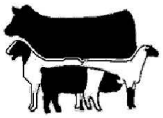
N.C. Cooperative Extension

Moore County Center

July 2025

Livestock News



Inside This Issue

Contact Us

N.C. Cooperative Extension
Moore County Center
707 Pinehurst Avenue
Carthage, NC 28327
(910)947-3188
moore.ces.ncsu.edu

Liz Joseph
Extension Agent
Livestock & Field Crops
liz_joseph@ncsu.edu

NC State Extension works in tandem with N.C. A&T State University, as well as federal, state and local governments, to form a strategic partnership known as N.C. Cooperative Extension.

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 OIC WASTE MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION

LOCATION: LENOIR COUNTY LIVESTOCK ARENA
1791 NC-11
KINSTON, NC 28504

CONTACT: KAELYN MOHRFELD LANE, LIVESTOCK EXT. AGENT-LENOIR AND GREENE COUNTIES
(252)560-6094 OR KFMOHRFE@NCSU.EDU TO REGISTER

JULY 14 AND 15
10 AM- 4 PM

Reminders

- Lagoon analysis is required 60 days before or after applying animal waste. Set reminders on your phone or calendar.
- 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.

Animal Waste Continuing Education Classes will be held this fall. Check the September newsletter for in-person locations and dates. We will have 2 - 3 hour Zoom classes.

The Department of Water Quality Animal Feeding operations Fayetteville Region has had some incidents with sludge removal recently. Steve Guyton, inspector for the region gave some reminders on sludge removal. At some point, sludge removal will be needed on lagoons. Once you perform a sludge survey and are out of compliance (less than 50% of the total treatment volume is sludge), a plan of action for Lagoon Sludge Reduction is required. If you haven't already removed sludge, hopefully you have given a lot of thought to where you will apply sludge when that time comes.

Most farms hire a custom applicator. Make sure to find out (preferably in writing) what your responsibilities are and what the applicator responsibilities are. Some questions to ask: who is responsible for the waste utilization plan, who is taking sludge samples to be analyzed, who is doing what parts of the required paperwork, etc. Have a waste plan (WUP) for sludge removal. Don't apply to your existing spray fields, unless you are doing a close out. The same weather rules apply to applying sludge as your regular effluent application.

There are setbacks such as not applying within 200 feet of a dwelling not owned by the producer. You must follow 2T rules (see 15A NCAC 02T rules below). These are important things to know up front, so nothing is missed. At the end of the day, the farm owner/permittee is ultimately responsible for all aspects of sludge application including any violations cause by the contractor and ensuring you are complying to your permit requirements. If you are using leased land, make sure you have all land lease agreements from the LAND OWNER signed and dated prior to the first application of any sludge. If someone else rents the land to farm and you talk with them, the landowner has to sign the agreement, not the one farming the land.

Be a good neighbor and let the community know what you are doing before sludge is applied next to their home, this will keep complaints to a minimum. Don't track sludge on the highway, follow sludge plan in regards to disking in the sludge within 48 hours or prior to a rain event on conventional tillage. No till is not required to be disked, but a best management practice would be to disk a strip around the border of the field. Locate all wells adjacent to fields (100 ft set back).

15A NCAC 02T .1304 (5): Notwithstanding Subparagraph (b)(4) of this rule, land application of waste shall be no closer than 100 feet from a well other than a monitoring well and no closer than 200 feet from a dwelling not owned by the waste generator at the time waste is first applied at the land application site. Setback waivers related to distance of land application of waste from a dwelling not owned by the waste generator shall be written, notarized, signed by all parties involved, and recorded with the county of Register of Deeds.

Plans of Action for High Freeboard

With all the rain we have had, lagoon levels are rising and may become out of compliance. When you are in the red, you must report to your inspector and have a plan of action done. You can do the POA or your technical specialist can assist you. It is a sheet that shows how much plant available nitrogen (PAN) you have left and you much you need to remove to get back into compliance. Your technical specialist will need a lagoon design (probably already has this), you current liquid level, amount of PAN left for each field, and your current waste analysis.

