

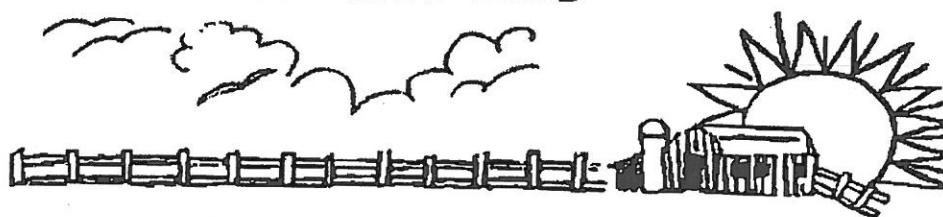
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# FENCELINES



## Newsletter of Southeast North Carolina

### The Importance of Biosecurity on your Goat Farm

Submitted by: Margaret Ross- Livestock Agent-Craven and Jones Counties

*Adapted from "APHIS Biosecurity on U.S. Goat Operations."*

Have you ever thought about biosecurity on your farm? What is biosecurity? Biosecurity is various different practices you can implement on your farm to reduce the risk of introducing disease into your herd. This is a very important part of your herd's health. Even one animal having a disease on your farm could affect the rest of your animals. Read on to learn more about how to make biosecurity improvements to your herd and your farm in general.

#### *Herd Additions*

Every time you add a new animal to your herd, you run the risk of introducing disease. There are three good practices to fend off disease from new animals. First, you can choose to have a closed herd, meaning the only way you add animals is through kidding on your farm. Obviously, this is not ideal for all farms because there is no way to add new bloodlines or improve genetics in a closed herd. Second, new animals should be quarantined and checked for signs and symptoms of disease for at least 30 days. Lastly, health management practices are a good way to help ensure your herd stays healthy. These may include: veterinary exams, deworming, vaccinations, and testing for disease.

#### *Usage of Needles*

By reusing needles between animals, you greatly increase your risk of disease transmission. The best practice would be to not reuse needles. However, if this is not possible, you can reduce your risk of disease transmission by disinfecting needles between each use.

#### *Veterinarian – Patient – Client Relationship*

It is very important to have a veterinarian who has a good client – patient relationship with you and your goat herd. Veterinarians are a good source of information about the goat industry as well as goat health. Regular farm visits by your veterinarian may help improve your herd, genetics, and provide a great opportunity for you to ask questions about your herd.

#### *Farm Visitors*

When visitors come to your farm, it is very important that they take precautions not to spread disease. Disease agents can be spread through various locations such as clothing, hands, boots, vehicles, or instruments. You can require that visitors take any and all of the following precautions: change into clean boots, use shoe covers, wash hands before touching the animals, don't park near the goat area, and use a footbath before entering goat area.

### *Kidding Management*

It may be a very good idea to keep does that are kidding for the first time away from the rest of the herd because if they become infected with bacterial pathogens while pregnant, they could abort, have abnormal kids, or kid early. Also, it is important to promptly remove placentas and aborted fetuses because they can hold infectious organisms that could possibly spread to other goats.

You should also consider taking precautions with your goats having physical contact with other animals including raccoons, skunks, and opossums. These animals can carry disease and infect your herd. Also, it is very important to make sure your animals are properly identified with an identification number, such as a Scrapie tag. Various forms of identification are required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture when animals are sold or moved from the farm.

These are just a few ways you can make your farm less susceptible to disease. Follow these steps to help raise biosecurity at your farm: work closely with your veterinarian, isolate new animals, disinfect or do not reuse needles between animals, limit outside animal contact as well as visitor contact, use proper animal identification, and properly manage kidding areas to reduce disease transfer. If you have any questions about how biosecure your farm is, feel free to contact your local Cooperative Extension agent.

### **Beef Herd- To Expand, or Not to Expand?**

Submitted By Katie Tyndall, Extension Livestock Intern,  
with Eve H. Honeycutt, Extension Livestock Agent, Lenoir and Greene Counties

*Adapted from Purdue Agriculture News (Feb. 20 and May 8, 2014)  
and University of Missouri Extension News (March 24, 2014)*

In the past few months, cattle producers across the nation have been reaping the benefits of the soaring prices beef cattle prices. Within the first quarter of 2014, the average sell price for steers was \$147 per live hundred weight, which is about \$20 higher than the previous first quarter record. There has been a 17% increase in the price of cattle since last year.

