

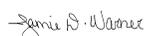
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Attention: Longleaf Pine Owners
 We are currently looking for landowners with longleaf pine to set up a Prescribed Burners Association (PBA) in Bladen and surrounding areas. The PBA will be a grass-roots effort to enhance prescribed fire efforts in longleaf ecosystems. This meeting is to determine interest and discuss other opportunities associated with longleaf pine. The meeting is January 11th from 6-8 pm at the Bladen Extension office. For information, contact Benjy Strope at 910-874-5562 or benjy.strope@ncwildlife.org

Cover Crop Demonstration

Friday, January 12th from 2- 4 pm at the Kennedy Farm located at 2907 Odom Rd. Hope Mills, NC 28348. At this demonstration, sponsored by Southeast Agriseeds, you will view a simple cover crop (cereal rye) versus a complex cover crop system. Pesticide and waste credits are pending approval. Paige Smart, Southeast Agriseeds, will discuss cover crop species selection; planting and termination techniques; how cover crops can help meet your overall goals; and the role each species plays in a complex cover crop system. To register, contact Liz Lahti at 910-321-6862 or liz_lahti@ncsu.edu.

Ag & Forest Landowners Meeting

Tuesday, January 23rd from 9 am - 1 pm at the Extension Office in Elizabethtown. Topics include Forest Best Management Practices and Working with a Consulting Forester; Landowner Property Rights – Bladen Sheriff's Office and NC Wildlife Resources; North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its impacts on agriculture; Farm Bill and Farm Services Agency; Natural Resources Conservation District, Bladen Soil and Water District, Bladen Tax Office and NC Cooperative Extension, and Pesticide Reminders/Best Practices. Lunch is

provided. Call the office at 862-4591 to register by Jan. 22.

Pesticide Information

Classes at the Bladen Extension Office.
 - January 23rd at 1pm - 2 hours V credit
 - March 20th at 4pm - 2 hours V credit
 - March 20th at 6pm - 2 hours of X, A, B, D, G, H, K, L, M, N, and O credits
 - August 14th at 5pm - 2 hours V credit
 - August 14th 7pm – 2 hours of X, A, B, D, G, H, K, L, M, N, & O credits

Cape Fear Regional Cattle Conference

The ninth annual conference is Thursday, **January 25th** at the Southeastern N.C. Agricultural Events Center in Lumberton. The conference starts at 4:30 pm and costs \$5 - pay at the door. Dr. Wes Watson will discuss fly control in the beef herd and Dr. Harrison Dudley will discuss herd health calendars and calf care. The program includes a meal and vendors. Call your Extension office by January 19th to register.

Regional Youth Chicken Project

This project is for youth in FFA and 4-H to learn more about poultry. Deadline for pullets has passed. The deadline for broilers is February 2nd. If you have interested kids or grandkids, contact your Livestock or 4-H agent for more details. See page 7.

Southern Farm Show

Jan. 31 - February 2 in Raleigh

**NC Cattlemen's Association Meeting
 February 23-24 in Hickory**

**NC Pork Council Annual Meeting March
 7-8 in Raleigh**

Soil Sample Fees

Soil samples are \$4 per sample until March 31. After March 31, they are free.

For any meeting listed, persons with disabilities may request accommodations to participate by contacting the Extension Office where the meeting will be held by phone, email, or in person at least 7 days prior to the event.

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Animal Waste Management

Initial 10-hour Animal Waste Operator Classes (OIC)

Bladen County Extension Office (Elizabethtown) - January 18 and 19 from 10 am - 4 pm. To register, call the Bladen Office at 910-862-4591 or go to <http://go.ncsu.edu/bladenoic2018> by January 11th. Cost is \$35 for class and a manual or \$5 for just the class. *Exam date is March 8th.*

Preparing Irrigation Equipment for the Winter Season

Written by Max Knowles and submitted by Paul Gonzalez, Livestock Extension Agents in Sampson County

Old man winter has definitely shown up, ushered in some Canadian air, and thrust freezing temperatures upon us. It is important for farmers to prepare their irrigation equipment for winter. Freezing temperatures can have detrimental effects on your irrigation equipment especially if it is left out or not lubricated correctly. Maintenance of irrigation equipment is a yearlong priority, and preparing the system for the winter season is an integral part of that maintenance program.

There are many types of irrigation equipment and many different tips and suggestions for winterization. Listed here are practices for the most commonly used system in Sampson County, the hard hose traveler. Always consult your equipment supplier or manufacturer with any specific questions or concerns about your system.

