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**Livestock Newsletter of the Southeast Extension District**

**Cattle Fly Control**

By: Margaret A. Bell, Extension Agent – Livestock, Craven & Jones Counties

*Adapted from “A Thousand Points of Flies” by Holly Ferguson, Ph.D Washington State University.*

Welcome to springtime! With spring comes warmer weather, greener pastures, and...flies! Have you thought about how to protect your cattle against flies? In this article, you will learn more about several common species of flies, the diseases they cause, and how to protect your cattle against them.

The first fly we will discuss is the face fly. It can cause your animals to drop weight and milk production, as well as serve as a vector for pink eye. Adult face flies are active from early spring to late fall. Female adult face flies will feed on nasal and eye secretions during the day and rest on vegetation at night. They lay their eggs on fresh cattle dung; larvae develop about five days later. To pupate, they crawl out to the soil and about a week later, emerge as adults. Control of the face fly is very important because of its ability to cause blindness from pink eye.

The horn fly can cause many problems including bunching, and reduced feeding and weight. This could cause you to lose money as a producer. Male and female adults feed on cattle blood and stay on the animal almost 100% of the time. They feed about 24–38 times per day. Their eggs are where the larvae develop. Form and emerge about 6–8 days later during the summer. Controlling horn flies is very important because they can cause a major reduction in milk production.

The third fly we will discuss is the stable fly. Like the face fly, they can also cause bunching, and reduced feeding and weight. It will also cause a major reduction in milk production. Adults stable flies bite at the cow’s legs, back, belly and sides and take one bloodmeal per day. They are only in contact with the cow for about 2–5 minutes per day. Their eggs and larvae are found in decomposing or wet straw around hay bales. Cattle will typically kick and stamp their legs to try to rid these pests. Their effects are worse during hot weather.

Control of these types of flies, as well as other types is very important. Various methods of fly control include feed-through supplements, tagging applications, and fuel-based applications. There are currently products on the market that are feed-through insect growth regulators (IGR). These are available in many different mineral supplements. Also, there are the tried and true “fly tags” that have been commonly used for years. However, just like with dewormers, a rotational method of different fly tags (the active ingredient being what you want to rotate) is best to help from breeding resistance in fly populations. Finally, there are fuel-based products that can be sprayed or put into a backrub for cattle. These are very effective, but sometimes can wash off in heavy rains and need reaplication.

Proper management of your farm’s fly population is key. If your cattle are using their energy bunching up and stamping their legs, they are not grazing. This, in turn, means they are having a lower feed efficiency, meaning you could be losing money. By managing your fly population, you are giving your cows the time and energy they need to be successful on your farm.
For those of you who may be considering updating your pastures, there are many options to consider. We don’t have many choices for cool season grasses in Eastern NC, but when it starts getting warmer, your options for summer grazing are numerous.

Before we get started, just remember that anything you plant from seed should be planted after the last frost into a well prepared seedbed. Ideally, you should have already taken soil samples to determine if the land needed any lime or micronutrients like phosphorus and potassium.

Annual Grasses are plants that usually only survive one growing season. They are usually cheaper than perennial grasses for that reason. Perennial grasses are more expensive, but if given the right management, these will establish well and can potentially give you a lifetime of excellent grass production.

**Annuals:**

Pearl Millet: Millet is a great choice for most grazing animals due to it’s fast growth. It resembles the corn plant in its early and vegetative stages, but with much more leaves. Millet should be allowed to grow about 18 inches before grazing, and then don’t allow animals to graze it lower than six inches. Grazing below this point will cause the plant to have poor re-growth and your stand will suffer. Planting rate:

- **Broadcast:** 20-25 lbs/ac; Drilled: 15-20 lbs/ac; depth of 5-1.5 inch; plant between April 20- June 20.

Sorghum/Sorghum Sudans: These grasses are very similar in look and growth to Millet. The same recommendations for grazing heights for Millet also apply to these. One big difference is that members of the Sorghum family contain dhurrin, a glucoside that breaks down to release hydrocyanic acid also known as prussic acid. This acid is released after the plant is stressed, such as in a drought or after a frost. Prussic acid can be deadly so care should be taken when grazing this type of forage. Planting rate: Broadcast: 35-40 /ac; Drilled: 20-30 lbs/ac; depth of .5-1 inch; plant between April 20- June 20.

