower. During periods of lush growth, some options are to stable the horse during the day or maybe use poly-wire temporary cross fencing to allow only a little fresh grass each day to help limit free access to pasture during lush growth. Using a grazing muzzle during daytime turnout would help reduce the risks also. Seek advice from your veterinarian, on this issue and the potential risk for your horse. Make sure your horse receives their daily nutritional requirements if you implement limited grazing. Low risk horses are better able to digest these sugars and are less prone to their effects

Have your horse updated on all necessary vaccinations if not already done. Have your veterinarian pull a Coggins to test for EIA. Plan now for mosquito season. These pesky insects carry numerous diseases that can be transmitted to horses. Spring is also a good time to deworm your horse. Contact the Extension Center or your veterinarian for more information on these management practices, forages, pasture management and other equine production issues.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS:

2nd ANNUAL SPRING AUTO SHOW FOR DAVIE FFA: Davie County High School FFA will be hosting their 2nd Annual Car show on March 18 on the Davie High School Campus. Come enjoy the car show, tractor show, food truck rodeo, kids zone, hayride, live DJ and more. This event starts at 10:00 AM and goes till 2:00 PM. For the low price of \$5 general admission (cash only), you get to enjoy the car show, the food, the fun and the proceeds go to support Career and Technical Education at Davie High School. A day of fun and you get to help support students in their future endeavors. That sounds like a win-win to me. Please consider supporting Davie High at this event. Contact Alyse Wooldridge at WooldridgeA@Davie.k12.nc.us for information.

***NC BEEF CATTLE FIELD DAY:** This educational field day will be Saturday, March 18, at the Butner Beef Cattle Unit in Bahama. Registration begins at 9:00 and the program begins at 10:00. Come learn about Byproduct feeds, parasite & health management, reproduction and pasture renovation. Lunch will be provided. To register, please go to the following link <http://GO.NCSU.EDU/2023BEEFDAY>

***FEEDER CALF PRODUCER MEETING:** will be March 16. Hosted by Mid-Atlantic Cattle Sales, NCDA, Stanly County Livestock Market and Harward Brothers Livestock Market.

All cow/calf and stocker producers are invited to attend our annual feeder calf producer meeting. This event is open to all producers and thanks to sponsors, there is no cost to attend. This year's event will feature presentations from three experts as well as information on feeder calf marketing opportunities for 2023. It is requested that you please [register online](#) by March 13 so they can plan accordingly. You can also register by calling or texting Brooke Harward at 704-322-9770.

***PRODUCER PASTURELAND ECOLOGY WEBINAR SERIES:** NEW! Join us for this free webinar series to talk about the fundamentals behind grazing and pasture management. In this 3-week webinar series, we will explore how the soil-plant-animal interface is intimately intertwined. This webinar series is for producers of all ages and will take place on Wednesday evenings in April (5th, 12th & 19th) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Flyer is attached. Please help spread the word. The beef portal announcement for this event can be found here: <https://beef.ces.ncsu.edu/2023/03/2023-producer-pastureland-ecology-webinar-series/> Registration is required to participate in this zoom webinar series.

***SMALL RUMINANT NUTRITION MAGEMENT WORKSHOP:** There will be an in-person Small Ruminant Nutrition Management Workshop in Iredell County on March 30. Please see the attached flyer for more information on the program.. There will be a sponsored meal so you need to call 704-873-0507 to register.

***EASTERN NC SHEEP & GOAT FIELD DAY:** On March 25, in Duplin County starting at 9:00 AM. There will be presentations on parasites, nutrition, fencing/infrastructure and more. There will be a lunch and visits to local farms. To register or for more information go to <https://go.ncsu.edu/eastncrip>. Registration deadline is March 17th.

