March-April 2009

The Livestock Line

From the Barnyard

In past newsletters, I asked for emails from all that have them. I received very few responses, so please, if you have an email and didn’t respond, send me an email with your email and which of the following list you would like to be on. (you can be on as many as you would like) BEEF, SHEEP/GOAT, HORSE, and/or FORAGE. These email groups will allow me to get information out to you faster and more often. Because of budget cuts, we are trying to find ways to cut cost on our end and by using these groups I will be able to reduce the number of newsletters sent out. By using your email I will be able to take you off of the mailing list for this newsletter. If you don’t have an email, don’t worry I will still send the newsletter to you, for now. If further budget cuts happen, we may be forced to stop or reduce our newsletter mailings.

So please, if you have an email address, email me the group(s) you wish to be included on, to barry_foushee@ncsu.edu. All email addresses will be kept confidential.

Here is all of my contact information:
Office: (336)318-6000
Cell: (336)382-0806
Nextel: 150*25*16007
Email: barry_foushee@ncsu.edu
Address: 112 West Walker Ave., Asheboro, NC 27203 (we moved March 1st of 2008)

UP-COMING EVENTS

Weed Management in Pastures (same meeting, 2 dates)
March 16, 2009 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
March 30, 2009 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

Pasture Management (same meeting, 2 dates)
March 17, 2009 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
March 25, 2009 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

Fire Ant Control in Pastures and Around the Farm (same meeting, 2 dates)
March 19, 2009 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
April 14, 2009 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

All classes will be held at the Extension Office in Asheboro (we moved in March 2008); 112 West Walker Ave, Asheboro, NC 27203

Please call Wanda at (336)318-6000 to register for the classes you plan on attending.
Can’t decide if you need to attend any of the meetings listed on the previous page? Well, I would hope you attend just to get the information but in case you don’t, here are some incentives:

_If you need Pesticide Credits for categories N, O, D, and/or X, ALL OF THE LISTED MEETINGS CARRY 2 HOURS OF CREDIT FOR EACH OF THOSE CATEGORIES. If you need hours for Pesticide categories G, H, and/or L, the FIRE ANT MEETING will also carry 2 HOURS OF CREDIT FOR EACH OF THOSE._

_If you need CERTIFIED ANIMAL WASTE APPLICATOR credits; The Weed Management in Pastures and the Pasture Management Meetings will carry 2 HOURS EACH FOR CERTIFIED ANIMAL WASTE APPLICATORS. Please note that the Fire Ant Meeting will NOT have Certified Animal Waste Applicator credits._

**New Regulations for Dead Animal Disposal**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued new regulations on the disposal of cattle that are 30 months old and older. Starting April 29, 2009 cattle that are 30 months old and older will no longer be allowed in the dead animal rendering stream. What does that mean to you? If you have had your dead cattle pick up to go to the rendering plant, those aged cattle will no longer be allowed to be picked up. This is to give additional protection to the cattle industry from the possibility of introducing BSE (Mad Cow) through feed to cattle. Although there is a ban (against the law) on feeding feed to cattle that contain ruminant (cow) by-products, it is another step to further protect the cattle industry in the United States.

So what do you do with those cows? Right now, burial is your only option. Animals must be covered with no less than 3 foot of soil and must be buried at least 3 feet above the water table.

**Pretty Yellow Flower in Pasture**

Do you remember late last spring when your pastures were a pretty shade of yellow with all those flowers? It was pretty as a picture, wasn’t it? Well that pretty little flower is called Buttercup and spraying with an herbicide is the best way for control but it is too late to spray if you are seeing the flowers. So when is the time to spray, you ask? March is a good time to spray, since this is a winter weed.

You will need 3-4 consecutive days above 50-55° F, so do not go out and spray when it is 35 degrees outside then call me because you do not get good control. **SPRAY ON A WARM DAY.** You will have to spray 2-3 years to control the buttercup.

If you would like herbicide recommendations for buttercup or other weed control or you have other questions, give Barry a call (336)318-6000.

Also, if you attend one of the Weed Management in Pasture meetings, you can get a lot more information on control of weeds.
Grass Tetany
Grass Tetany, also referred to as grass staggers, is a nutritional disorder (magnesium deficiency) which can result in severe death loss to cattlemen.

The basic cause of grass tetany is a low level of magnesium in the blood. It generally occurs in cattle grazing heavily fertilized cool season grasses in cool weather, when daily temperatures have been between 40 and 60 degrees for 5 to 6 days. Good milking cows in the first two months of lactation are most prone to grass tetany because there is a considerable amount of magnesium put in the milk. Cows that get grass tetany will stop eating suddenly and become unusually alert. They may become wild, uncoordinated, have muscular twitching in various parts of the body and have increased heart and breathing rates. They will finally go down, having a large amount of salivation, labored breathing and grinding of teeth. Finally convulsions and death will follow.