The increase in price is based on two things; the cost of grain and the total number of cattle.

Weather in previous years has affected the price and yield of grains. Corn has reached the lowest price it has been at since 2011, and yields have increased. This creates lower feed prices and a more abundance supply of feed.

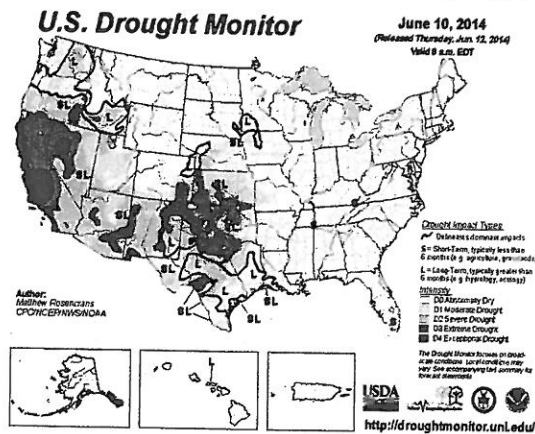
The number of total cattle in the United States is at the lowest point it has been at since 1952. In 1952, there were about 90 million head of cattle, which was the previous record low. Today, there are 87.7 million.

Cattle farmers across the country are taking these favorable market conditions as a sign to expand their operation. An increase in production can already be seen based on the reduced numbers of heifers on feedlots and the decline of heifers and cows being slaughtered. Expansion of cattle operations takes time and a lot of money. Purdue Extension Agricultural economist, Chris Hurt, believes that expansion of beef cattle herds will be a slow process for the following reasons:

- Retaining heifers as replacements is expensive for producers
- Producers have struggled to make a profit from their cattle for a long time
- Areas with the largest amount of beef cattle are still affected by the drought.

According to Hurt, the challenges will allow the price outlook for beef cattle to be "extremely favorable for 2014 to 2016".

With expectations of the beef industry to continue to thrive through the year 2016, University of Missouri beef economist, Scott Brown says, "The time to expand may be now." However, Brown reminds producers "there are always risks". By the time calves from cows bred this spring go to market, prices could be much lower than they are now. "Before you go home and double the size of your cow herd, remember the cattle cycle," Brown said. When cow numbers go down, prices go up. However, when numbers go up, prices go down.



A big factor that will determine the future price of beef cattle is weather. About 47% of the country is experiencing abnormally dry conditions or suffering from drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. If the dry weather persists or becomes worse, it is possible that the number of cattle will continue to decrease and will keep the prices high. However, enough rain and sufficient pastures will allow cattle herds across the nation to expand faster, leading to a shorter time to take advantage of the high prices

### **PEDV's impact: Now and tomorrow**

Written by: Steve Meyer, President of Paragon Economics and a Pork Checkoff consultant  
Submitted by: Paul Gonzalez, Livestock Extension Agent, Sampson County

As I write this, it has been 364 days since the first U.S. case of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDV) was diagnosed at the Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. I believe everyone was concerned about that news.

A new disease always brings a chill of apprehension, but I doubt anyone knew just how concerned they should have been on May 17, 2013. As it turns out, "very concerned" or "scared to death" both may have been appropriate. The truth is, we still don't know which better describes this menace to baby pigs.

### **Not the Foreign Animal Disease We Feared**

For years, the U.S. pork industry has feared, considered and planned for the introduction of a foreign animal disease, with virtually all of the attention on Foot-and-Mouth Disease, African Swine Fever and Classical Swine Fever. Any of these would immediately close exports markets, destroying demand for roughly 23 percent of U.S. production.

Domestic supplies would increase dramatically, pushing prices down sharply in order to clear the market. That assumes that domestic demand would remain relatively strong in spite of what almost certainly will be a public relations hurdle as news services cover control and eradication efforts.

PEDV though, is not a demand-killing bug. In fact, pork demand has remained strong since PEDV first appeared, with real per capita pork expenditures growing nearly 6 percent in 2013 and over 5 percent in 2014 through March.

