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2008 Cumberland County Fair Junior Livestock Show Schedule
Tuesday, September 23rd, 7:00 p.m. Junior Market Lamb Show
Wednesday, September 24, 4:30 pm Junior Swine/Feeder Calf/Steer Show
Thursday, September 25th, 7:00 p.m. Junior Show

Contact Us
Phone: (910) 321-6880 or (910) 321-6872

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Important Livestock Information

Livestock Compensation Program - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency has announced the sign-up for the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) beginning March 19, 2008. A final date has not been established at this time. The LCP will provide benefits to livestock producers who suffered feed losses or incurred additional feed losses directly resulting from natural disasters such as, but not limited to, the excessive drought suffered in 2007. The disaster period for 2007 will cover from January 1, 2007 until December 31, 2007.

To be eligible under LCP, livestock must: be dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, goats, swine, or deer that have been physically located in an eligible county on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period; have been maintained for commercial use as a part of a farming operation on the beginning date of the disaster period; and have not been produced and maintained for reasons other than commercial use as a part of a farming operation. Such excluded uses include, but are not limited to, wild free roaming animals or animals used for recreational purposes such as pleasure, hunting, pets, roping or for show. Producers will not be penalized if they reduced the average number of livestock they owned for grazing during the production year for which assistance is being provided. Payment rates on a per head basis will vary based on the kind of livestock application is made for. For questions concerning this program, please contact the Cumberland County Farm Service Agency at 910-484-2138 ext. 2.

NC Agriculture Drought Recovery Program - The NC Agriculture Drought Recovery Program is a cost-share project to assist farmers with restoring drought-damaged pastureland and provide additional water supply for livestock and crops. The project will respond to immediate, critical needs resulting from the record-breaking drought of 2007. Grants will cover 75 percent of the cost of certain projects necessary to restore pasturelands to usable condition or to create new or improved water supplies for livestock and crops, to avoid crises in the event of future drought. Recipients will cover the remaining 25 percent of the cost. Eligible projects include: pasture renovation, drilling and re-drilling wells, pond construction and renovation, conversion of closed lagoons to fresh water ponds, and upgrading existing irrigation systems. Technical assistance will be available to assist farmers with grass selection and other pastureland management for long-term productivity. The program starts on May 1st. It will end upon the depletion of available funds or until the need has been met. The Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the NC State University A&T State University COOPERATIVE EXTENSION Empowering People • Providing Solutions
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Agriculture Drought Recovery Program (cont’d.)

Resources will operate the program through its district offices. Farmers may contact their local office to learn if they are eligible and how to apply. The Cumberland office number is: 910-484-8479 ext. 3.

Forage Management Tips

*Plant summer annuals at two week intervals to stagger the forage availability.
*Fertilize warm-season grasses with nitrogen after each cutting or every four to six weeks on pastures.

*Spray pasture weeds while they are small (3 inches) for most effective control.
*Do not apply nitrogen to fescue pastures from April until August.

June

*Soil sample fields to be overseeded or planted in the fall. Apply limestone as far in advance of planting as possible.
*Consider a late planting of summer annuals to extend forage supply.
*Cross fencing is a practical tool to help manage feed quality.
*Graze bermudagrass close (1 to 2 inch stubble) and harvest any growth not grazed every four-six weeks.
*Control summer pasture weeds before they get too tall and mature.

July

* Continue a four to six-week schedule of nitrogen applications on summer grasses. Do not delay application because of dry weather unless it has not rained at all since the previous application.
* Maintain harvesting frequency for quality hay.
* Hot dry weather can result in nitrate and prussic acid poisoning of animals grazing stunted, highly fertilized summer annuals.
* Sample soils and apply lime on fields to be planted in the autumn.
* Decide which fescue pastures to stockpile. Apply nitrogen (60 to 80 pounds/acre) around September 1st.

Marketing Trends in the Beef Industry: Becky Spearman, Livestock Extension Agent, Bladen County

There are several ways to increase profit of marketing beef cattle. Beef producers need to know what options are available to them. Beef is traditionally sold as a commodity product at an auction market.

As input costs continue to rise, producers must get the most out of their product. Look at your marketing scheme and plan for the changing industry. Many producers can add value to their product by making some changes in their management.

Some options include Auction Markets, Graded Feeder Calf Sales, Video and Internet Auctions, Market Alliances, Process Verification Program and Quality System Assessment, Retained Ownership, and Niche including local, grass fed, all natural, and organic beef. Below are some advantages and disadvantages of each.

Auction Market - This is the traditional method. Prices are seasonal with the lowest prices in the fall due to the increased number being sold. The highest prices tend to be in the spring. Advantages are least complex method, convenient, no limit on the number or size of animals. Disadvantages include fewer buyers at the sale and the seller pays trucking. Auction markets usually pay the lowest price per pound for the calves.

Graded Feeder Calf Sales - These sales are a cooperative effort by the NCDA, the NC Cattlemen's Association, NC Cooperative Extension and livestock markets. Producers bring their cattle to be sorted into uniform lots based on sex, weight, grade and breed. This allows buyers to minimize assembly and transportation costs. Smaller cow-calf producers can market their cattle in lots. Graded Sales can bring about $5.00 per cwt. over weekly auction sales. Disadvantages include limited number of sale dates (a few days in the fall and spring) and seller pays trucking costs.

