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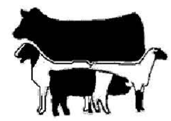
March 2025

Moore County Center

Livestock News



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Alternative Feeds - Feeding Wet Distiller's Grain

Thursday, March 13 at 6:30 pm
Brad Halling American Whiskey Ko. - BHAWK Distillery
175 Yadkin Rd, Southern Pines, NC 28387

Join the Moore County Stockmen's Association for their March meeting to learn more about feeding wet distiller's grain to livestock and how you can incorporate it into your feeding program. Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist with the University of Kentucky, will be our presenter. We will also get to see the by-product and how to pick it up.

RSVP is required by Thursday, March 6 at 5:00 pm
$15 at the door (cash or check) for non-members
$40 for an individual and $50 for a family to become a member!

Contact Liz Joseph, 910-947-3188 or liz_joseph@ncsu.edu, for more information and to register.

New Land Owner Summit

Wednesday, April 9, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Moore County Agricultural Center,
707 Pinehurst Avenue, Carthage, NC 28327

Topics include:
I bought land, now what?
Present Use Tax Program
Bona Fide Farms
Farm Service Agency
Cost-Share Programs - Soil & Water/Natural Resources Conservation Service

Contact Liz Joseph, 910-947-3188 or liz_joseph@ncsu.edu, for more information and to register. RSVP by April 7.

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.

Animal Waste Management Updates

By: Becky Spearman, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Bladen County

Initial 10- hour Animal Waste Operator Class (OIC)

There will be an initial class on April 30 and May 1 in Sampson County. Participants will be able to take the June exam. To sign up, call (910) 592-7161 or email max_knowles@ncsu.edu.

Sprayfield and Lagoon Reminders:

- Remove overseed in a timely manner to protect your Bermudagrass stand. Check your waste plan for when it must be removed. Some plans say prior to heading out or by April 7th whichever comes first. The earlier you can remove your overseed the better for hay quality and Bermuda stand loss.
- Now is a good time to evaluate your Bermuda stand to see if you need to improve weak areas. If there are bare areas in your fields, you can just sprig or seed with an improved Bermuda variety in the small bare/ weak areas. You don't have to sprig/seed the entire field.
- If you are sprigging a field, control of weeds before and after sprigging are critical to the long-term success of the field. Diruion herbicide is a chemical applied right after sprigging to control many weeds. It cannot be used on seeded varieties. There are also post emergent broadleaf herbicides that can be used during establishment year on both sprigged and seeded varieties.
- Bermudagrass does not like wet soil, so if you continually see a declining stand, consider planting a summer annual alternative. Pearl Millet, Sorghum/Sudan and Crabgrass are options. They have similar PAN rates or within 25% of your bermudagrass rate. Each works with a fall planting of a small grain like rye, oats, wheat, or triticale. The combination summer and fall planting will make for a good year-round sprayfield option that has comparable PAN rates for your waste plan.
- To make the best decisions for replanting fields, make sure you know your soil type so you can choose the grass that will match it in terms of drainage and fertility. Contact your local Extension Agent for help with fertility and soil mapping.
- As the OIC, you are responsible for the entire farm even if your employees are doing the pumping, etc. It is the OIC's job to educate employees on what they should be looking for while pumping. If the OIC is not directly pumping, they are responsible for inspection of the spray site within 24 hours. Inspection includes visual observation of application equipment, land application area, subsurface drain outlets, ditches, and drainage ways for any discharge of waste.
- Your permit also says that you will inspect the system while pumping at least every 120 minutes during the application of waste. A record of each inspection shall be recorded on IRR forms or other approved forms.
- Excessive Ponding is any area of the application field where visible liquid waste is ponded on the surface of the land application site more than four (4) hours following the application of waste.
- Check for bare areas on lagoon banks and walls. It can be difficult to get things to grow on the lagoon once grasses have started eroding or were "scalped" by a mower. If you can replace soil and establish bahia grass or any good grass cover, don't mow it as close as you would your yard. Let it grow and establish, but keep it mowed enough to see your pipes, wires and snakes when working around the lagoon. Most people don't like to hear Bahia because it's hard on the mower, but you don't have to mow it that much, if at all.
- Check that stormwater is managed around houses and especially between the houses and lagoon, so that stormwater doesn't runoff into the lagoon and add more pumping for you or cause a violation. Be careful that any leakage around the houses or pipes is stopped because it can discharge quickly through these stormwater pathways if not managed properly.