This entire process can occur within a few hours and the animal will just be found dead unless the herd is being watched closely.

The most effective approach to managing grass tetany is a prevention program based on magnesium supplementation. During periods or situations of moderate tetany risk, daily consumption of 1 oz/hd/day of magnesium oxide should provide protection. The following methods may be used to supply 1 oz of magnesium per head per day:

1. Feed 2 lbs. of grain mix containing 3% magnesium oxide
2. If a protein supplement is used as the carrier, feed 1 lb. of a mixture containing 6% magnesium oxide and 94% of the protein supplement.
3. Sprinkle 1 oz of magnesium oxide over silage at feeding time.
4. Magnesium blocks offered free-choice. Make sure enough blocks are available so that cattle consume the equivalent of 1 oz of magnesium oxide.
5. Free choice mineral mixes. A mineral mix that is no more than 25 to 30% magnesium oxide. If cattle do not consume 1 oz of magnesium oxide from the mineral mix, add 25 to 30% cottonseed meal to the mixture.

In periods or situations of high tetany risk, animals should receive 2 oz of magnesium oxide per day. Adjustments in the supplement program will be required to provide this higher level of magnesium.

Four points to remember about supplementation:
1. Magnesium oxide is not very palatable and when mixing your own mineral mix it may be necessary to add some grain to the mix to get adequate consumption
2. Cattle should have no other source of salt except that containing the magnesium oxide
3. A severe drop in magnesium levels in the blood can occur within 48 hours after supplementation is stopped, therefore, it is important to provide it on a continuous basis during periods of risk and locate mineral boxes so as to encourage regular daily consumption by the animals
4. Most commercial mineral supplements contain very little magnesium unless it is promoted as a source of magnesium supplementation because magnesium is so expensive; therefore, you should check the guaranteed analysis of the supplement for magnesium content.
The use of dolomitic lime rather than plain lime or a fertilization material containing magnesium should help to correct low magnesium content in the soil if this is determined to be a problem. Following the above guidelines should prevent occurrences of grass tetany under most conditions.

North Carolina lost more than half a million acres of farmland from 2002-2007, latest Ag Census shows

North Carolina lost more than 600,000 acres of farmland from 2002 to 2007, according to the latest U.S. Census of Agriculture. The U.S. Department of Agriculture conducts an agricultural census every five years, and the results of the 2007 survey were released earlier this month. The new census reported 8.5 million acres of farmland in the state, compared with 9.1 million acres in 2002.

Buncombe, Edgecombe, Hyde, Moore and Perquimans counties led the state in farmland loss, with each seeing decreases of greater than 20,000 acres. Urban counties such as Forsyth, Guilford, Mecklenburg and Wake saw decreases of between 5,000 and 20,000 acres each. The 2007 census was the first attempt to extensively count very small family farms. As a result, the census included small farms that had not been counted previously.

In 2007, North Carolina had 52,900 farms, compared with 53,900 in 2002, the census showed.

Other census findings:
- The number of tobacco farms across the state dropped by almost 70 percent, from 8,000 in 2002 to 2,600 in 2007. The end of the federal price support system for tobacco in 2004 led to the retirement of many tobacco farmers, while others shifted from tobacco to other commodities. Despite the drop in their numbers, farmers harvested 174,000 acres of tobacco in 2008, the most since 1999.
- The number of cotton farms dropped nearly 40 percent, from 2,100 to 1,300. In 2007, North Carolina saw a jump in corn production and a corresponding drop in cotton production as growers took advantage of higher prices for grains.
- The state has 34,000 farms with sales of $1,000 to $1 million, down 12 percent from the previous census. Sixty-five percent of N.C. farms fall into this category and account for 26 percent of total sales.
- The number of farms with sales of more than $1 million jumped 87 percent, to 2,800. These farms account for 74 percent of all sales, but only 5 percent of farms.
- The number of farms with sales of less than $1,000 increased 18 percent, to 15,900. These farms account for 30 percent of all N.C. farms, but less than 1 percent of total sales.
- The average age of a North Carolina farmer is 57, compared with 56 in 2002.
- Women now account for 13 percent of all farm operators, up 3 percent from 2002.
- Family farms account for 97 percent of all farms. About 85 percent are classified as small family farms.

Article taken from NCDA News Release dated February 24, 2009