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Bladen County Center

Livestock News

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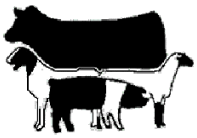

Inside This Issue

2024 Regional Chicken Project and Virtual Show

The project provides an opportunity for youth in 4-H and FFA to learn how to raise and show chickens. Youth raised laying hens (Rhode Island Reds, Easter Eggers or Barred Rocks) or broilers and completed a project record book about their project. Youth competed in showmanship classes where they had to demonstrate their knowledge of their bird and ability to properly handle their bird. The show was held at White Lake FFA Camp with 67 total youth participating. Bladen County had 9 youth.

Cloverbud Participants (5-7 years old):

Lawson Alley

Gage McQueen

Junior Participants (8-10 years old):

Nora Bridgers

Evelyn Parrish

Intermediate winners (11-13 years old):

Phyllis Grace Williamson
3rd showmanship

Aleigha Alley
6th showmanship

Luke Bridgers
2nd Project book
2nd Easter Egger

Senior winners (14-18 years old):

Trindle Beaver
3rd showmanship
2nd project book

Jackson Bridgers
5th showmanship
1st project book

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Turning Cutover into Green Pasture

By: Anthony Growe, Livestock and Row Crops Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Richmond County

With climbing land prices occurring in just about every corner of our state, the last couple of years I have seen an influx of calls from new landowners who have purchased cutover land and have the goal to convert it into a pasture to raise livestock. Cutover is defined as forestland that has been harvested of all marketable timber (clearcut) with little to no trees of value remaining. Typically, if cutover land is sold, it comes with a lower price tag since all the valuable timber has been harvested.

Those with the dream to start a farm find this type of land much more affordable compared to well-maintained farmland that is in already in production. For example, maintained farmland may sell at $ 10,000 per acre compared to cutover that may be on the market for $3,000 per acre. Over the last few years, I have assisted several clients with this large undertaking with a handful being successful. Time, money, labor, equipment, and knowledge of running equipment are what I identify as the largest restraints that can hinder landowners from completing their project.

Although the lower price tag is attractive, converting cutover land into a productive pasture can be a large undertaking and can quickly turn into an expensive project. When dealing with several acres to convert, landowners must look at it as multiyear project and set both short-term and long-term goals.

The first step toward establishing a lush green pasture is typically the biggest hurdle for most landowners. Removing the remaining branches, sticks, roots and stumps across several acres usually requires hired or rented machinery. Stumps can be mulched with a forestry mulcher or removed with a bull dozier or excavator. After stump removal, a root rake can be used to pull remaining material into piles which are usually burned.

After remaining tree material is removed, tillage, such as discing, can be utilized to smooth the land. This step may need to be done a few times as it will help remove any ruts or ridges. At this point, it is recommended that soil samples are taken and sent off for testing. This will help get an idea of what the soil lacks in terms of plant nutrients. When land comes out of timber production, nutrients required to grow forages are usually lacking. After receiving the results for the soil analysis, amendments such as fertilizer, manures or lime can be incorporated. If you need assistance with soil sampling or understanding fertilizer recommendations, we will be happy to help you with that.

After lime and other amendments are applied, summer annuals, such as pearl millet or sorghum sudan can be planted in the late spring and into early summer. These forages will compete with and smother out the plethora of weeds that will emerge after disturbing the soil. Although sorghum sudan produces large amounts of forage, pearl millet withstands closer grazing and does well on newly prepared ground. In the fall, most producers plant cereal rye or annual ryegrass behind the summer annuals for fall and winter grazing. After the rye plays out in the spring, warm season perennial grasses, such as hybrid bermudagrass, can be established or another year of pearl millet and cereal rye can be planted again to aid in smothering weeds. If establishing fescue pasture, it is best to plant pearl millet for summer grazing and then prepare to plant fescue in the fall around October.