Reminders

- Lagoon analysis is required 60 days before or after applying animal waste. Set reminders on your phone or calendar to take them in a timely manner.
- Sludge surveys are due yearly by 12/31 unless you received an extension.
- Check if your calibration (due every other year for general permits) and soil samples (due every 3 years) are due this year by 12/31.

Check your animal waste continuing credit hours and due date.

Hay Feeding Strategies

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

I hate feeding hay! This is a pretty commonly said statement on cattle farms around the country each winter. Sometimes, with a little more salty language thrown in for good measure.

If we take the time to list out everything we invest in a cow over the course of a year and put a dollar figure to it, then hay is going to be the biggest expense we have. Things like vaccines, dewormer, breeding costs ,and protein supplementation are all minor expenses when we compare them to what we spend on hay over the winter (and the Spring and Fall, depending on the year).

Those of us that choose to farm in Southeast NC that have bermudagrass and more bermudagrass are especially cursed to endure a long hay-feeding season while we envy our neighbors to the North and West for their Fescue. For Bermuda farms, we start feeding hay sometime in October and continue through May. We may get a little break with some rye or oats in the spring, but usually, these small grains will play out pretty quickly when a bunch of hungry cows gets to them.

So, with hay being such a major expense, what can we do to reduce this cost?

Have sensible stocking rates.
Stocking rate is the amount of land you have versus the number of animals you graze on it. Simply put, a cow can graze longer if she has 3 acres of grass to go across than 1 acre. The more acres you have per cow to graze will directly impact how much hay you'll need. Of course, the downside of low stocking rates is that you'll have less cattle to market, and in a year like we just had, everybody wants more calves to sell. I always tell cattle farmers, "sur,e you'll have enough grass in the middle of summer, but how long does your grass last in the fall and the spring?" How long does it take your cows to wipe out your small grain overseed? 3 weeks or 7 weeks? This is where your stocking rates can make a major difference in your annual hay consumption.

Feed decent quality hay.
Everybody has a job in this world. On some farms, a cow's job is to eat the hay that is not pretty enough to sell to a horse person. Cattle, being a ruminant, can consume some pretty poor quality hay and still get proper nutrition. That's why when you say "cow hay" to your farming buddies, they know what you're talking about. However, there is a difference between "cow hay" and just downright bad hay. Sure, a hungry cow can eat some of the stemmiest and rankest hay you can find, but in an effort to meet her daily caloric needs, she'll end up eating a bunch of it! Feeding your cattle a little better quality hay with a better TDN (Total Digestible Nutrients) means they'll eat less of it to meet their needs. This is especially true when we look at different ages of cattle. Calves, breeding age heifers, and lactating 2 year-old cows need a better quality bale of hay than a dry, middle-aged cow. If you have the ability to sort your hay and keep good-quality hay separate from poor-quality hay, save the good stuff for those who need it more.

Invest in hay feeders to avoid wastage.
If you take nothing else from this article, don't feed round bales on the ground with no type of hay feeder. There is no way around it, throwing a round bale on the ground by itself and just driving off is probably the biggest waste of hay you'll see. (Please note I am not talking about the practice of unrolling round bales daily in a clean spot of a pasture. This is a practice I have seen on several farms and, if done correctly, works really good.) No, I'm referring to just dropping a bale on the ground and leaving. Numerous studies conducted on this practice over the years have shown that anywhere from 25%-50% of hay fed this way gets wasted and is not consumed. If you've ever seen the aftermath of a bunch of cows fighting over an unprotected bale of hay in the middle of a pasture, the sheer volume of hay thrown around and stomped into the mud is hard to ignore. I've also had farmers tell me that if you don't feed them too much, they'll go back and clean it up the next day. I always try to see everybody's viewpoint and know that there are good ideas and tricks to be learned at every farm I go to, but this is one practice that is just flat out wrong. If you can afford $100,000 worth of hay equipment or spend $25-$40 for every bale you buy to feed, you can afford to go out and buy a $300 hay ring so the hay ends up in a cow's belly and not in the mud.