Rotational Grazing for the Small Farm

By: Kimberly Webb, Agriculture Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Wake County

Rotational grazing, or a grazing system where livestock are moved between multiple smaller pasture subdivisions (or “paddocks”) on a set schedule, and then allowed to rest or regrow between grazing periods, have been widely used, particularly on smaller farms to maximize forage utilization and reduce overgrazing. Rotational grazing has been shown to increase gain per acre compared to conventional grazing. But for the small farm, additional benefits can also include an ability to feed multiple livestock species, reduce the need for supplemental feed, lowering or improving distributions of animal waste, reductions in costs associated with improved animal health, and the possibility to reduce chemical inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides. However, for the small farmer, there can also be some disadvantages of rotational grazing primarily due to a need for more labor and time to manage, increased upfront investment (for fencing or other physical barriers), and potential equipment or resource needs to provide access to water and shade in each paddock.

If you are interested in implementing rotational grazing on your farm, remember, no one system translates perfectly from one farm to the next. Therefore, there is a lot of flexibility in how you establish your rotational grazing program. Keeping this in mind, it’s always a good idea to make a plan before getting started and be willing to adapt your grazing strategy to what best suits your farm goals based on your available resources. Begin by setting your goals for what you are trying to achieve prior to starting any rotational grazing plan. Is it to improve areas of pasture that are currently being overgrazed? Are you trying to reduce the need to supplement grazing? Likewise, define how much time and resources you are wanting to put into managing the grazing strategy. There is a wide range in the intensity and/or periods of rest between grazing that can be implemented so pick a strategy that works best for you. Typically, a more intensive rotational grazing plan allows for higher stocking densities and greater returns, however they also require more management time and investment from you.

Next, define how many acres you have available, how you would set up your paddocks, and what stocking rates your land can handle as you rotate between sub-pastures. Outline the resources you have that will determine how the rotational plan will look. Do you have access to temporary fencing, individual sources of water and available shade in every paddock? It can be helpful if you can see an aerial view of the area you want to graze and include soil maps and/or fertilizer recommendations for each area. This will help you visualize how to deploy your resources and ensure that proper soil nutrition etc. can be provided for each area and that you address providing adequate access to water and shade in each sub-division. Remember, your areas do not have to be a standard shape, sometimes the use of fan or triangle shaped areas may allow you to access overlapping shaded areas or provide access to water etc. Finally knowing the forage portfolio of your pastures beforehand and the associated recommended pasture grazing heights for your livestock species, will help determine how long your animals can graze in each paddock before moving them onto the next site.

It is recommended to begin with a basic rotational plan then gradually increase the intensity and complexity as you gain experience. If grazing multiple species, allow animals with higher nutritional requirements to graze first then rotate with other animals. Select your most productive area to start, as these areas typically will be more resilient to intensive grazing and will respond more rapidly with recommended management strategies as you learn and implement your management plan. If grazing multiple species, goats are known to be “top-down grazers” whereas other livestock species such as cattle, sheep and horses prefer to graze much shorter vegetation than goats. Make sure you have thought about what limiting factors you may have on your farm and predict these trouble areas before getting started. After starting on a smaller scale, see how these troublesome factors are impacting the efficiency of grazing and make adjustments as you build up intensity of your rotational grazing plan.

Always remember, that you have support around you, if you need assistance in coming up with a grazing plan or assistance in troubleshooting problems with implementation, reach out to your county Extension agent and they can help address problems as they arise.

Keeping Replacement Heifers in a Good Year

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

The past several months have seen unprecedented high prices for beef cattle. When you can get over two grand for a 5-weight calf at a regular weekly sale with no value-added management or health improvements to the calf, there's not a lot to complain about. The beef market, which has always been cyclical and somewhat volatile, has not been shy about showing us it's good side the last few years, and while this extreme high will no doubt peak at some point, most long range indicators show strong beef prices for quite some time. With calves routinely bringing over $3.00 per pound, most cow-calf producers are on the fence about retaining replacement heifers. I fully understand their reluctance to cut a heifer back from the load chute when cattle are bringing these types of prices. For years beef cattle operations operated at or below break-even prices, and now that we have a chance to actually make a little profit, it's tough not to put everything on the trailer and we'll worry about next year when the time comes.

One reason why we are seeing these type of prices is that we simply don't have as many brood cows in this country as we used to. This is why the long-range price forecast for beef is not showing a huge drop-off like we traditionally see in a 5-10 year price peak. There's no doubt that this year is one we'll tell our grandkids about one day, but the next few years are forecasted to be pretty good too.