One of the most important steps is removing water from the hoses and purging all the irrigation waterlines. Purging can be done by using an air compressor or by rolling out the line and removing or opening the drain plug. If lines are left with water in them during the dead of winter, they could freeze and expand which could burst your irrigation line. While getting the excess water purged from the lines, this is a great time to check the stability of the lines. If or when the line is pulled out, take the time to walk the length of the irrigation hose and look for any damaged areas or potential problem areas. It is also a good idea to make sure there is no excess water in the turbine. This can be accessed by opening the gate valve and drain plug on the turbine.

Another area needing attention is the gun cart and big

gun. Start by using calipers to measure the nozzle ring size to make sure the nozzle has not been worn out during the pumping season. Rotate the big gun around to make sure there is no issue with the bearings that would hinder the rotation speed which needs to be consistent. Check the tires on the gun cart and the reel itself to ensure they have the adequate amount of air and that the tires have not begun to dry rot and need replacing. Do not forget to check all safety shields to ensure they are still in place and tight. Take the necessary time to find all the grease fittings located on the reel. Once you have located the fittings, go around the reel with your grease gun to ensure all the fittings have the appropriate amount of grease.

Once you are confident you have prepared the irrigation system for winter, then it is time to store the hard hose traveler. It is recommended that it be stored indoors out of the rain in a clean, dry place. If there is not a covered shelter option and the reel is kept outside, be sure to cover the reel with a canvas or tarp that will shield it from the rain. Once your reel is stored and ready for winter, you can feel confident it will be ready to get the job done for you when you resume your regular irrigation during the spring.

For more specific questions about winterizing your irrigation system, contact your Extension agent or your equipment supplier or manufacturer.



Hay Directory

North Carolina Department of Agriculture's Hay Alert is at <http://www.agr.state.nc.us/hayalert/>. Producers can call the Hay Alert at 1-866-506-6222. It lists people selling hay or looking for hay to buy. It is free to list your hay.

Forage Management Tips

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

Information provided from the book *Production and Utilization of Pastures and Forages in North Carolina*.

JANUARY

- * To maximize stockpiled fescue, restrict the grazing area (cross fencing) so that four to six cows graze on an acre.
- * If winter pasture is limited, feed hay in the pasture or allow cows to graze every other day. The priority for limited pasture is for (1) calves by creep grazing, (2) stockers, (3) nursing cows, and (4) dry cows.
- * Winter annual pastures that were planted on a prepared seedbed may be severely damaged if animals trample on them during wet periods. Allow calves first priority to these high-quality annual pastures.
- * Sample hay bales which are stored outside that will be fed during the next four to eight weeks.
- * Keep a record of winter weed problems so that control measures can be taken next fall.
- * Determine animal feed requirements for the year (about 6 tons hay equivalent/cow-calf pair) and outline a 12 month forage production plan and use plan to meet the needs.

FEBRUARY

- * Apply nitrogen to cool-season grasses to stimulate early spring growth.
- * Lime fields that will be prepared for spring plants.
- * Locate sources of hybrid bermudagrass sprigs for planting next month.
- * Burn warm-season grass residues in late February or early March.
- * Get herbicide sprayers ready to control weeds in dormant bermudagrass fields.



Many pastures and hayfields are dormant during the winter months of the year, but that doesn't mean that they should be neglected. The chart above adapted from the book *Production and Utilization of Pastures and Forages in North Carolina* provides some tips for the winter months. I want to highlight a few of those tips and provide additional information.

Pastures may be damaged if animals trample them during wet periods.

- ◇ Winter months bring about wet weather with the potential for snow and rain. It is important to consider soil compaction. Tractors and other equipment used to make fertilizer and lime applications on saturated ground can result in soil compaction.
- ◇ Hoof pressure from animals in pastures can also cause soil compaction.
- ◇ Soil compaction can destroy roots and root growth and lead to reduced plant growth. Limiting pasture exposure and tractor and equipment movement on saturated ground will help alleviate soil compaction.

Sample hay bales

- ◇ Several places will test the forage, including the NCDA&CS.
- ◇ Sample analysis costs \$10 per sample.
- ◇ By sampling hay, the producer knows the exact quality of the hay and whether to supplement feed based on the needs of the animal.

Keep a record of winter weed problems.

- ◇ Weeds reduce forage yield by competing with the desired forage and weakening the stand of grass.
- ◇ Proper timing will play a role in the control of weeds. October through December is the best time to control winter weeds, but since we have missed that time frame, now would be a good time to scout pastures or hayfields for problematic weeds. You can mark problem areas with a flag or make notes of heavy infestations and then during February through April time frame use proper herbicides to control winter weeds.