There's not a lot that can be done to decrease what it costs us to produce a bale of hay, but it's not hard to follow a few common sense practices to make sure that hay gets used wisely.

Complacency and Farm Safety

By: Tom Dyson, Area Specialized Agromedicine Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension

It is hard to shock a farmer when it comes to farm safety. Most have experienced farm safety education, with the horrible photos and videos and warnings. Yet the news stories, photos, and videos of tragedy continue to come each year! How can this be?!

The problem is not that farmers have no idea of the dangers on a farm. I suspect most could teach a pretty good course in farm safety. It is not a mystery at this point, for example, that a kid falling off Grandpa's tractor fender and going under the wheel in a split second is a scarring family horror that will never fully heal. Farm safety instructors have preached the tractor/fender ride sermon ad nauseam for decades. Yet tractor rides with grandpa continue as a treasured tradition. At some point, we have to ask ourselves, why?

I know many farmers. But I don't know a single one that would intentionally endanger a family member. It is NOT a lack knowledge, or love, or care that results in such tragedy. Instead, I believe that it is that old enemy on the farm known as complacency. Complacency lets us become so comfortable with certain dangers, that we actually become able to essentially ignore them.

Complacency allows a farmer to step over a spinning PTO shaft to avoid a 20 second walk around the tractor, just as it allows a teenager to send "just a quick" text message, while hurling at a combined speed of 110mph toward an oncoming 18-wheeler…with no idea that truck driver is texting too! The farmer knows a PTO shaft can end a life instantly. And the teen has seen enough horrifying photos in driver's education to practically give them PTSD. Yet the risk taking continues.

We humans honestly come to think tragedy won't really happen to us. After all, not one person reading or writing this article has done anything careless in all their lives that actually killed them. And we naturally expect the good luck to continue! That is the very nature of complacency.

Recently, I have begun thinking of walking out on to a farm for a day of work as walking up to a giant roulette wheel with one casino chip in your hand. But that one chip does not represent money. It represents your life. It represents the possibility of being at your daughter's wedding, or celebrating holidays, or walking with your spouse holding hands at the beach. All the joys that future years may hold if the giant roulette wheel allows. That's why we must minimize risk!

I suggest that you find a casino chip somewhere, or some object that will serve the same purpose for you. Perhaps your wallet, since it is always with you. Think of it as a giant chip. When you are in a hurry to get to something important like a ball game, or dinner, and you just want to step across that spinning PTO shaft to save walking around to tractor, or whatever risk you are contemplating, put that "chip" down on the back of the tractor first (in your mind, or with an actual chip). Then reconsider what you are contemplating. Is the risk I'm about to take to save a few seconds worth my daughter or wife finding me wrapped around this PTO shaft, or crushed under a tractor that I never got around to putting a roll over protection structure on? Is it worth facing life with missing limbs, fingers, or permanent disfigurement? Is it worth neurological, lung, eye or other damage, from unprotected exposure to chemicals that have immediate effects, or most troubling, deadly effects such as cancer that you won't know are happening until years have passed? I think that plainly that answer, every time you stop and think about it, is NO. Remember, you can't even farm, if you are gone.

There are far too many stories of disasters from unnecessary on-farm risk taking. And so many of these were the results of good people who have become so comfortable with certain dangers that they come to basically ignore them.

And children learn from what they watch around them. On the farm, children also need to observe and learn danger avoidance, risk reduction, and a powerful attitude of respect for the dangers that are unavoidable. If they see your complacency, they will very likely learn it from you, and the cycle will continue. They need to know that an ATV ride on the farm can, and too often does, turn deadly in a moment. They need to know that livestock can go from cute to deadly in seconds. They need to know that a grain bin is nowhere to go, or to play. They need to know that they can get into many things, playing or working on the farm, that can cause them serious harm. They can learn these things from you, and the safety-first attitude they see in you. However, they are also kids. They need you to not only model safety, but to keep them safe from their own complacency and blindness to danger. Keep the guards in place on equipment, take the keys with you when you park a tractor, store pesticides properly, and remember all the things YOU got into when you were a kid growing up on a farm.