There have been virtually no instances in which the safety of pork has been questioned due to PEDV, and consumers and the popular press have remained calm. This is due in large part to fact-based messages regarding food safety being shared by the pork industry.

The irony of PEDV is that as a supply-impacting disease, producers could be financially better off this year for the following reasons:

1) Demand for pigs is inelastic. This means that any reduction in the pig supply will cause a price increase that is larger in percentage terms than the supply reduction. Further, the relative price change (i.e., price flexibility or multiplier) normally ranges from -2 to -3. So, for every 1 percent reduction in quantity supplied, prices will usually rise 2 to 3 percent.

Since total revenue is price times quantity, a 1 percent decrease in pig output causes a 1 to 2 percent increase in total revenue for producers.

2) Some producers are not losing a large percentage of yearly output to PEDV. Current evidence indicates that most herds return to normal production within five to eight weeks, with most losses in the first three to four weeks. So, 8 to 12 percent of output is being lost on infected farms. Larger producers with multiple sow farms may avoid having PEDV at every location.

The obvious exceptions are single-site producers who farrow less frequently than once every two months or so. They could see pig losses proportionally larger than the price increase witnessed so far in 2014, meaning their total revenue would decrease.

### **Record Profits Expected**

For producers as a whole, add to higher revenue the fact that production costs are 10 to 15 percent lower this year, and it is easy to see that 2014 will likely be a year of record profitability for producers.

So who will be hurt by PEDV? Consumers and middlemen (packers, processors, distributors, retailers) and people who work for them. Consumers will pay higher prices for pork and other proteins since high pork prices will allow those values to rise, as well. Middlemen and their employees will be hurt by reduced throughput and, most likely, operating hours.

### **How Big Has the Impact Been? How Big Will It Be?**

No one knows the answer to those two questions with certainty because our data systems are not geared to accurately tell us how many pigs have died from the disease. There are three different data sources, each of which approach the issue from a different point of view.

1) National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) – This network provides weekly data to USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on the number of case submissions and positive case accessions. Data are provided by states, but the labs have no way to know much, if anything, about the number of pigs lost, the number of pigs at risk, etc.

So all we know is that each accession represents a set of samples submitted for a given farm at one point in time. Many represent new cases, but some are retests on farms infected earlier. Farms that don't submit samples to diagnostic labs generate no data. Figure 1 shows weekly positive PEDV case accessions for the U.S. and several key states.

2) University of Minnesota Swine Health Monitoring Project – The College of Veterinary Medicine publishes weekly updates from large farms. Participants have steadily increased to 16 as of mid-May, with nine participating publicly and the identities of the others confidential.

The 713 breeding herds account for about 2.5 million sows, with 57 percent having been infected by PEDV in the past 12 months. Of the 713 breeding herds, 315 are in the Midwest, 62 in the Oklahoma Panhandle and 336 in the Southeast.

The new Census of Agriculture indicates, however, that there are far more farms with breeding hogs in the upper Midwest states than in the Southeast. This suggests that firms reporting may under-represent the Midwest herd, which saw rapidly increasing PEDV case accessions this winter.

3) USDA's Hogs and Pigs Report – USDA's March 28 report represents March 1 inventories and should reflect PEDV baby pig losses to that date.

Inventories, with the exception of the breeding herd, were larger than analysts expected but reflected some PEDV impacts. The average number of pigs saved per litter was the lowest since early 2009, and the December-February pig crop was down 3.6 percent from last year.

USDA's September through November pig crop, though, was as large as a year earlier, a finding that does not fit with March slaughter that was 6.7 percent lower than in 2013. March slaughter is made up primarily of pigs born in September.

The report also pegged the December through February pig crops for Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois at +5, +2 and +3 percent, respectively, from a year earlier. These numbers do not jibe well with NAHLN data that shows rapidly rising PEDV case accessions in the Midwest during that period.

### **So Where Do We Stand?**

The honest answer is that we do not know. If more than 50 percent of sows have indeed been infected, with pig losses of 2.7 to 3.0 pigs per sow as widely established by producers dealing with the disease, we lost 7-8 million pigs from June 2013 through April 2014. Distributing these numbers according to the accession data suggests hog slaughter could be down 10 percent from 2013 levels from July through September.