- ◇ The important piece is not to wait too late!

Lime fields that will be prepared for spring planting.

- ◇ Winter is a good time to apply lime because lime requires a series of reactions in the soil before soil pH is reduced. Limed soil improves the viability of the plant, less plant stress, and makes for healthier pastures or hayfields. Soil testing should be done to determine what nutrients are needed.
- ◇ Winter is an excellent time to make fertilizer applications unless applying nitrogen. Nitrogen is highly mobile in the soil and applications are best made when plants are actively growing during the spring or fall. Other nutrients, like phosphorous and potassium are not highly mobile and are best applied in winter months to give them time to break down and become available for the plants. Nutrients can then move into the root zone and be available in the spring when plants begin to resume growth.

Getting the Most Out of Your New Herd Bull

By: Randy Wood, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Scotland County

As I talk to cattle farmers this time of year, one conversation that repeats itself from farm to farm is “how much should I spend on a bull this year”? That’s a tough question to answer in terms of actual cash money, but the short answer is as much as your business can reasonably afford. The reason I give farmers this response is a good, productive herd bull is critical to the long-term success of your cattle herd. When we look at how much genetic impact this one animal will have on your cows for years to come, you simply cannot afford to go out and scrounge up a \$1000 “Cow Freshener” to get you by for another year or two. This one animal will provide ½ the genetic makeup of 20, 30, even 50 calves per year. If you run this bull for 3 or 4 years, and then retain daughters from him, his long-term impact on your farm is tremendous. So, what are some things we can do as managers to help your newly purchased bull have a good start?

Young Bulls vs Old Bulls

Young (1-3 years old) herd sires have to be managed differently than older bulls. Young herd bulls are still growing, plus they are much more physically active in checking females for estrus, courting and even herding females up than older bulls. Often young sires will come into a farm from a farm sale or a bull test station where they are a little to moderately overweight and not accustomed to the “real world” of hay and more hay. Inevitably young bulls are going to lose weight during their first couple of breeding season. What has to be closely observed is to keep a normal, moderate weight loss from becoming a major weight loss. There’s not a lot you can do about a young bull’s daily regimen of checking every female 3 times and moving his cows around like a sheep dog. But you can do three things to help a bull come through his first season or two in decent shape. First, try to keep his nutrition level up so he is getting additional calories. While it may not be practical to feed the entire herd a supplement, bulls can be trained to feed out of a bucket every day or every other day while you keep the cows back. This is something nobody is going to do long term but most farmers can do this for 30-45 days or so when he starts getting worked down. Protein licks or blocks are another option to help the bull get some additional nutrition during the breeding season without breaking the bank. The second things you can do is run a young bull with the right age/size females. A yearling or even a two-year old bull cannot hold his own at the hay feeder with a group of fully grown cows. He will get pushed out and beat around just like a heifer will. Yearling bulls do best when they are run on cows 3

years of age or younger. This tends to even the playing field and they are not having to fight their way through a bunch of cows that are way bigger than him just to get to the feeder. Once they get to about 3 years old they should be able to run the roost, but as a 1-2 year old they have to be babied. Finally, run a young bull with the appropriate number of females. A young bull should never be put with females until he has passed a Breeding Soundness Exam. Almost any bull sale or test station will require their bulls to pass a BSE before they are sold, but if you are buying a bull through private treaty this test is a must before you use him. After passing a BSE, a 14-15-month-old bull can service about that many females in a controlled 60-90 day season. In a year-round situation, this number can be increased a little but you never want to put a 15-month-old bull with 40 cows and think good things are going to happen. As a bull gets older, he can handle one cow per month of age (i.e. a 24-month-old bull can breed around 24 cows) until a maximum of 35-40 cows.

Using a young bull in a multi-sire pasture

Much research has been conducted over the years on how young bulls function in a multi-sire pasture system. The short answer is not very well. Inevitably what happens is the dominate bull of the pasture ends up breeding most, if not all, of the cycling females while the younger bulls get very little cows bred. The only way these type of multi-sire situations work if the bulls are very close in age and size. Even then the bull that ends up establishing dominance will get a very high percentage of the females bred. If you are forced to run two or more bulls in the same pasture, then you need to purchase a young bull a year ahead of time and figure out how to get him exposed to at least a few cows the first year in a separate pasture. This will allow him to get some breeding experience and also allows you to evaluate at least a few of his calves the following year.