Farm life is a great way to live, but you have to stay alive to love it!

Preparing Your Horse for Spring

By: Emi Bigford, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Montgomery County

Spring is in the air! You might have noticed your horse starting to shed its winter coat and perhaps even spotted the first insects. These seasonal changes signal the need to adjust your horse's care routine. Whether you're preparing for the show ring or the rodeo arena, this checklist will help you optimize your horse's health and set them up for success.

Spring Horse Care Checklist

This checklist outlines essential tasks to prepare your horse for the warmer months. Remember to consult your veterinarian and local extension office for specific recommendations tailored to your horse and region.

I. Health & Wellness:

- **Schedule Spring Vaccinations:** Administer core and risk-based vaccines as recommended by your veterinarian.
- **Perform Fecal Egg Count:** Conduct a fecal egg count to determine parasite load and implement targeted deworming based on results.
- **Schedule Dental Examination:** Arrange a professional dental exam to ensure optimal oral health.
- **Conduct Bloodwork (if recommended):** Perform blood work as advised by your veterinarian to assess overall health.
- **Clean Sheath/Udder:** Clean the sheath (for geldings and stallions) or udder (for mares) to prevent infections.
- **Schedule Coggins Test:** Conduct a Coggins test as required for travel and boarding.
- **Evaluate Diet:** Assess your horse's current diet and adjust as needed to account for new spring grasses, potentially reducing caloric or sugar intake.

II. Tack & Equipment:

- **Inspect Tack for Safety and Fit:** Thoroughly inspect all tack for wear and tear, ensuring proper fit for both horse and rider.
- **Maintain Blankets:** Wash, repair any rips or holes, and re-waterproof blankets before storing them for the next season.
- **Schedule Trailer and Equipment Maintenance:** Schedule professional maintenance for your trailer and other equipment, or complete necessary maintenance yourself (e.g., check tires, lights, brakes).

III. Property & Environment:

- **Inspect and Repair Fences:** Walk the fence line, checking for damage and making necessary repairs to ensure secure pastures.
- **Develop Insect Control Plan:** Create a comprehensive insect control plan, including appropriate products and strategies for the upcoming months.

IV. Grooming & Comfort:

- **Clip (if needed):** Clip your horse's winter coat if it is causing excessive sweating due to temperature changes.

While this is not a complete list as every horse's needs are different and every farm has a different schedule. Spring is a great time to set your equine partner up for a successful year.

Contact your local extension office if you need assistance with any of these tasks, have questions or need resources to make yourself the most successful equine owner.

Sheep and Goat Care Basics

AN INFOGRAPHIC FOR SHEEP AND GOAT OWNERS

Stockting Rates:

Sheep

5-6 head per acre

Goats

6-8 head per acre

****Based on Excellent Pasture Source****

Vital Signs

	Sheep	Goat
Temperature:	102-103°F	102-104°F
Resting Heart Rate: (Beats Per Minute)	70 - 90	70-80
Resting Respiration Rate: (Breaths Per Minute)	10-20	12-15

Ruminant Digestion

Sheep and goats are ruminants, which means the majority of their diet should be forage like grass and hay.

Goats need browse and forbs as part of their diet as well.

Supplementation through feed, grain, and concentrates can be provided as needed.

Body Condition Scores

Score		Description	
1		Spine sharp, back muscle shallow,	Lean
2		Spine sharp, back muscle full, no fat	Lean
3		Spine can be felt, back muscle full, some fat cover	Good Condition
4		Spine barley felt, muscle very full, thick fat cover	Fat
5		Spine impossible to feel, very thick fat cover, fat deposits over tail and rump	Fat

Nutritional Requirements

Nutrients requirements will vary based on species, stage of production, and age among other factors. These are some basic guidelines.