Higher weights will make up 3 to 4 percent of the reduction, but pork supplies will, in my opinion, be tight in the second half of 2014. I expect weekly slaughter to drop quickly after June 1 and national barrow and gilt prices to spend most of the summer in the mid-\$120s per cwt., carcass.



There is little data to suggest what may happen beyond September. Warmer weather has slowed the rate of positive accessions, so slaughter reductions should get smaller in the fourth quarter. The same should apply to the first quarter of 2015 if case numbers fall as expected this summer.

Beyond that, PEDV's impact depends on:

1. Whether an effective vaccine is developed,
2. The degree to which immunities persist in herds that have already dealt with the disease, and
3. How effectively producers apply management practices they have learned to prevent future breaks.

Things are better now. But the only certainty is that the future of PEDV's impact is still quite uncertain.

### **Crabgrass: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly...**

Submitted by: Stefani R. Garbacik, Livestock Agent - Wayne County

I have had several calls this summer asking how to get rid of crabgrass. I wanted to ask these people "Why would you want to get rid of it? Why spend money on killing it when you can utilize it?" The only reason I can think of for destroying this fantastic weed (aka forage) would be for haying purposes, particularly in horse hay where the concern about mold is more prevalent.

Crabgrass is called a weed in many circles, but in the livestock world, particularly in cattle groups, it should be called a forage. A wonderful, nutritious, hardy forage that can feed our cattle for next to nothing (especially if you already have an abundance in your field).

#### **The Good:**

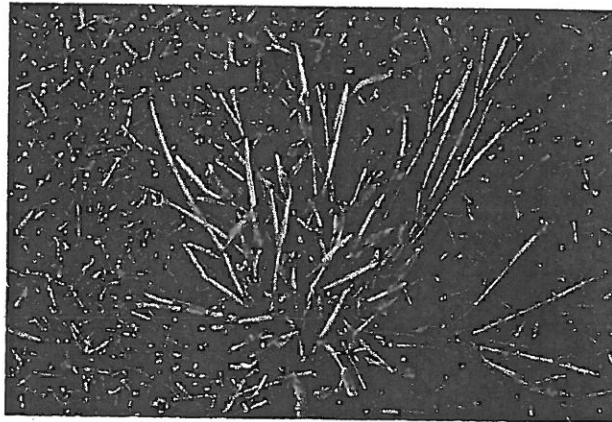
- Extremely nutritious
  - NDF (neutral detergent fiber) from 50 - 62%
  - CP (crude protein) from 15 - 25% in early season, 12% in late season
  - DDM (digestible dry matter) values of 74%
- No known toxicity problems
- Palatable: cattle will choose to eat crabgrass over several other summer grasses
- Fermentable: broken down faster in the rumen than other grasses (i.e. bermudagrass)
- Works well with a winter interseeding grazing program (use this for summer forage, plant rye/ryegrass for winter forage)
  - Grows well between 80 - 100°F
  - Once growth has declined, fertilize, lightly disc the soil and plant your annual cereal
- Will reseed itself
- Can grow with the pH anywhere from 5.5 - 7.5, with 6.0 - 7.2 being ideal
- Tolerant of overgrazing
  - Can be routinely grazed to 3"

- Stocking rates can be as high as 800 - 1200 lbs animal/acre depending on fertility and rainfall
  - ADG: 0.75 lbs/day on poor-mature crabgrass, 2 - 2.5 lbs/day on well managed stands
- Dairymen have noticed increased lactation when crabgrass was grazed
- Can be used for hay or pasture purposes

#### **The Bad:**

- Growth declines around the beginning of September
- Shallow annual tilling needed for regrowth
- Some research suggests that too much crabgrass may reduce the yield of your hayfield
- Best used in a rotational grazing system
- Slower drying time than other grasses, may mold if included in hay (i.e. bermudagrass hay) if not properly managed
- Yield is variable and depends heavily on soil fertility and rainfall
- Typically 3 - 5 tons/acre, can be as low as 1 ton/acre
- Possible pests include grasshoppers, fall army worms, and the southern cinch bug
- May need heavier loads of N than other grasses
- Color of hay is dark and may not fair well on the visual hay test (looks worse than it is)

#### **The Ugly:**



The take home message concerning crabgrass seems to be that it may look funny, and have a weedy reputation, but if managed correctly it can be a highly valuable addition to your forage program. Regardless of your end goal — hay or pasture — consider adding crabgrass (or at least not destroying the crabgrass you may already have) to the grazing plan. You won't regret it!

