



**CASWELL AMAZING GRAZING/AGRICULTURE  
EXTENSION NOTES  
MID-SUMMER 2013**

Hello again,

It's been a while since my last newsletter because of budget cuts and other administrative items, but the Extension Office is running at full speed. As I sit at my desk and write this newsletter, I think about all the rain that we have had since June 1, 2013 (over 12 inches thus far). It has been great for the livestock producers because of the abundance of pasture forage for grazing. But then on the other hand, it has been tough on crop farmers with problems getting into fields for spraying, cultivation, and harvesting. Also this summer thus far I have received numerous calls concerning disease and insect pressures in vegetable and fruit crops. But we can count our blessings for the rains instead of a drought and as always deal with the current situation at hand the best way we can. As my Dad use to tell me growing up, "Us farmers are tough and we have survived other similar weather conditions worse." But a little more sunshine would be great!

Progress is being made on the 2012 (2013, 2014?) Farm Bill. One version of the Farm Bill passed the Senate earlier, and this week a very different version passed the House of Representatives. The next step is for the two bills to go to a conference committee made up of representatives of the House and Senate to hash out the differences between the two. In this case, it is difficult to predict how the two bills can be reconciled given the vast gulf between them. The bill that passed the House does not include a food stamps program. House leadership has said they will take up the food stamp portion of the old farm bill in new legislation that is separate from the Farm Bill. Goodness knows what will happen now. I think this conference committee fight will be legend and will not be resolved quickly, but we'll have to see.

Any way that the Caswell County Extension Center can be of assistance to you and your farm business, then feel free to call me here at the office (336-694-4158) or my cell phone (434-728-5980). Here's some latest information that I hope will help you in your farming enterprise.

## Peak-Season Soil Testing Fee Proposal



The current House and Senate appropriations bills both contain a provision to implement a soil-testing fee. If passed, there will be \$4 fee for all soil samples processed by the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division during its busiest season: December through March. There will still be no fee from April through November.

### Rationale:

- ❖ To improve lab efficiency by encouraging more growers to sample early, thereby fostering a more balanced sample load throughout the year
- ❖ To enhance sustainability of the soil-testing program by generating receipts that will be earmarked for lab improvements, such as automated equipment, additional peak-season personnel and computer-programming enhancements [The draft 2013 Appropriations Act ensures that receipts generated by the new fee will be appropriated to NCDA&CS for this purpose for FY 2014 and 2015.]

**NOTE:** This year, December 1<sup>st</sup> falls on a Sunday and is preceded by the Thanksgiving holidays. Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>, will be the last business day of the month for the soil-testing lab. Any soil **samples arriving after 6 p.m. on November 27<sup>th</sup> will be subject to the peak-season fee** because they will not be logged in and processed until December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Sample drop offs must take place during business hours (6 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon.–Fri.).** A locked gate will prevent access to the loading dock area after hours and on weekends. This change will help increase the security of samples and improve customers' access to Agronomic Division personnel.

Payment should not be placed inside shippers. By late Fall 2013, clients will have the convenience of entering sample and payment (credit card or escrow account) information online in the PALS website. **Cash and checks will be accepted for peak-season samples only if deposited in advance in an escrow account.**

### Facts:

- ❖ The Agronomic Division provides a quality soil-testing service that includes comprehensive chemical soil analyses, site-specific lime and fertilizer recommendations and access to the consulting services of NCDA&CS agronomists.
- ❖ It costs NCDA&CS approximately \$3.22 to analyze one sample (based on average expenses 2008–2012), of which about \$1 is covered by receipts from the state fertilizer inspection fee and lime tonnage tax.
- ❖ For a typical 8-acre field in eastern North Carolina, we estimate that the peak-season fee will cost between \$4 and \$16, depending upon the intensity of the sampling protocol.



- ❖ Most North Carolina growers submit fewer than 50 samples per year according to 2010 data.
- ❖ Of the approximately 350,000 samples typically received each year, nearly 60 percent are analyzed from December through March, with turnaround times of up to 9 weeks.
- ❖ The vast majority of soil samples analyzed during the winter months are from farms in preparation for spring planting. Most of these samples can be collected and submitted well before December 1<sup>st</sup>, thus avoiding the fee. Nearly all soil samples associated with home & garden and landscaping projects can be collected and submitted from April through November.
- ❖ Clients who desire expedited service during the peak season can purchase NCDA&CS expedited shippers to receive a guaranteed turnaround time of ten business days. A limited number of shippers are sold each year (usually in August or September). The anticipated 2013–14 price for a 36-sample shipper is \$200.

This is still a value for the price per sample, because some other states are charging more and commercial laboratories are charging at least \$10.00 plus per sample.

#### **Eliminating Unnecessary Soil Testing Requirements in Animal Waste Mgmt. Plans**

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts SESSION LAW 2013-228 SENATE BILL 205 which is an act to eliminate unnecessary soil testing requirements in animal waste management plans.