WOLFPACK ROUND-UP LIVESTOCK SALE: On April 15, the NCSU Livestock Merchandising class will hold their 10th Annual Wolfpack Roundup at the Beef Educational Unit. The sale will feature 25 head of cattle and 10-15 sheep & goats. At 10:00 there will be an Educational Program on research updates (forages, nutrition, small ruminants & reproduction). They will also discuss practical applications of genetic tools. There will be a free lunch at 12:00 noon and the sale will start at 1:00 PM. For information contact Dr. Andrew Weaver, 989-708-2557 arweav3@ncsu.edu or Matt Morrison 716-720-0227 mdmorri8@ncsu.edu

The sale catalog will be posted online at www.go.ncsu.edu/wolfpackroundup

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: The extreme amount of rain we have experienced has not been kind to our pastures. Most of our forage land needs some management, if not some renovation to be able to meet our grazing needs. I'm seeing evidence of the rain leaching minerals out of the grasses that our livestock eat. All the mud and changing temperatures have only added to the stress.

Fertilizer is a necessity this year to help with forage growth. After all the rain we had, your grass will need that extra boost. 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 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. 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. Some weeds seem to be blooming early. Now through late March/early April is usually 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 your clover. Decide what you need the herbicide to do and make your selection is 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.

FORAGE MANAGEMENT TIPS

- * If you have not fertilized, make plans to get it done SOON. Spreading late could benefit weeds more than the grass. If you decide to fertilize, think about split applications to spread out the forage growth.
- * Identify problem weeds and spray if you have not already. There are different types of weeds that come up different times of the year so make a weed control plan for the whole growing season.
- * 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.

OVER THE COUNTER LIVESTOCK ANTIBIOTICS WILL REQUIRE PRESCRIPTION JUNE 11

New rules are coming for livestock producers needing to purchase antibiotics. This covers all livestock (cattle, swine, horses, sheep, goats, etc.). By June 11, 2023, labels of the remaining over-the-counter antibiotics for livestock use will be required to read: "Caution: Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian," and the purchaser must have a prescription or drug order to buy it. This doesn't mean you must buy them from a veterinarian, only that you must have a prescription from a licensed veterinarian.

Don't wait. Get to know your local veterinarian now to establish a veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR). If you expect to treat livestock in the future, over-the-counter livestock antibiotics will soon require a prescription. Now is the time to plan for a smooth transition to help ensure continued access to animal health products.

What antibiotics does this affect?

Products that traditionally could be purchased by anyone over-the-counter (OTC) now will be available by prescription (Rx) written by a licensed veterinarian. Prescription-only items will include injectable tylosin, injectable and intramammary penicillin, injectable and oral oxytetracycline, sulfadimethoxine and sulfamethazine, gentamicin, cephalirin and cephalirin benzathine intramammary tubes.

What constitutes a VCPR? Three requirements must be met:

- (1) The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment, and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarian's instructions.
- (2) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the animal's medical condition. This means that the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal by examining the animal or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept.
- (3) The veterinarian is readily available or has arranged emergency coverage and follow-up evaluation in the event of adverse reactions or the failure of the treatment regimen.

Livestock owners without a VCPR will be unable to purchase certain antibiotics and will need to have a veterinarian visit their farm to examine the animal(s), treat them or offer a prescription as needed. Lack of a VCPR will have significant impacts on how the livestock owners can access antibiotic therapy for their animals, so contact your local veterinarian as soon as possible. Producers who already have a VCPR in place and purchase their animal health products through their veterinary office or through other distributors under an existing prescription system will likely notice little change.

Why shouldn't I go ahead and stock up on antibiotics now?

Do not stock up on these products once this change takes effect. Animal health products are expensive, have expiration dates and are sensitive to storage time and conditions. You might spend a lot of money on a product and it has lost its efficacy by the time you might need it. You would have wasted your hard earned money.

What health/medical items can livestock owners continue to purchase over the counter?

Most vaccines, dewormers, injectable and oral nutritional supplements, ionophores, pro/prebiotics and topical nonantibiotic treatments will not require a veterinary prescription. However, there are some exceptions. Always read the label and consult your veterinarian for accurate information.

A positive result of having a VCPR is it will prompt conversations with your veterinarian to plan out your herd health program. It will help you need less antibiotics and help ensure access to products as needed.