My point is don't get so excited about next week's sale that you leave your cupboard empty for next season. It takes a while to raise a heifer calf up from birth and then turn her into a functioning brood cow, so if you go too long without retaining any replacement females at all, there will come a day where that decision will come back to haunt you. Most cattle farms that are in the cattle business for the long haul will generally have a target number or a target age they will cull their cattle by each year. What that number is, is completely up to each farm, but to say you're going to keep the same group of cows year after year and not have a plan for replacing these cows will be a mistake. Can you tweak that plan a little here and there when things get good or bad? Sure…. Just don't abandon it altogether on a whim either.

One of the most frustrating things about raising livestock, especially cattle, is the natural attrition we see that depletes our herds over time. Cattle get hurt, they have feet that go bad, they get things like lump jaw and that's not including the carnage that calving season can bring. All this occurs before you preg check each season to find out X number of cows are open that you thought for sure were bred. There's no amount of planning, wishful thinking and 16 hour days that can stop Mother Nature from taking her share. It's the nature of agriculture.

One way or another you're going to have to bite the bullet and pay for some replacement females in your herd at some point. Sure you can skip a year if you're older cows are relatively healthy and young, but as discussed above, going this route for long means you're not going to have as many calves to market long-term.

There's generally two schools of thought here on how to keep your cow numbers up.

The Slow & Steady Approach

You keep X number of heifers back each year, or you buy X number of heifers from an outside source. Generally this is not a big number, and it means you can be pretty selective in your choice from what heifers are coming back into the herd. The downside of this approach is that in a year like this it will cost you more to keep heifers back. Also you will have the labor and expense of developing a group of heifers every season.

Keeping or Buying a Large Group of Heifers Every 2-3 Years

Instead of keeping or purchasing a few heifers annually, you retain a larger number every 2-4 years. The advantages are you only have to deal with developing and calving-out a group of heifers occasionally, and not every single year. One a year like this you get to market 100% of your calf crop. The disadvantages when you do look to replenish your females annually it will be more significant investment on your business when you do. You will also probably be forced to keep some poorer performing heifers to make up the number you need, or if you are buying from an outside source you may not be able to find enough suitable heifers all at the same time.

2025 is a good year to be in the cattle business. Instead of laying awake at night wondering how were gonna make it to next year we're thinking about how we can finally replace that old tractor or maybe take a vacation this summer. Just don't get so excited thinking about this year you forget to plan for the next 3-5 years, which hopefully will be pretty good as well.

Summer Management for Sheep & Goats

By: Liz Joseph, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Moore County

As the days get hotter, there are several things to keep in mind when managing sheep and goats.

Heat Stress
Extreme heat can be stressful to livestock, as well as humans. In states like North Carolina, where high temperatures are often accompanied by high humidity, paying attention to the heat index (temperature + humidity) is a better way to determine the potential for heat stress than the temperature alone.

Sheep and goats are often able to tolerate heat stress better than other livestock. Goats tend to be most tolerant, followed by hair sheep, and then wool sheep. Horned animals are able to dissipate heat better than polled or disbudded animals. Young, geriatric, and animals in poor nutritional status or compromised immunity are all more susceptible to heat stress.

Under normal circumstances, livestock are able to maintain their body temperature at a safe range as long as they have shade and plenty of clean, cool, fresh water. Heat stress can occur if animals are handled during the hottest part of the day, so avoid doing this. Signs of heat stress include continual panting, rapid breathing, weakness, inability to stand, and an elevated rectal temperature (over 105 degrees F). Livestock should be checked regularly during periods of high heat and/or humidity. If heat stress is suspected, the goal is to lower the body temperature. Animals should be moved to a shaded area with good air movement and offered ample water but in small amounts.

Internal Parasites
Internal parasites are most active during the hot, humid months. The barberpole worm is a primary concern for the majority of sheep and goat producers. Deworming should be a last resort when it comes to managing internal parasites. Utilizing rotational grazing is one way to help manage internal parasites. Animals should be moved off of a pasture when the average height of the grass is around 3 inches tall and can be put back on that pasture when the grass reaches 6 to 8 inches (maybe taller depending on the type of grass being grazed). The infective larvae tend to be in the first 1 to 2 inches of grass.