Buying a good young herd bull at auction is part skill and part luck. Managing him to become a successful herd sire who will do his job for the next 5-7 years however is something you can easily accomplish with a little work and a little planning.

Winter Feeding of Horses

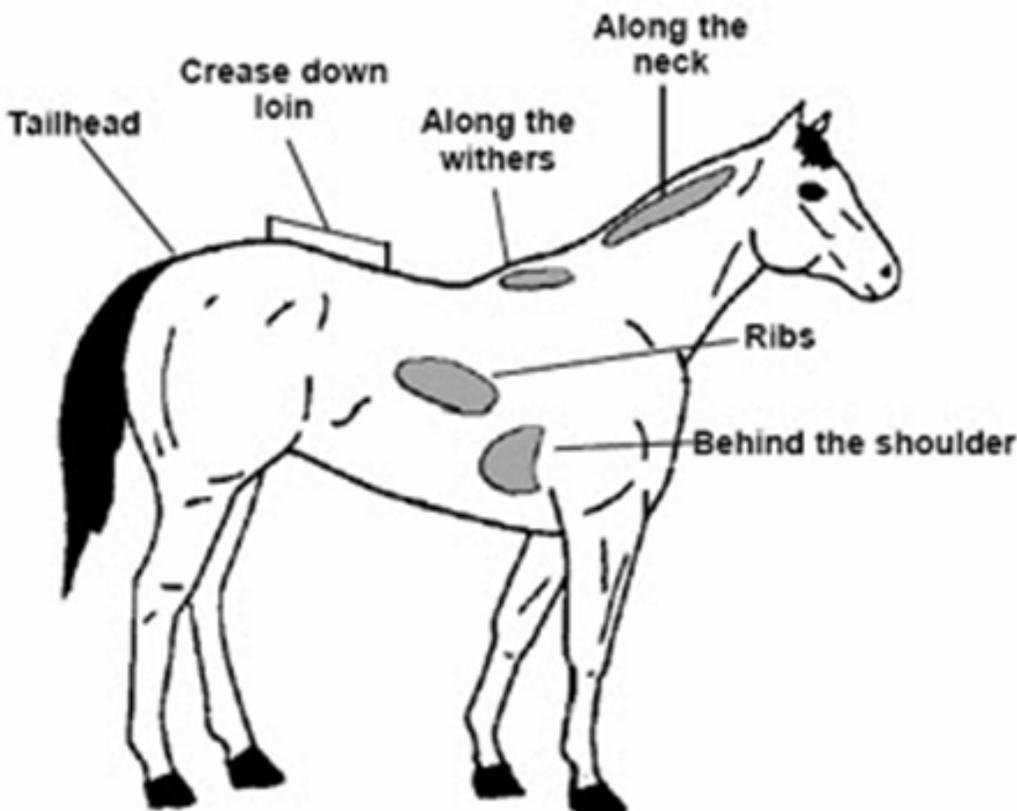
By: Jamie Warner, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Montgomery County

North Carolina is known for mild winters; however, there are still a few things that horse owners should think about in order to keep their equine friends happy and healthy during these colder months.

It happens every year during the winter, some horses put on extra weight and some start to look too skinny. The best way to tell if your horse is getting enough food (or too much) is to monitor their Body Condition Score (BCS). Most horses require 1.5 – 2 % of their body weight in forages and feed a day to maintain the proper BCS (which most experts agree is a 5 on a scale from 1 to 9). This means that for a 1,000 pound animal, they will need to consume 15-20 pounds a day. Of course, a majority of that should come from forages. Horses that are “easy keepers” may require a little less to maintain their BCS and older horses, horses with certain medical problems or those that are just plain harder to keep may require a little more to stay at their ideal weight. Likewise, horses that are kept in a stall during the colder winter months might not need as much as horses that are on pasture all winter. The article from the University of Maine (<http://umaine.edu/publications/1010e/>) describes body condition scoring and what to look for when doing so. The main thing is to just be aware of your horse’s BCS and how it changes throughout the winter.

With all this talk on feeding, don’t forget the water! Cooler months usually lead to periods of inactivity, changes in diet and drinking less water than normal. All of these have the tendency to raise the incidence of impaction colic. A typical horse should drink between 8-12 gallons of fresh water a day to ensure that the normal bodily functions continue to stay “normal”. Horses like their water between 45-65°F and free of ice. This is often hard to do during the coldest months of the year. To guarantee that your horse’s water is adequate, check buckets at least twice a day, emptying the icy cold water and replacing it with fresh, warmer water. If twice a day water checks are not feasible, then you may want to check into some automatic de-icers. Most experts advise that you continue to offer access to free choice mineral/salt blocks throughout the winter months, as this will also increase their intake of water.