**Perennials:**

Bahiagrass: This common grass is frequently found along roadsides because of its fast growth. However, some good varieties do exist that are better for hay and pasture, such as TifQuick, Tifton 9, and Pensacola. After planting, bahiagrass should be allowed to grow 6-8 inches before grazing, and not grazed below 2-3 inches. Planting rate: Broadcast: 15-25 lbs/ac; Drilled: 10-20 lbs/ac; depth of .25-.5 inches; plant between Feb 1 and March 31.

Crabgrass: I know it sounds strange to plant crabgrass, but it is a highly nutritious forage that grows fast and is very tasty to livestock. Crabgrass also produces “runners” or stolons just like bermudagrass, so it will tolerate continuous grazing. Crabgrass seed is very inexpensive but usually has to be ordered over the phone or on the internet from seed companies in the midwest. After planting, crabgrass should be allowed to grow 6-8 inches before grazing, and not grazed below 2-3 inches. Planting rate: 1-5 pounds per acre at shallow depth 0-.25 inches; plant after last frost through early May.

Bermudagrass: Probably the most common pasture grass in Eastern NC, bermudagrass has a lot of research behind it to help you choose a good variety. Seeded bermudagrass can be expensive because of it’s popularity, but is overall a good choice for all livestock. It tolerates close, continuous grazing because it stores it’s energy in the “runners” and rhizomes under the ground. After planting, bermudagrass should be allowed to grow 6-8 inches before grazing, and not grazed below 2-3 inches. Planting rate: Broadcast 6-8 lbs/ac; Drilled 10-20 lbs/ac; depth .25-.5 inches; plant by April 15- or through July if irrigated.

These are a few options for warm season grazing. If you have any questions, please call your local Extension office.
The following information on developing a successful smart drenching program were found in a useful brochure prepared by the Southern Region USDA Program on Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) titled: “The Problem: Resistance to Dewormers is on the Rise, The Solution: Smart Drenching.”

Resistance to dewormers is a huge problem in small ruminants. Sheep and goat producers have to find was to more effectively manage the major parasite problems in these animals, which in most cases is the barber pole worm (Haemonchus contortus). Pregnant females, young kids and lambs are the most vulnerable to these parasites.

“Smart drenching” is a term that originated in Australia as a successful solution to solving the growing problem of resistance to dewormers in sheep and goats. The following steps are components of smart drenching to remember:

1. Find out which dewormers work by performing a fecal egg count reduction test
2. Weigh each animal prior to deworming them. Drench sheep similar to cattle, based on body weight, but goats should be given a double dose of sheep/cattle for most dewormers (levamisole is an exception at only 1.5 times the dosage).
3. Deworm the animal by “drenching”, or administering the dewormer in the back of the throat, over the tongue, with a drench gun.
4. Withhold feed for 12-24 hours prior to drenching with benzimidazoles (white dewormers such as albendazole or fenbendazole), or ivermectins.
5. It is also recommended to repeat the drench 12 hours later if using benzimidazole to be more effective.
6. Use two classes of dewormers if resistance is suspected.
7. ONLY drench animals that need treatment, based on the fecal egg count reduction test or FAMACHA® System.

Another very useful management tool to minimizing resistance and controlling parasites is the FAMACHA® System. Developed in South Africa, it uses a color chart to compare levels of anemia in the goat by analyzing the color of the animal’s inner eyelid. Once affected animals are identified, they can be treated more aggressively in an effort to increase survival rates and decrease resistance. Additionally, it can be helpful in finding animals that we call “persistently infected”, and removing them from the breeding herd in an effort to improve and build resistance in the herd. In addition to anemia, other signs of these parasites to look out for are: a rough hair coat, pasty to watery feces, bottle jaw (swelling under the jaw), and unthrifty or unhealthy appearance in general.

For more information, for a copy of the Smart Drenching brochure, or to learn about parasite management in small ruminants, visit www.scsrpc.org or contact your local Extension office.

The use of brand names in this publication does not imply endorsement of the products or services named or criticism of similar ones not mentioned. Consult your veterinarian for the most effective treatment method and protocol for your herd.
With all the interest in growing grain sorghum this year, it only seems logical to talk about how much swine love sorghum! Grain sorghum is a feedstuff with an excellent nutritional value for swine. According to the Sorghum Check Off, research has shown that sorghum grain contains 96 percent of the energy content of corn. While feed processors are not trying to replace corn in swine diets, they are looking at alternative options that meet the needs of all swine diets and are available locally.

While sorghum has the potential to completely replace corn, wheat or barley in all swine diets, there are important considerations that need to be made. Sorghum-based diets are slightly lower in energy and lysine content compared to corn-based diets. The decreased energy value, pigs will generally have a 1 to 2 percent lower feed efficiency compared to pigs fed a corn diet. But from a carcass fat quality standpoint, this is ideal because it will make firmer carcass fat, which is good for bacon processors and fresh pork markets!