Use the Five Point Check to help identify animals that need treatment for internal parasites. This check includes checking animals for their FAMACHA score, body condition score, dag/fecal soiling, bottle jaw, and nose. Fecal egg counts (FEC) are mainly used to determine if a dewormer is working and effective, which requires taking a FEC before dewormer is administered to get an initial egg count and then 10 to 14 days after administration to determine the reduction rate. During the hot, humid months, animals that are grazing on pasture should be checked weekly.

Pasture Management
Pasture management is not only important to help with parasite management, but it is also important to avoid overgrazing. Rotational grazing encourages better pasture utilization because animals graze more evenly and efficiently when rotated through smaller paddocks, reducing selective grazing and promoting more uniform pasture growth. Allowing pastures to rest and regrow leads to more productive forage, increased grazing capacity, and reduced feed cost. Weed pressure can also be reduced because the desirable forages is able to compete more effectively with the weeds during the rest periods.

Predator Awareness
Summer months can bring increased predator problems due to increased food demands for predators like coyotes, who are raising their young during this time of year. Lambs and kids can be easy targets for predators, along with animals that are grazing areas that might be farther away. Checking your fences regularly and utilizing livestock guardian animals can help prevent predation.

Hoof Care
Hoof care is a very important component of managing small ruminants. If left untended, common hoof diseases like foot rot, foot scald, and laminitis can become a problem and affect the overall health of your herd, and lead to decreased productivity. Hooves should be trimmed every 2 to 12 weeks, depending on breed, genetic composition, soil moisture, and nutrition. Small ruminants that are grazed on sandy soil and on a higher plane of nutrition often need their hooves trimmed. Animals should have access to a dry area to allow their hooves to dry out during the wet months.

Breeding Season Preparation
It is never too early to start to prepare for breeding season. All breeding animals should be in the right body condition score. If it's possible, separate out ones who need to add condition and feed them separately until they gain weight. Provide mineral supplements to prevent deficiencies. Consider conducting a breeding soundness exam on the males 4 to 6 weeks before breeding begins to evaluate semen quality, testicular size, and overall health.

If you have questions or want additional information about any of the information mentioned, reach out to your county's livestock agent.

Do You Know What's Flying Around Your Livestock?

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

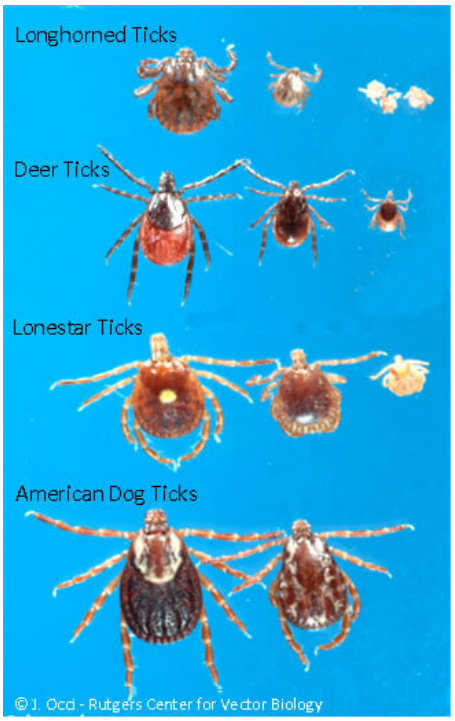
If you've spent any time on a farm in North Carolina during the summer, you know it can be brutally hot, incredibly humid, and full of bugs. The warm, moist air combined with fresh grass and organic matter creates the perfect breeding ground for a variety of pests. These conditions are ideal for insects that thrive in heat and moisture, making pest control a necessary part of summer farm management.