Contact your local extension agent for more information on crabgrass and how it may fit in your grazing system. The following link offers a ton of information regarding crabgrass as well: <http://www.noble.org/ag/pasture/crabgrass-for-forage/winter-pasture/>

## Forage Management Tips

### July

- Stick to 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 poisoning of animals grazing stunted, highly fertilized summer annuals.
- Sample soils and apply lime on fields to be planted in the fall, if not already done.
- Decide which fescue pastures will be stock-piled for winter grazing.

### August

- Sample soils and apply lime to pastures with pH below 5.8 to be overseeded next month.
- Fertilize warm-season grasses.
- Fertilize fescue and keep cattle off of the pastures to be stockpiled for winter grazing.

### September

- Fertilize and lime cool season grasses.
- Keep the grazing pressure on the summer grasses and completely use them before grazing cool season forages.
- Continue to watch for armyworms on established and seedling stands of forages.
- Overseed or no-till winter annuals onto summer perennial grass after they have been closely grazed.
- Make a winter feed supply inventory so deficiencies can be avoided now (by purchasing hay or planting more winter pasture).

## Calendar of Events

**\*\*RSVP FOR ALL EVENTS BELOW TO THE CRAVEN COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OFFICE AT (252) 633.1477 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED\*\***

**July 14:** Craven / Jones Livestock Association Meeting at 7PM at the Jones Office. **\*\* Meetings will now be held the second Monday of every month unless you hear otherwise!\*\***

**July 16 - 17:** State Livestock Judging, Skill-A-Thon, and Stockmen's Bowl Competitions at the NCSU Beef Unit in Raleigh.

**July 30 - 31:** Initial Animal Waste Operator CEC, Lenoir County from 9AM - 4PM both days. Contact Eve Honeycutt at the Lenoir County Cooperative Extension Office for more details, fees and registration at (252) 527.2191.



July 31: Backyard Poultry Management Class for Beginners at the Jones Office at 6PM.

August 11: Craven / Jones Livestock Association Meeting at 6PM at the Village Butcher in New Bern for a meat processing demonstration.

August 14: Backyard Poultry Management Class - an Advanced class at the Jones Office at 6PM.

August 18: CARTs Meeting at 10:00 AM for Craven County; 1:00 PM for Jones County in their respective counties.

September 2: Jones County Centennial Celebration at the Jones Office, more info TBD.

September 8: Craven / Jones Livestock Association Meeting, more info TBD.

September 9: Feeder Calf Sale in Clinton. Contact Paul Gonzalez in Sampson County at (910) 592.7161 for more information.

#### **Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD Program)**

\*Craven County agricultural field crop and livestock producers generate \$50-70 million dollars of farm sales each year. Enrollment of lands into farmland preservation programs identifies and preserve existing farmlands. Additionally, it adds additional protection for the producer and landowner against nuisance lawsuits, notifies potential new landowners of agricultural activities and provides a priority ranking or reduced cost share for some USDA programs. Please consider enrolling lands into either the Voluntary Agricultural Districts or Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts if you are a landowner. The Craven Soil & Water Conservation District is accepting applications for enrollment into the Voluntary Agricultural and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts. Applications can be obtained from the Craven County Soil & Water Conservation office, our office or downloaded from our web page (<http://craven.ces.ncsu.edu/>). Cost of enrollment is \$76. For more details, visit, [http://craven.ces.ncsu.edu/content/VAD\\*](http://craven.ces.ncsu.edu/content/VAD*)

**We're on the web!**

<http://craven.ces.ncsu.edu/>

<http://jones.ces.ncsu.edu/>

<http://cravenjoneslivestock.blogspot.com/>

<http://nchorse.blogspot.com/>



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**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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