After permanent grass, such as bermudagrass or fescue, is established, there still may be some weed issues present in the pasture. Take another soil sample to see where nutrient levels and pH are and surface apply any additional amendments they may be needed. Woody weed species that are not palatable to livestock, such as blackberries and briars, can be controlled with a well-timed herbicide application. Products that are effective on these woody species include those with the active ingredients: triclopyr or metsulfuron. These are broadleaf herbicides and will help get weed pressure down. Note: metsulfuron is safe on bermudagrass but can injure new stands of fescue. No matter what product you use, be sure to read the label before getting started.

Converting cutover to pasture can be a rather large and expensive undertaking so it is important that landowners budget for the expenses and time that is required. Additionally, converting to pasture is a long-term, multiyear project that takes a lot of planning. If you have any questions about pasture establishment or forage management, please contact your local Livestock Agent.

Developing Replacement Heifers—Things to Consider Part 1

By: Brian Parrish, Agriculture Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Harnett County

Most cattle herds cull 15% to 20% of cows each year. How will you get replacements? Can you purchase heifers cheaper than you can raise them? If you are buying heifers, they may not be the first picks. Second pick heifers from another farm may be better than first pick heifers from your farm.

Good cow nutrition is very important for replacement heifers. Thirty or more pounds of calf weaning weight can easily be lost due to poor cow nutrition. Cow nutrition affects weigh gain, marbling, and feed efficiency of calves. Poor cow nutrition can also have a negative effect on heifer calf fertility. Colostrum quality is important for all calves and especially for replacement heifers.

Heifers born earlier are more likely to breed earlier. Heifers born in the first 21 days in the calving cycle tend to remain in the herd longer. Also, heifers that calf in the first 21 days of calving season typically wean heavier calves in each of their first 6 calving seasons. Calving early is important! It takes the profit from two early calving cows to cover the loss from one late calving cow. A cow that calves in the first 21 day calving cycle interval her entire 8 or 9 year life cycle will produce the weaning weight equivalent of 1.5 to 2 additional calves in her life compared to a cow that starts late and stays late. When selecting replacement heifers, cull daughter of cows that have had problems. Cull light weights, large birth weights, and larger than 6 frames. Cull the youngest (born last 30 to 40 days of calving season). Earlier calves are from the most fertile cows so select heifers from this group. Also select daughters from your oldest cows. It is important that you are very strict when selecting heifer calves for replacement! You want to select heifers that are structurally correct, physically sound, and with adequate muscling.

You want weight gain in heifers during development to be a linear progression up. You need to avoid highs and lows in nutrition. You want to develop your heifers in a similar environment to your farm (longevity is better for heifers developed this way) Heifers should not be overfed as fatty deposits in the udder can affect future milk supply. You want heifers to reach **65% of their mature weight at breeding**. Reaching this target weight helps lower risks across breed types and helps ensure more heifers breed early. Most producers underestimate the mature weight of their cows! Do you really know the average weight of your cows?

Mature Cow Weight	**lbs.**	**65% Target Weight**
1200		780
1300		845
1400		910

Goals For Heifers

You want heifers to become pregnant during the first 25 days of the breeding season**. Reach 85%** of mature weight before calving at BCS 6. Give birth to a live calf with little difficulty and then raise the calf to weaning. Then breed back within 45 days and continue to produce for 6 to 9 years. After calving sort out the first calvers so that you can manage and feed them better.

Foot Rot and Foot Scald in Small Ruminants

By: Aaron Blackmon, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Columbus County

Foot rot and Foot scald are annoying and costly diseases to the livestock industry, with the combination of increased labor, and medicine costs along with losses in production from infected animals putting a strain on producers' bottom line. Foot rot and Foot scald occur most often during persistent rainy weather or heavy dew such as in spring with temperatures above 50°F. These diseases are prevalent in many flocks throughout the Southeast region because of our warm humid climate.