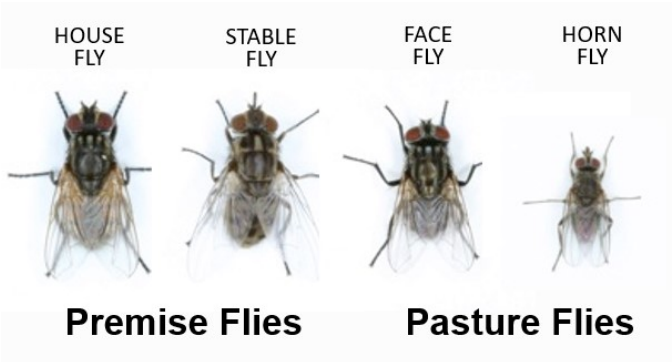
Some of the most common flying pests you'll encounter around your farm and livestock include several types of flies: horse flies, deer flies, house flies, horn flies, face flies, and stable flies. Each type poses a unique challenge. Horse and deer flies are painful biters, while house and stable flies can transmit disease. Horn flies are small but persistent, feeding on cattle throughout the day. In addition to flies, other flying pests like mosquitoes, gnats, and even ticks can cause problems. These insects do more than just irritate your animals; they can seriously impact their health, comfort, and productivity.

All of these pests require warm, moist environments to breed and organic material in which to mature. For many, this organic matter includes manure or decaying vegetation. Others, like mosquitoes and some fly species, seek out the blood of your animals to reproduce. Controlling these pests requires a multi-faceted approach. Eliminating standing water whenever possible, managing manure properly, using fly control products such as sprays, traps, or feed-through insect growth regulators, and providing your animals with cool, dry areas for rest are all effective strategies. These efforts work best when combined into a consistent, seasonal pest management plan.

While it's not always possible to eliminate all wet areas such as ponds or natural springs, you can help protect your animals by limiting their exposure to these spots during peak insect activity. The stakes are high. Pests can carry serious diseases that affect livestock health and farm productivity. These include Bovine Ephemeral Fever, bluetongue virus, vesicular stomatitis, pinkeye, and anaplasmosis. Ticks can carry diseases such as Lyme disease, and mosquitoes can transmit viruses as dangerous as West Nile virus or parasites such as malaria.

Being proactive with pest control doesn't just benefit your livestock. It protects your farm's bottom line. Keeping your animals healthy, comfortable, and free of disease means better weight gain, milk production, and overall performance. Understanding what's flying around your livestock is the first step in protecting them during the hot, buggy summer months.



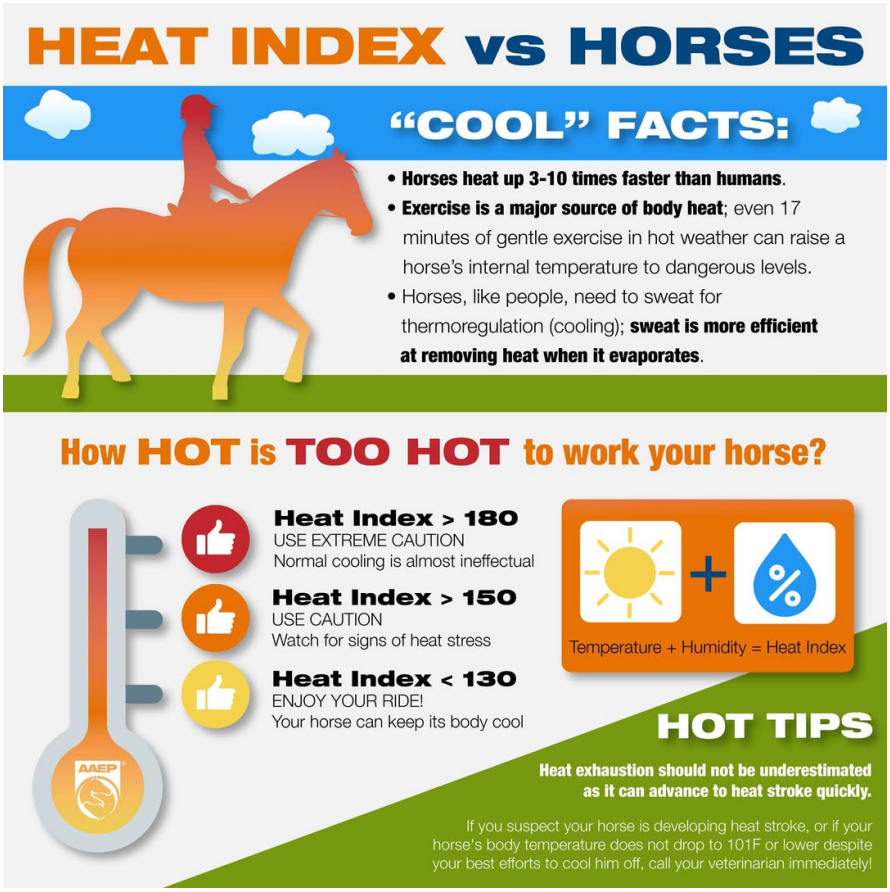


Caring for Our Equines During the Heat

By: Kristi Welke, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Jones, Craven, & Pamlico Counties