An animal waste management plan for an animal operation shall include all of the following components:

- ❖ Provisions regarding periodic testing of waste products used as nutrient sources as close to the time of application as practical and at least within 60 days of the date of application and periodic testing, at least annually, **once every three years**, of soils at crop sites where the waste products are applied. Nitrogen shall be a rate-determining element. Phosphorus shall be evaluated according to the nutrient management standard approved by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture for facilities that are required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008). If the evaluation demonstrates the need to limit the application of phosphorus in order to comply with the nutrient management standard, then phosphorus shall be a rate-determining element. Zinc and copper levels in the soils shall be monitored, and alternative crop sites shall be used when these metals approach excess levels.
- ❖ This act becomes effective August 1, 2013, and applies to any animal waste management plan submitted to or approved by the Department after that date.

I wanted to make everyone aware of a change made by the legislature this year. The soil testing frequency stated in G.S. 143-215.10C(e)(6) has been changed from annually to every three years. Because our permits reference the general statute, this change is effective this year for our permitted animal operations. So farms that did a soil test last year will be good until 2015. If they already did one this year, they will be good until 2016.

### **Reducing Heat Stress in Dairy Cattle**



During the summer months heat stress on dairy cattle as well as other livestock causes a tremendously amount of economical losses from low milk producing herds. Some things to remember when trying to prevent heat stress in dairy cows are as follows:

- ❖ The optimum temperature for dairy cattle ranges from 25- 65F. When temperatures rise above 80F, a decrease in feed intake by 8-12% occurs. When temperatures reach 90F or above then breeding performance is poor.
- ❖ Cattle sweat only 10% as much as man; therefore, evaporative cooling such as body sprinkling or fans for good air movement is essential.
- ❖ Use high-quality forages to reduce heat produced in digesting and assimilating feed. Make certain the neutral fiber (NDF0 level is at least 26-28%. Increase levels of certain minerals to compensate for higher losses from the body during hot humid weather.
- ❖ Some older research in Texas has illustrated that chilled water at 50F will allow the cows to produce approximately 5 lbs. of more milk/day/cow verses drinking water temperatures at 86F.
- ❖ Increase sanitation during hot, humid weather because the risk of mastitis and other infections increases. A need for more bedding, cleaning and disease control is essential.





### **Creep-Graze Calves**

Creep-grazing is the practice of allowing suckling calves to graze the highest quality forage available while restricting cows to pastures that are lower in quality or less abundant.

Research at VA-Tech University has shown an increase of 25 to 50 pounds in calf weaning weight where creep grazing is used. Creep grazing is a very simple practice to start. An area of the pasture needs to be selected that parallels the area where cows will be grazing. Creep holes for calves should be generally 18 inches wide and 40 inches high. In general 4 calves can be creep-grazed per acre of permanent pasture. Up to 10 calves can be grazed per acre of summer annuals. For example, a herd with 60 calves you will need to fence off about 15 acres for creep grazing. Those added pounds could help the profit of your cattle operation especially since feeder cattle prices have drop from Spring prices.

### **Deworm Spring Calves In Early August**

If you fail to get spring born nursing calves de-wormed in July, early August will do. Use any one of a number of good de-worming materials on spring born calves, 75 to 90 days prior to weaning which will be, in most instances, in July. The weight gain advantage has proven mid-season de-worming adds weight and makes money. There is usually no need to de-worm cows at this time, only calves.

### **Fall Feeder Calf Sales**

Carolina Stockyards at Siler City will conduct one graded feeder calf sale this Fall. The date is August 28, 2013. To be sold at Graded Sales, all calves must be less than one year old, males must be castrated and healed, and all must be dehorned. In addition the calves must be vaccinated against Blackleg and Malignant Edema. There are other graded sales in Statesville, Norwood, Canton, Clinton, and North Wilksboro if this date does not fit your schedules.

If you need consignment forms to designate feeder cattle to one of these sale barns, then feel free to contact me.

### **August-Time To Stockpile Fescue**

Extending the grazing season using cool season grasses and legumes can be one of the most cost-effective practices available to farmers. In North Carolina, this practice is most often accomplished by stockpiling tall fescue in the late summer and early fall. Stockpiling fescue can help reduce feed cost by 50-60 percent.

Standard recommendations in North Carolina are to apply 60 to 80 lbs. of nitrogen around August 15. Typically the quality of the stockpiled forage is as good as or better than the "good hay" in your barn.

To further enhance the utilization of stockpiled forage use strip grazing to limit access. Strip grazing reduces the loss of forage to trampling, bedding on grass, manure, etc. Strip grazing can be accomplished by using temporary electric fencing which can be moved easily as needed. In work done in North Carolina in 1995, savings of \$20/head was gained by using strip grazing of 47 yearling heifers and 22 first calf cows on 35 acres of unfertilized pasture/hay field - fescue, blue grass, orchard-grass, red and white clover. Don't forget to call our office if you need to use the Caswell County Cattlemen's no-till drill (\$12.00 per acre) to interseed clovers and grasses into your hayfields and pastures.