Both diseases are contagious, they can affect both goats and sheep and can spread by bringing in new animals onto the farm that are infected. The disease is usually spread from infected carrier animals into the soil and then to the non-infected feet of healthy animals. It is usually displayed by lameness; infected animals frequently experience pain and sensitivity. They often can not keep up with the herd during grazing, and they can often be found grazing on their knees. Foot rot and scald can also be diagnosed by the distinguishable “foul smell” coming from the foot. Overgrown hooves will predispose an animal to foot rot. Wet soils, muddy areas, and periods when there's little to no dry weather increase the possibility of disease outbreaks.

Foot scald, or interdigital dermatitis, is an inflammation between the toes caused by the microorganism *Fusobacterium necrophorum. F.necrophorum* naturally lives in the large intestine of small ruminants and therefore is present in manure, pasture, mud, and congregating areas where manure is allowed to accumulate. The mud and manure cause interdigital irritation, and *F.necrophorum* then infects the soft, irritated area. But this bacterium alone can not cause foot rot. Foot rot is a disease of the hoove tissue caused primarily by the invasion of (2) two anaerobic bacteria, *Fusobacterium necrophorum* and *Dichelobacter nodusus*. *Dichelobacter nodosus* produces a powerful enzyme that dissolves hoof horn and leads to the undermining of the sole, and separation from the hoof wall.

Foot scald can be treated topically using solutions of copper sulfate or zinc sulfate by squirting the solution between the affected toes twice a day until the infection is gone (you can also use the foot bath method). When treating animals with Foot rot remove the dead, rotten foot tissue with shears or a sharp knife. Trim down until the healthy tissue is found. Some bleeding will occur. This is necessary to remove the diseased tissue. After trimming their feet, the animals should be forced to walk through a zinc sulfate foot bath solution. Repeating the footbath treatment 2 to 4 times at weekly intervals may be necessary. Let animals stand in the foot bath solution for approximately 30 minutes, followed by another period in a dry lot to allow the solution to dry on hooves. Do not place the foot bath where goats are likely to drink from it. COPPER SULFATE SOLUTIONS SHOULD NOT BE USED IN SHEEP.

For severe or persistent cases consult your veterinarian. Antibiotics may be necessary, and a Foot rot vaccine may need to be added to your herd health plan. If you need any assistance identifying or managing Foot rot or scald in your flock, please contact your local Livestock Extension Agent.

Resources: https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/foot-scald
https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/foot-rot

Horse Emergencies

By: Taylor Chavis, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Robeson County

Horse owners are prone to emergency situations. Horse emergencies can sneak up on you and while sometimes you cannot prevent them, being prepared for them can potentially save you and your horses life. You've heard that old saying “Nothings a problem until it's a problem – THEN it's a problem,” having a plan in place can help minimize potential problems before they manifest themselves into emergency situations and help to deal with situations when they do become emergencies.

Do you have a plan in place for your horse in an emergency situation? The following guidelines are from the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) to help with equine emergencies:

1. Keep your veterinarian’s number in your phone, including how the practitioner can be reached after hours.
2. Consult with your regular veterinarian regarding a back-up or referring veterinarian’s number in case you cannot reach your regular veterinarian quickly enough.
3. Know in advance the most direct route to an equine surgery center in case you need to transport the horse.
4. Store the names and phone numbers of nearby friends and neighbors who can assist you in an emergency while you wait for the veterinarian.
5. Prepare a first aid kit and store it in a clean, dry, readily accessible place. Make sure that family members and other barn users know where the kit is. Also keep a first aid kit in your horse trailer or towing vehicle, and a pared-down version to carry on the trail.

A horse emergency can include severe injuries, colic, foaling issues, trailer accidents, horses being stuck or stolen, barn fires, etc. If a horse has an open wound, that can be an obvious problem, but cases of colic, illness, or other subtle injuries may not be as obvious. Recognizing signs of distress is important to be able to distinguish from normal behavior patterns. Individual temperature, pulse, and respiration will vary among horses.