Video and Internet Auctions - Feeder calves are sold in truckload lots (48,000 pounds). A videotape or pictures are placed on a website or sent to buyers. A written description of the breed(s), health program and other information is included. Buyers bid on the lots. The auction site gets a commission and serves as a marketing agency. Advantages include buyers from all over the US, increased prices based on criteria and trucking is paid by the buyer. Some disadvantages is only selling truck load lots (can combine farms) and seller has to weigh and have the cattle inspected.

Market Alliances - Alliances have specific requirements for breeding, feeding, and management of the calves. There is an increased amount of paperwork and certifications required. Some advantages include...
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market research is done by the alliance, producers know what they need to raise, product is based on the retail value of the final product, delivery dates and location are negotiated and trucking is paid by buyer. Some disadvantages include the need for larger lots and specific breeds, feeding and health programs are required. Producers need to plan months and years ahead.

Process Verification Program (PVP) and Quality System Assessment (QSA) - PVP is an USDA program for verifying certain product attributes such as age and source of cattle. In the case of age and source verification, PVP programs create a documented, auditable procedure for the collection and transfer of age and source information. QSA is similar to PVP, although a QSA generally involves certification of a system that may involve several entities. QSA describes how age/source is documented by the packer and feedlots and their producer suppliers (cow-calf producers).

Retained Ownership - This has been an option for years, but not used by many producers. Producers own the cattle throughout the animal's life.

Feeder calves are sent to a feedlot who feeds and manages them. Producers pay feed, yardage and health costs. Advantages include the ability to add value to the cattle and receive feedback from feedlot and packers. Disadvantages include volatile feed prices and time frames for the finishing phase.

Niche or Value Added including local, grass fed, all natural, and organic - These are lumped together to include any type of direct marketing of finished beef. This group used to be freezer beef, but recently has become much more.

Usually involves a producer finishing the animal instead of selling a feeder calf. Certain management practices are used so the animals are raised to what the consumer wants. It is best to have the beef sold or a contract before it is produced.

Management practices often cost more and therefore a producer must get more out of the beef than traditional commodity beef. A producer must possess a higher degree of marketing skills. Additional rules and regulations may apply. Consumers want to be assured that their beef was raised in a particular way and are willing to pay more. Local production can be any type of beef that is raised locally. Grass Fed Beef has been finished on grass rather than a corn based ration. All natural is a gray area. Technically all natural means beef without other additives included - a large portion of commodity beef is all natural. To many people all natural means raised without hormones and antibiotics.

Organic Beef has been certified by a government agency that a strict production system was used. Producers need to do background research on what the types are and plan before they start raising beef to meet these criteria. There are many advantages, but you must have a plan to succeed.

Composting for Horse Farms

With the price of fertilizer rising everyday and expected to increase even more this summer, composting for horse farms has become a hot topic with horse owners. Composting is a way to speed up the natural process for manure and bedding to decompose by providing a good environment for bacteria and microorganisms that assist the decomposition. As the manure breaks down, a lot of heat is produced which destroys weed seeds, fly larvae, and pathogens that can cause disease. The end product is a crumbly, dark, earthy smelling material, which can be used to fertilize pastures and save money. It is important to have a plan for what you plan to do with your manure since horses produce approximately 45 lbs of manure per day. A pile of manure will shrink to about half its size during composting which will help you to reduce the amount that needs to be managed.

There are many benefits to composting. Odors and flies are reduced and it creates a valuable source of fertilizer to use on your property, to give away, or to sell to others who need it. If you decide to give composting a try, you'll want to make sure to locate the pile in a convenient area close to stalls and paddocks. You will want it to be on high, dry, and level ground that is far away from streams, ponds, or wetland.

The pile will need to be at least 3 feet high for the manure to start building heat. You can build a compost bin to contain the pile, but you don't have to have one as long as you can get a 3-foot depth. You'll want to start piling the manure into one bin until it is full and then leave it alone and start filling up the next bin. Within 2-4 months the first bin should be ready to spread on pastures. You can help the pile to decompose by covering it to prevent it from getting too wet in winter and too dry in summer. This

Adapted by Tiffanee Conrad-Acuña, Livestock Extension Agent with NC Cooperative Extension in Richmond County from an article produced by Alayne Blickle from the Horses for Clean Water Program
also helps to prevent the nutrients from leaching into the soil. If the compost is too wet or dry, it can stop decomposing and if too wet will begin to smell. Compost should stay about as damp as a wrung-out sponge. You will also need to get air into the pile so that the microorganisms can breathe while doing their job. The easiest way to do this is to insert several 5-foot PVC pipes into the center of the pile like a chimney. If you have a tractor, you can occasionally turn the manure to speed composting.

To spread the manure, you will need either a wheel barrel for small jobs or a manure spreader. You can also spread it from the back of a pickup truck. You want to spread it very thin around ¼ inch. Some manure spreaders are corrosion resistant which means you can store the manure in it for long periods of time, but you would not want to do this with your wheel barrel or leave other equipment, such as shovels in the pile. Manure spreaders come in all sizes now, where they can be hooked up to lawn tractors or 4-wheelers. Also, keep in mind that shavings can cause issues with your pasture. Applying stall waste that has not been composted with too much bedding may actually slow growth and cause yellowing in your pasture. If this is the case, you may want to contact your Extension Agent for information.