However, some of the major benefits to feeding sorghum in a swine diet include higher available phosphorus and lower fatty acid content.

The higher phosphorus characteristic is beneficial from an economic and environmental standpoint. Diets containing sorghum require less supplemental inorganic phosphorus; this equals less feed costs. And from an environmentally beneficial perspective, less “extra” phosphorus would be excreted in swine waste.

The lower fat content in sorghum compared to corn, paired with an ideal fatty acid profile makes sorghum perfect for improving pork fat quality. Fat quality is extremely important in today's pork processing industry. The fat in a sorghum-based diet contain less unsaturated fats and produce a “firmer” fat.

The important thing to remember is that sorghum has the potential to improve nutritional values in a swine diet, as well as open up new opportunities for area farmers to grow a quality crop on their marginal corn land. For more information, please contact your local Extension office.
We are entering into hurricane season, so now is the time to start developing a disaster plan for your horses. Typically we don’t start having to worry about storms until August or September. So that gives you plenty of time to start preparing for a potential disaster. And if you think it won’t happen to me, just think back a couple of months ago to when all the spring storms when spawning tornadoes every few days. Those folks likely thought the same thing. A few minutes of preparation can be the difference between a good and bad outcome. It’s better to be prepared days, weeks or even months ahead of time than to be prepared one day (or minute) too late. The lists below are just a few suggestions of what to do to prepare for an emergency situation. Every farm, horse owner, horse and situation are different. The idea is to take the steps to be prepared so that when a disaster strikes, you know what to do. You don’t want to have to develop a plan when it’s time to take action.

**Equine Disaster Preparedness**

These suggestions can be used to prepare for any type of disaster – natural or manmade; although these ideas were written with horses in mind, they can be tailored to fit any animal. The following suggestions are from the Equine Disaster Response Alliance, which is a collaborative effort between groups representing the equine industry and horse owners.

**How to Prepare for a Disaster**

- Be familiar with the types of disasters that can occur in your area and develop a written plan of action for each
- Keep a stock of hay, grain, water, medications and veterinary supplies
- Decide where you will take your horses if evacuation becomes necessary
- Keep your horses’ vaccinations and boosters up-to-date
- Compile all important document in one location This should include:
  - Registration papers
  - Medical history, dosages and type of medications/health products required
  - Dietary requirements
  - Current Coggins test
  - Photographs (left & right side, face, medial and lateral lower legs as well as a photo of you with your horse)
- Train your horse to load and unload

**Marking Horses**

Make ID tags such as luggage tags for your horse. On each tag, clearly write your name, address, phone number, horse’s description, feeding instructions, special needs and your vet’s name and phone number. Attach the tag to the halter with duct tape or braid into mane or tail. Do not tie around the tail. Permanent identifications methods, like tattoos, brands, microchips, work well. Small clippers can be used to clip your phone number onto your horse’s neck. An auction crayon can be used to write your number on him. Spray painting the hooves will also help identify the animal.
**Items to Have in Case of an Emergency**

- Photographs, registration papers and medical records for each horse
- Enough hay, gear and water to last three or more days
- Halter and lead for each horse with the horse's name on the halter
- Medications and veterinary supplies
- Extra feed buckets
- Extra bedding, pitchforks, shovels, and a wheelbarrow
- Portable first-aid kit
- Map and list of phone numbers (veterinarian, transporter, insurance company, etc)

**Hurricane Preparation**

(The following information was obtained from a University of Florida Extension Publication.)

- Make sure you have adequate water stored for all animals
- If you have large numbers of animals, make sure you have a generator that it is operational and plenty of fuel to run it
- Keep chlorine bleach on hand because contaminated water may be purified by adding 2 drops of chlorine bleach per quart of water and then letting stand for 30 minutes
- Store at least 72 hours (7 days is best) of hay and feed. Cover hay with waterproof tarps and store grain in watertight containers.
- Store lawn furniture, etc to prevent them from becoming projectile objects
- Place large vehicles and tractors in open fields to prevent tree damage
- Turn off electrical power to barn and other outbuildings
- Make sure you have emergency tools on hand such as chain saw and fuel, hammer and nails, fence repair materials, fire extinguisher.

After the storm has passed, you should address this checklist.