Normal ranges are as follows:

- Rectal temperature: 99.5' to 101.5' F. If the horse's temperature exceeds 102.5' F., contact your veterinarian immediately. Temperatures of over 103' F indicate a serious disorder.
- Pulse rate: 30 to 42 beats per minute.
- Respiratory rate: 12 to 20 breaths per minute.
- Capillary refill time (time it takes for color to return to gum tissue adjacent to teeth after pressing and releasing with your thumb): 2 seconds.

Other observations to note:

- Skin pliability is tested by pinching or folding a flap of neck skin and releasing. It should immediately snap back into place. Failure to do so is evidence of dehydration.
- Color of the mucous membranes of gums, nostrils, conjunctiva (inner eye tissue), and inner lips of vulva should be pink. Bright red, pale pink to white, or bluish-purple coloring may indicate problems.
- Color, consistency, and volume of feces and urine should be typical of that individual's usual excretions. Straining or failure to excrete should be noted.
- Signs of distress, anxiety or discomfort.
- Lethargy, depression or a horse that's "off-feed."
- Presence or absence of gut sounds.
- Evidence of lameness such as head-bobbing, reluctance to move, odd stance, pain, unwillingness to rise.
- Bleeding, swelling, evidence of pain.
- Seizures, paralysis, or "tying up" (form of muscle cramps that ranges in severity from mild stiffness to life-threatening illness).

It is a good idea to have first aid kits on farm. First aid kits should have essential items to include: (*Material that should be sterile.)

- *Cotton roll
- *Contact bandage
- *Cling wrap
- *Gauze pads, assorted sizes
- *Gauze wrap
- Adhesive wrap and adhesive tape
- Leg wraps
- Sharp scissors
- Hemostats
- Steel cup or container
- Rectal thermometer with string and clip attached
- Surgical scrub and antiseptic solution
- Latex gloves
- Flashlight and spare batteries
- Permanent marker pen
- Pliers (to pull nails)
- 6" diameter PVC tubing cut in half the long way (like a gutter) into lengths of 1-1 /2 to 2 feet (for emergency splinting)

Being prepared for an emergency is key – “by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

Upcoming Youth Livestock Opportunities

By: Kaelyn Mohrfield, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Lenoir and Greene Counties

Save the Date for the "**Carolina Sort**." This will be a NC Born and Bred Pig Sale that will have pigs eligible to compete this Fall and at the 2024 NC State Fair. This event will be held at the Lenoir County Livestock Arena, May 25th 2024. Time TBD. Please follow the "Got to be NC Show Pigs" facebook page for more information.

The **East Carolina Showmanship Circuit** dates have been released for the 2024 season. If you need assistance finding an animal to participate please reach out to your local livestock agent for further assistance.

ECSC
EASTERN CAROLINA SHOWMANSHIP CIRCUIT

Show	Sheep	Goat	Swine	Heifer
AGR	8/10	8/09	8/10	8/10
Halifax	8/18	8/18	*N/A*	8/18
Jones	8/17	8/17	8/17	8/16
Lenoir	8/24	8/23	8/24	8/24
Albemarle	8/31	8/30	8/31	8/31
Edgecombe	9/7	9/6	9/7	9/7
Duplin	9/14	9/13	9/12	9/14
Pitt	9/19	9/22	*N/A*	9/17
Wilson	9/20	9/19	9/17	9/21
Sampson	9/29	9/29	9/28	9/28
Wayne	9/28	9/27	9/26	9/29

For more information, please follow the "Eastern Carolina Showmanship Circuit" facebook page.

Livestock Skillathon Supreme Championship Circuit 2024

Upcoming Contests

Lenoir Livestock Contest - May 25th, Lenoir County Livestock Arena - Kinston, NC Jammin' June - June 8th, Johnston County Agriculture & Conference Center Sheep and Goat Round-Up - June 29th, Winston Salem Fairgrounds

For more information, go to https://youthlivestock.ces.ncsu.edu/