For more information on winter feeding, body condition scoring your animal or anything else mentioned in this article, please don’t hesitate to contact your local Cooperative Extension Center.



Check the amount of fat covering the above places when conducting a BCS on your horse.

Preparing for Lambing and Kidding Season

By: Liz Lahti, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Cumberland and Hoke Counties

For some, lambing and kidding has already begun and for others it will start soon. It is important to be prepared to ensure survival rate of kids and lambs and help reduce stress level during this critical time. Below are some suggestions for preparing for lambing and kidding season.

Lambing/Kidding Kit

Having the following tools ready and in one place will be helpful when a stressful situation occurs because you will not have to waste time searching for the different items. When putting your tool kit together is a great time to check to make sure all tools are in good working order and that you have enough gloves, lubricant, etc. along with cleaning and disinfecting all equipment.

- Feeding tube and syringe
- Plastic sleeves and lubricant
- Colostrum
- Milk replacer
- Clean, dry shelter
- Heat lamps
- Rectal thermometer
- Syringes and needles
- Iodine solution
- Injectable Vit. E/Selenium
- Vaccines (enterotoxemia, tetnus)
- Ear tags
- Docking and castration instruments
- Disinfectant
- Record sheets
- Kid/lamb puller
- Latex gloves
- Towels
- Emergency phone numbers
- Surgical scissors

What to Expect and Look For

Based on your breeding records, you should be able to tell when the first females should have their babies. Start checking and monitoring the animals daily about a week before the first does and ewes are supposed to give birth. Be sure to provide a clean, dry area for kidding and lambing to happen. It can be in the pasture or in a building. The building should be well ventilated and have clean bedding – straw, pine shavings, and/or inexpensive hay can be used. Some signs to look for that indicate the animal is getting ready to kid/lamb are enlarged udders one to six weeks before kidding/lambing, muscles and ligaments in the hind end soften and relax two weeks prior, one to two days prior she will start to get restless and show signs of nervousness and isolate herself from the group. One to two days prior you may see the udder become even larger along with the teats. Most will start to have a thin

mucous discharge from their vulva that will get thicker as parturition gets closer.

A normal delivery should take about five hours, depending on the number of offspring to be born. After the water breaks the ewe/doe should start to deliver within 30 minutes to 1 hour. If the ewe/doe is pushing hard for more than 30 minutes and you have not seen a water sac or kid/lamb you may need to provide assistance. Kids/lambs should come 30 minutes to 1 hour apart. The kid/lamb should be in a diving position, front feet first and right side up. If you notice the kid/lamb is not in this position, the ewe/doe may have a hard time delivering and you may need to reposition the baby. If the sac around the lamb/kid is not broken, you will have to break it. If you do not feel comfortable helping a ewe/doe that is struggling, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Lamb/Kid Care

You should try to let the umbilical cord break naturally. The cord lengths will vary and if it's too long the lamb/kid could step on it. Use surgical scissors to clip the cord to about 2 inches and then dip it in an iodine solution to prevent infection. The kid/lamb's respiration will be stimulated by the mom licking the baby and the lamb/kid should begin to vocalize. If the lamb/kid appears to be lifeless, rub the animal vigorously with a towel to stimulate it and wipe mucous from the nose and mouth. You can also stick a piece of hay or straw in the nostril to stimulate a sneeze reflex to trigger breathing. Normal lambs/kids should stand within a few hours of birth and look for the udder to nurse. It is very important that the lamb/kid gets colostrum within 12 to 24 hours after birth. Colostrum contains antibodies that protect the newborns against diseases.

Ewe/Doe Care

The placenta should be detached within 12 to 18 hours after lambing/kidding is over. If any part of the placenta remains in the animal it can cause an infection in the uterus and prevent the animal from getting pregnant in the future. Ewes and does in poor health, giving birth for the first time, or who are poor mothers will sometimes abandon their babies or fail to allow them to nurse. Penning the babies with the mom for a few days may help, but you have to make sure the babies are nursing and healthy.

Being prepared for one of the most stressful times of year for a sheep and goat producer will help decrease stress and make sure you are successful. If you have any questions contact your local Extension Agent.