- Inspect animals for injuries and treat appropriately
- Walk through pasture to access and repair any fence damage and remove any debris that could be harmful to animals
- Look for and report any downed power lines
- Take pictures of storm damage
- If any animals are missing, contact animal control

Here is a link to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture’s Equine Disaster Response Alliance homepage. There is a lot of good information here including a 24 Step Disaster Plan and Tips to Prepare for a disaster.


The key message is that you need to take the time now to prepare for potential disasters that may strike you and your horses. We sometimes think things like that happen to others and not ourselves. While many of us will remain lucky and not have to deal with disasters affecting our horses, we need to be diligent and proactive horse owners and make the necessary decisions and preparations so that we can safely care for our animals.
Forage Management Tips

April

• Fertilize cool-season grasses if you have not already done so.
• Watch for symptoms of grass tetany.
• Winter annual pastures should be completely used before grazing pastures which may be harvested as hay.
• To maintain clover in grass pastures and to maintain quality, develop a rotational grazing system in which cattle can graze forage to a 2 inch height before moving to another pasture.
• Fertilize warm-season grasses as soon as dormancy breaks.

May

• Plant warm-season perennial grasses such as common or seeded bermudagrass.
• Plant summer annuals such as pearl millet by May 15.
• Fertilize warm-season grasses with nitrogen after each cutting or every four to six weeks on pastures.
• If irrigation is available, hybrid bermudagrass sprigs may be planted, but weed control will be essential.
• Spray pasture weeds while they are small (3 inches or smaller) for most effective control.

June

• Take soil samples from fields which will be overseeded or planted during the fall.
• Apply lime as far in advance of planting as possible.
• A late planting of summer annuals may be made to extend forage supply.
• To stimulate yield of warm-season grass such as bermuda, apply nitrogen after each cutting or every four to six weeks.
• Graze bermudagrass close (1 to 2 inch stubble) and harvest any growth that has not been grazed every four to six weeks.
• Control summer pasture weeds before they get too tall and mature.

Calendar of Events

April 9 & 10, 2012: Coastal Plains Jr. Livestock Show & Sale, Lenoir County Livestock Arena. For more information, contact Eve Honeycutt at (252) 527.2191.

April 10, 2012: Eastern Carolina 4-H Livestock Judging Contest, Rocky Mount. For more information, contact Margaret Bell at (252) 633.1477.

April 11 & 12, 2012: Wayne County Livestock Show, Wayne County Fairgrounds. For more information, contact Eileen Coite at (910) 731.1521.

April 14, 2012: State Horse Judging Contest, Williamston. For more information, contact Matt Downs at (252) 529.1077.

April 17, 2012: West Craven High School Ag Awareness Day, West Craven High School, Vanceboro. For more information, contact Brenda Laughinghouse at (252) 244.3200.

April 17, 2012: Pesticide Disposal Day, Jones County Crop Production Services, Trenton. For more information, contact Jacob Morgan at (252) 448.9621.
April 18 & 19, 2012: Initial 10-hour AWO Class, Bladen County, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM both days. For more information, contact Becky Spearman at (910) 862.4591.

April 27, 2012: Jones County Science Day, Jones County Civic Center, 8:30 AM – 2:00 PM. For more information, contact Erin Morgan at (252) 448.9621.

April 28, 2012: Heifer Showdown, Sampson County Livestock Arena. For more information, contact Charmae Kendall at (910) 592.7161.

May 4, 2012: Responsible You, Jones County Civic Center. For more information, contact Erin Morgan at (252) 448.9621.

May 15, 2012: Continuing Education Class for AWO, Mt. Olive College, Mt. Olive. For more information, contact Margaret Bell at (252) 633.1477 or Eileen Coite at (910) 731.1521.

May 18, 2012: Southeast District Horse Show, Bob Martin Ag Center. For more information, contact Matt Downs at (252) 259.1077.

June 7 & 8, 2012: Turkey pick-up for NC State Fair. For more information, contact Margaret Bell at (252) 633.1477.

June 22, 2012: Southeast District Activity Day, Lenoir County. For more information, contact Erin Morgan (Jones) at (252) 448.9621 or Wendy Paschal (Craven) at (252) 633.1477.

We’re on the web! Check out our website for more upcoming events.
http://craven.ces.ncsu.edu/
http://jones.ces.ncsu.edu/
http://cravenjoneslivestock.blogspot.com/
http://nchorse.blogspot.com/

Fencelines is a quarterly newsletter written by a team of Southeast District Agricultural Agents for livestock producers of Southeastern North Carolina. For more information on material and events presented in this newsletter, contact your local agent and Cooperative Extension office at:

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