- Feed animals 1.5-2% of their bodyweight daily, with the majority of the diet being forages.
- Growth and lactation requires require higher crude protein levels.
- Make any changes to a diet slowly and avoid increasing concentrate amounts too quickly to avoid issues with enterotoxemia (overeating disease)

For more information about the care and management of sheep or goats, contact your local county Extension office. ces.ncsu.edu

Biosecurity on Commercial Poultry Farms

By: Margaret Ross, Area Specialized Poultry Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in the East

Keeping disease out of your commercial poultry flock is very important. Biosecurity is the best way to greatly reduce your risk of disease. Below, we will discuss the definition of biosecurity and how you can ramp yours up to keep your birds safe of disease.

What is biosecurity? According to the University of Maryland Extension, biosecurity refers to procedures used to prevent the introduction and spread of disease-causing organisms in poultry flocks.

How does disease enter our flocks? Disease is spread through contact or close proximity to a host or vector. Vectors are any organisms that transfer pathogens from one host to another. Usually, people are the most common vectors and this usually happens by mechanical transfer. The most common examples of mechanical transfer are clothing, shoes, vehicles, equipment, rodents, insects, and migratory waterfowl.

What biosecurity measures can you implement on your farm? There are many practices, procedures, and equipment you can put into place on your farm to reduce your disease risk. These include wearing disposable coveralls and boots, wearing hair nets and disposable gloves, using foot baths (very important to keep the material changed, clean, and out of the elements), installing car washing stations, and disinfecting equipment and houses between flocks. Also, it is important for essential personnel to sign in and out of your farm, so in case of a disease outbreak, you will be able to hopefully trace the origin. Putting signs at the front of your farm that say this is a biosecurity area and visitors do not need to enter the property without approval is another measure you can put in place to increase your biosecurity.

UGA has a publication on biosecurity and suggests these methods for lowering disease risk: **limiting visitations to other poultry farms** – do this only when necessary and be sure to shower in and out and change clothing before returning to your farm, **keep all animals out of poultry houses** – this includes wild birds, dogs and cats, **practice sound rodent and pest control programs** – rodents carry disease, **keep visitors to a minimum** – only allow essential personnel, **avoid contact with non-commercial poultry or wild birds** – migratory waterfowl and hunting, **inspect flocks daily** – properly and quickly dispose of mortality and report health concerns right away, **maximize the flock's environment** – good ventilation and dry litter keeps disease risk low, **keep areas around the houses and feed bins clean** – remove trash and keep grass cut, and most important – **recognize disease symptoms.**

Recognizing disease symptoms early may be one of your best defenses against the spread of disease. Be aware of these symptoms in your flock: lack of energy and appetite, decreased egg production; soft-shelled eggs or misshapen eggs, swelling of the head, eyes, comb, wattles and hocks, purple discoloration of the wattles, combs and legs, nasal discharge, coughing, wheezing and sneezing, lack of coordination in mobility; diarrhea, sudden or excessive mortality without clinical signs. Be sure to report symptoms immediately.

Be sure not to stress about biosecurity because you will never be able to do every single thing 100% of the time. Biosecurity is about lowering and managing your disease risk as much as possible. Not all of the above suggestions may be feasible for your farm. If you would like to discuss what biosecurity measures you could implement on your farm and how you can lower your flock's disease risk, contact your local Cooperative Extension Office.

Understanding Breeds of Sheep for Livestock Competitions

By: Dan Wells, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Johnston County

Having a good base knowledge of sheep breeds is important for youth involved in livestock competitions. Market lambs, breeding ewes and wether dams are very common classes in judging contests, and will very commonly include reasons or questions about the class. It's important to know and understand about where these breeds come from, a bit about their breed character, and where they fit into the picture of the modern livestock industry.

Oklahoma State University has an excellent webpage with information about many breeds of livestock at afs.okstate.edu/breeds/. This website lists over 240 breeds of sheep from around the world. Sheep were one of the very first animals to be domesticated, with drawings appearing in books from Mesopotamia dating back to 3000 BC. It's easy to understand that many breeds of sheep have been developed to adapt to many different environments around the world. There are breeds selected for wool, meat, milk or some dual-purpose breeds. Sheep are even used as draft animals in some areas! For the purposes of this article, we'll focus on the meat breeds of sheep most commonly found in North Carolina. But to be fair, many club lambs and commercial sheep in NC are actually crossbred.