Summer temperatures are always a common time for heat related issues with livestock. In this article we are going to be addressing our equine friends and what we can do to help them cope with the heat.

Sweating is a natural cooling event for equines. As the sweat evaporates from their skin it creates a cooling effect. Equines are able to acclimate to the hot and humid weather in the south, if they are relocating from other areas of the country. If the horses are relocating make sure they have the proper amount of time to adjust to the heat and humidity before going into work. Humidity plays a big effect in how equines are able to cool themselves. The more humidity in the air the less sweat evaporates off the equines body creating a hotter environment.



What can I do to help keep my equine friend cool?

- Provide free access to clean water and salt block
- Provide relief from the sun (shade)
- Provide proper ventilation methods inside the barn
- Reduce ride times
- Pick proper times of the day for rides and make them less intensive
- Transport horses during the cooler parts of the day
- For equines with metabolic issues clip their coats short
- Provide turnout during cooler times of the day if possible

What are important signs to watch for if you think your equine is having a heat stress related event?

- Rapid respiratory rate (>40 breaths per minute)
- Unusual sweating
- High rectal temperature at rest (103 degrees and above)
- Decreased appetite
- Lethargic

How do I cool down my equine friend if they are having a heat stress related event?

- Make contact with your vet and let them know what symptoms your equine is showing
- Move your equine to the shade and get them out of direct sunlight
- You can run a steady stream of water over the equine
- Provide ventilation/air movement through fans

NC Sheep & Goat Roundup Results

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

The NC Sheep & Goat Roundup began in 2023 with an aim to create a multi-day experience centered around showing and supporting the sheep and goat industries for youth in our state. The idea was to create an event similar to a junior national breed show, with traditional competitions such as market and breeding shows, but also showmanship, Skillathon, salesmanship and fitting contests, in addition to fun activities like a kickball tournament and ice cream social.

For two years the event was held at the Carolina Classic Fairgrounds in Winston-Salem, and moved to the Johnston County Livestock Arena in Smithfield for 2025. The event was held June 20-21 with over 200 animals entered. Youth from across the state participated, braving the soaring temperatures to demonstrate the best of what livestock youth in NC have to offer. Below are some of the results from two days of showing.

The judge for the show was Kyla Mennen, originally of Walton, IN. Kyla judged at Joliet Junior College and then went on to judge at Kansas State, where she was a member of both the 2024 National Champion Collegiate Livestock Judging and 2024 National Champion Meats Judging Teams, where she was also high individual. She recently took the position as Judging Coach with Joliet Junior College. She also works with her family's commercial club lamb operation and has a graphic design business, Elevate Custom Designs, specializing in vinyl banners.

Goat Showmanship		
Novice Grand Champion	Addie Gail Waters	Princeton
Novice Reserve Champion	Brody King	Lenoir
Junior Grand Champion	Edynn Tew	Garner
Junior Reserve Champion	Lillian Garcia	King
Intermediate Grand Champion	Addison Maxwell	Browns Summit
Intermediate Reserve Champion	Johnathan Scarlett	Asheboro
Senior Grand Champion	Rylan Tew	Garner
Senior Reserve Champion	Hattie Jo Powell	Four Oaks

Sheep Showmanship		
Novice Grand Champion	Carter Jennings	Kenly
Novice Reserve Champion	Charleigh Settle	Mooresville
Junior Grand Champion	Ditty Moore	Scotland Neck
Junior Reserve Champion	Meredith Poole	Zebulon
Intermediate Grand Champion	Zade Jennings	Kenly
Intermediate Reserve Champion	Charlotte Payne	Madison
Senior Grand Champion	Addie Dillon	Vale
Senior Reserve Champion	Scarlett Denning	Newton Grove