Regional 4-H and FFA Chicken Projects

By: *Eve Honeycutt, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Lenior and Greene Counties*

One of the easiest 4-H Livestock projects in which youth can be involved is a chicken project. Chickens are fun and easy to raise, they don't eat that much, and take up very little space. Because of the popularity of chicken projects, Eastern NC has two Regional 4-H and FFA chicken projects in which youth can participate.

Our Regional Chicken Projects are divided into two regions. For the counties north of I-40, we have the Coastal Plains Chicken Project. For the more southern counties, we have the Southeast Regional Chicken Project. We also give youth the option of choosing two different types of chickens. Those that choose laying hens will receive 5-10 day old chicks in February and will raise them to maturity. Those that choose our broilers will receive chicks that have been hatched through the 4-H embryology programs in local elementary schools in March. These broilers are then passed out to those who chose to raise them and will also be raised to maturity. On May 1, the participants will bring all their birds to our Coastal Plains Regional Chicken Project show for

prizes and bragging rights. The Southeastern show is April 26.

The youth that choose the laying hens will receive Black Laced Silver Wyandotte pullets. The Southeastern Show youth also has the option to choose Red Sex Links. After the show they will raise their birds at home for their own small flock. For the broilers, because they are meat birds, we collect all of the broilers that were passed out and process them for their meat. The processing day is also used as a learning tool for local farmers that want to learn how to process their own birds. The birds are packaged as whole chickens, and then donated to local food banks.

Encourage kids you know as well as local high school agriculture programs to participate in this great project! Contact your local Extension Agent for more information.



Winter Safety Tips

By: Zack Taylor, Agriculture Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Lee County

On the farm, safety is a 24/7/365 job. When working with heavy machinery and large animals, even a small slip can easily become potentially life threatening. The winter months present their own challenges. Conditions are often muddy, work areas are cold, and there is the potential for snow and ice. Here are a few things to consider to help keep you and your family stay safe when working the farm this winter.

1. Dress in layers. Staying dry is critical during cold temperatures, be sure to have both insulating and waterproofing layers. Hand warmers can be useful, and are a good idea to keep in the truck or in coat pockets.
2. Plan your day and start on time. Accidents are more likely to happen in the dark. With shorter winter days, it is even more important to use time efficiently. Plan your work and pace yourself so that as much as possible can be completed during daylight hours.
3. Bring safety gear. Winter weather and muddy conditions increase the risk of slips and falls. Make sure first aid kits are accessible and well stocked. Try to avoid working alone, but if you must, be sure to keep a cell phone with you so that you can call for help if needed. In many rural areas, cell phone service is limited, so a 2-way radio with access to someone at the house or shop can be a great lifeline in an emergency.
4. Watch your step. It's always a good idea to have some ice melt and sand readily available to help gain extra traction in case of icy conditions. Buy now instead of waiting until after winter weather has happened.
5. Clear snow and ice from vehicles and equipment completely. Ice left on the hood of a truck and break loose and impair visibility. Snow or ice on the hood of an open tractor may shift and fall onto decking, interfering with foot controls. Take the time to completely remove snow and ice before beginning a job.
6. Use caution around heating sources. Farm shops are often cold and drafty, so often we use a supplemental gas or electric heater. Always read and follow manufacturer guidelines when using a heater, and be sure the area around the heater is clear of anything that could lead to a fire, such as grease, rags, or fuel.
7. Let someone know what your plans are. Leave a note or tell a loved one when leaving the house. Let them know where you will be and when you expect to return. In the event of an accident, they will know something is not right when you don't show up on time.
8. Stay hydrated. Dehydration is common during winter months. During hot weather, it is much easier to remember to drink plenty of fluids. However, work during the winter still leads to sweat, so remember to replace fluids. A thermos with a hot beverage can be a great way to warm up during a break. Fuel your body with healthy and hearty meals and snacks to keep you warm during cold winter days.
9. Invest in good work wear. Quality waterproof jackets, boots, and pants can be a steep investment, but will pay for themselves in the comfort and safety they provide.
10. Be prepared to finish at another time. Often chores on the farm take longer than we expect. If dangerous weather conditions occur, stop and take breaks to keep yourself safe. No task on the farm is worth your life. Prioritize work to finish the most important jobs first.

Each farm is unique, so think of things on your farm that may be a safety hazard and make a checklist to help you and employees or family member stay safe this year. Sometimes an extra set of eyes can notice risk you never thought of, so ask you extension agent for help identifying possible safety risk. I hope these tips will help keep you safe on the farm this winter.