The Hampshire breed developed in the county of the same name in England, with the breed association there being founded in 1889. An American Hampshire Association was also founded that same year. While there is some evidence of Hampshires in America as early as 1840, the primary introduction was between 1865-1870. Hampshires are black-faced sheep with gentle dispositions, known for good muscling and stoutness. They have a wool "cap" beginning at the eyes continuing back over the head to join the body wool. The ears and face are covered with coarse black hair and should be free from wool. They are likely to have "shaggy" wool on their lower legs, which are primarily covered with coarse black hair. Recent trends in the show lamb industry that favor shaggy legs have led to a greater emphasis on Hampshire character in club lambs.

Suffolk sheep also originated in England, in the upland regions along the southeast coast. They resulted from crossing Southdown rams on Norfolk Horned ewes, and were recognized as a breed as early as 1810. Suffolks are also black-faced, but lack the wool cap and leg shag of Hampshires. They tend to be somewhat taller and longer-legged than many other breeds. According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the largest sheep ever recorded was a Suffolk ram in Oregon that stood close to four feet tall and weighed 545 pounds!

The Horned Dorset Breed also originated in England, although its exact origins are somewhat murky. There is speculation that Merino sheep from Spain were crossed with the Horned Sheep of Wales, resulting in a desirable meat breed. The first recorded imports to the US were in 1860. Almost a hundred years later, at NC State University, a herd of Horned Dorsets yielded an apparent mutation of hornless offspring. After testing and research on these animals, led by Dr. Lemuel Goode, ensured that they carried the same characteristics as Horned Dorsets, a registry of Polled Dorsets was established. Polled Dorsets now exceed their horned relatives in number around the world, and especially in NC. They have very white, medium-coarse wool over the body, upper legs, crown and jaw. They have dense white hair, possibly mixed with some wool, over the face, ears and lower legs. Their hooves are predominantly white, in fact- a completely black hoof is a disqualification from registry.

The Southdown Sheep is becoming more common in NC, both with youth exhibitors and those seeking the "homesteader" lifestyle. This breed developed in the Sussex, England area in the late 1700's. The first imports to the US occurred in the 1820's. They are a shorter stature breed, with a meaty, muscular build. They are a medium-wool breed with gray to brown hair on the muzzle and lower legs. The face should be somewhat triangular with moderate-length ears covered with wool or short hair. Their body should be longer than it is tall.

Hair sheep have become more popular across the US in recent years. These breeds have little wool, which is mixed with hair that tends to shed off in warm weather, eliminating the need for shearing and saving labor in commercial flocks. Their meat has been well received in local markets. Two breeds of particular importance as youth projects are the Katahdin and the Dorper.

Katahdins were developed in the US state of Maine and are named for the highest peak in that state. The originator, Michael Piel, imported three African Hair Sheep from St Croix in the 1950's. Piel crossed the ram of this set on various other breeds of sheep, selecting for hair coat, meatiness, fertility and flocking instinct. A satellite flock soon began in Vermont, and the sheep even caught the attention of Heifer Project International as they were deemed to be suited to the southern US. The breed association began in 1985. Katahdins are noted as being docile, medium-sized sheep with good mothering ability and are well suited for pastured production as they are noted for good parasite resistance and heat tolerance. The hair coat varies in length and color, from solid white to red, with some black coloration in certain individuals. They have coarse outer hair with an undercoat of fine woolly fibers that shed as temperature and daylight increases. Their tails are typically not docked, so a long natural tail is a common characteristic.

The Dorper Sheep were developed in South Africa. The first US registry was established in 1995. They are a moderate-framed breed known for rapid growth to market weight. Both Dorper and White Dorper share a registry. Dorpers have a white body with a black head and neck, with limited spots allowed on the body. White Dorpers are white all over, but must have full pigmentation over the eyelids, under the tail and over the reproductive organs. All Dorpers should have a short, loose coat of hair and wool on the body, with short clean hair over the head. Dorpers are typically docked.