August 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### August Beef Management Calendar

#### *Spring Calving Herds*

- \* End breeding season early in month if not already stopped; pull bulls
- \* Feed 1st calf heifers separately; give them best forage and supplement if needed
- \* Plan marketing of calves at Fall Special Graded Sales
- \* Continue fly control program
- \* Continue feeding high Selenium trace mineral salt
- \* Continue creep grazing and grazing warm season grasses
- \* Fertilize pastures that will be stockpiled for fall-winter grazing
- \* Move cattle to some hay fields to give pastures a rest

#### *Fall Calving Herds*

- \* Body condition score cows
- \* Separate thin cows from supplement until calving rest of the herd, and feed them best pasture or a grain.
- \* Prepare for calving season; make sure you have all equipment and supplies
- \* Continue fly control program
- \* Continue high Selenium trace mineral salt
- \* Move cattle to some hay fields to give pastures a rest
- \* Fertilize pastures that will be stockpiled for fall-winter grazing
- \* Market calves early in month if not already done or continue back grounding calves

### Helpful Hints In Making Corn Silage



Here are some helpful recommendations when cutting corn for silage:

- ❖ Kernel milk-line is a measure used when determining the right time to harvest corn for silage. Around 1/2 milk-line stage of maturity is best. Do not harvest at black-layer stage because silage will tend to be too dry and cows will not utilize the silage as well.



- ❖ Corn silage should be harvested when there is 65 to 70 percent whole-plant moisture. Harvesting whole-plant corn with more than 70 percent moisture will increase acidity and seepage therefore leading to lower dry matter intake.
- ❖ A 3/8-inch chopping length is recommended but may vary from 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch because of whole-plant and kernel moisture, forage harvester, and hybrid type.
- ❖ Silage cutter roll clearance ranges should be set at 1/16 to 1/8 of an inch. If kernel and cob breakage is not complete, tighten the rolls until kernel damage is complete.
- ❖ Estimated milk production goes up when the chopper head is raised from 6 to 18 inches because of more fibrous feed and increased TDN (total digestible nutrients).
- ❖ In conclusion, harvesting corn for silage at the right moisture and particle size is crucial to achieve high quality livestock feed.

**Enclosed please find two flyers of upcoming field days in Virginia that I thought may interest you. I receive a lot of forage research regularly from Virginia Tech from Dr. Chris Teutsch. I will be attending the Forage/Livestock Tour on August 7, 2013 and will be glad to drive our van. If anyone wants to attend, please let me know.**

Sincerely,



Joey E. Knight, III  
County Extension Director

JEK/scr

Persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate by contacting Joey E. Knight, III, County Extension Director at 336-694-4158 (phone), or [joey\\_knight@ncsu.edu](mailto:joey_knight@ncsu.edu) (email) or 336-694-5930 (Fax), or in person at the Caswell County Extension office at least (5) days prior to the event. Employment and program opportunities are offered to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and local governments cooperating.

**Virginia Angus Association & Virginia Cattlemen's Association**

**Invite you to the**

**2013 Virginia Cattle Industry Field Day**

**Held in conjunction with the**

**52nd Annual VA Angus Association Breeder's Show**

**Saturday, July 27 & Sunday, July 28**

Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex

19783 US Hwy 29 South

Chatham, VA 24531

**Saturday and Sunday**

Open and Junior VA Angus Shows-Cattle Displays

Equipment Displays-Trade Show

**Saturday Events**

9:00 am: Breeders Show

12:00 pm: CAB Lunch-burgers and beef hot dogs  
(nominal fee collected at registration)

1:00pm: Genemax testing demonstration  
and  
Value-added beef carcass seminar  
headlined by Certified Angus Beef

6:00 pm: Breeders Show Banquet (contact VA Angus for registration)

Junior and Adult Stockmen's Contest Open All Day

**Sunday Events**

9:00 am: Junior Showmanship & VA Jr. Angus Breeders Show

Rain or shine in the Olde Dominion's state of the art livestock barns and  
53,000 square foot enclosed arena

For more information contact

Virginia Angus Association 540-337-3001

Virginia Cattlemen's Association 540-992-1011



**Virginia Tech**  
**Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research & Extension Center**  
Located 2 miles east of Blackstone, VA on Rt. 40

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**2013 Annual Field Days**

**Tobacco**  
**August 6, 2013**

**Registration: 4:30 pm**  
**Dinner: 5:00 pm**  
**Tour: 6:00-8:30 pm**

**Tobacco Tour**

- Tobacco curing efficiency research
- Tobacco sucker control and MH residue management
- Flue, burley, and dark-fired tobacco variety evaluations
- Potential alternatives to control tobacco nematodes
- Potential alternatives for black shank control
- Budworm and hornworm control



**Forages/Livestock**  
**August 7, 2013**

**Registration: 8:30 am**  
**Tour: 9:00 am**  
**Lunch: 12:00 pm**

**Forage/Livestock Tour**

- Bull selection
- Body condition scoring of cows
- Silvopasture
- Clover in pastures
- Fall stockpiling of Tall Fescue



**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services, or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Betty Mayton or Margaret Kenny (434) 292-5331 during business hours (M-F: 7:30 am to 4:30 pm) 5 days prior to the event to discuss accommodations.



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