

## **April 2012 Cattle Call**

**Howdy Rockingham County Cattle E-mailers,**

**Included in this April 2012 Cattle Call is Extension's Beef Cattle related educational information & announcements for Rockingham & Guilford Counties. Please send me any announcements, or buy and sale items, hay or other that you wish to be included in EACH Cattle call. (SHORT AS POSSIBLE) THERE ARE NO CONTINUAL RUNNING SPOTS, SO YOU NEED TO SEND THESE TO ME FOR \*EACH\* Cattle Call.**

**\*\*\*PLEASE PUT IN SUBJECT LINE – \*\*\*Cattle Call. \*\*\***

**If I forgot to include anything in this email it was a total oversight on my part. BUT LET ME KNOW!**

**\*\*\*\*\*GOT A QUESTION OR WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SOMETHING, LET ME KNOW SO IT CAN BE INCLUDED IN THE NEXT CATTLE CALL!\*\*\*\*\***

***As Always - I would like to hear your comments!***

**Included in This Cattle Call**

- 1. Rockingham Co Cattleman's Program - Thursday April 12, 2012**
- 2. Meat Handling & Cutting Workshop**
- 3. The Pink Slime Hype**

4. **Safety Month- Animal Handling Safety Considerations**

5. **Freeze Branding**

6. **Make a Choice for More Grass**

7. **SNAKES**

8. **The Buzz on Bees, Carpenter bees & Blue Orchard Mason Bees**

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11. **Grazing Tips**

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13. **Take A Load Off**

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**1. Rockingham Co Cattleman's Program - Thursday April 12, 2012**

With today's input costs at record levels it has never been more important to manage our business decisions wisely. Dr. Joe Cassady Associate Professor in the Department of Animal Science at NC State University will be coming to present a program on "Genetic Supply & Replacement Selection". This event will begin with dinner at 6:30 P.M. Thursday April 12, 2012 at the Rockingham Co Agricultural Center in Reidsville. Dr. Cassady will address many topics including modern and timely tips on both selection and management of beef heifers and the cattle herd. We in North Carolina are fortunate to have someone available with Dr. Cassady's knowledge and experience in beef cattle efficiency. Dr. Cassady has served for the past three years as the executive director of the Beef Improvement Federation. His research is focused on food animal genetics and genomics with special emphasis on the improvement of efficiency of production as it relates to pigs and beef cattle.

The event will begin at at 6:30 P.M with Dinner and the program will follow. I know that this will be a Good program, so make sure you make plans to attend. If you are planning to attend this program on April 12, please call Ben Chase, Extension Livestock Agent at 342-8235, by Monday April 9th to reserve your place. When you call, please leave your name, phone number and the names of those planning to attend. The cost for dinner will be \$8.00 per person. (You will be responsible for any places you reserve)

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## **2. Meat Handling & Cutting Workshop**

**Cooperative Extension In Rockingham County will be holding a Meat Workshop on June 1<sup>st</sup> at the Rockingham County Agricultural Center from 1-4pm.**

***There will be a registration fee of \$20 for this workshop.***



- Lean finely textured beef offers affordable nutrition for kids, which is critical given shrinking school budgets, rising food costs and the fact that for many kids, school lunch is their best chance at getting a well-balanced meal during the day.
- Ground beef that includes lean finely textured beef is safe according to independent scientists, safety advocates and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). By law, E. coli and Salmonella cannot be in meat supplied for school lunch. In some cases, a small, safe amount of ammonia gas or citric acid is used to produce the lean finely textured beef, which like other safety measures along the way, reduces the potential for bacterial contamination. FSIS has reviewed and approved this practice as safe, and safety advocates have applauded it as an effective way of ensuring safe beef for consumers.
- Processing aids like ammonia gas, citric acid and others do not appear singled out on food labels because by definition and by law, they do not affect the finished food. According to the Food and Drug Administration, labeling of “incidental additives” like these processing aids would be impracticable and might draw undue attention to what essentially amounts to meaningless trace amounts.

You may be wondering if we’re talking about the same product after all you’ve heard or read about “pink slime,” but the fact is, much of what you may have heard just isn’t factual. Lean finely textured beef is simply a low-fat source of beef protein, that when added to ground beef, is just another ingredient in the ground beef dishes.

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#### **4. Safety Month- Animal Handling Safety Considerations**

**David E. Baker and Rusty Lee,**

**Department of Agricultural Engineering, University of Missouri**

**Few farmers view livestock as a source of danger. Yet animal-related accidents cause numerous deaths and serious injuries each year. A recent National Safety Council study ranked beef cattle farms second and dairy operations third among all farming enterprises in injuries per hours of work. Seventeen percent of all farm injuries involved animals. This equaled the percentage of injuries caused by farm machinery.**

Removing hazards brings you one step closer to a safe work environment. Whether you are operating equipment or working with animals, taking a few precautions and observing safety rules can save you precious time, prevent injury, or even save your life.

**General considerations** - Anyone who works with livestock knows each animal has its own personality. Animals sense their surroundings differently than humans. Their vision is in black and white, not in color. They also have difficulty judging distances. And differences exist between the vision of cattle, swine and horses. For example, cattle have close to 360-degree panoramic vision. A quick movement behind cattle may "spook" them.

Animals have extremely sensitive hearing and can detect sounds that human ears cannot hear. Loud noises frighten animals, and research proves that high-frequency sounds actually hurt their ears. These factors explain why animals are often skittish and balky, particularly in unfamiliar surroundings.

Watching animals for signs of aggressiveness or fear alerts you to possible danger. Warning signs may include raised or pinned ears, raised tail or hair on the back, bared teeth, pawing the ground or snorting.

Although handling methods may vary greatly for different types of livestock, there are some generally accepted rules for working with any animal: Most animals will respond to routine; be calm and deliberate. - Avoid quick movements or loud noises. - Be patient; never prod an animal when it has nowhere to go. - Respect livestock — don't fear it. - Move slowly and deliberately around livestock; gently touch animals rather than shoving or bumping them. - Always have an escape route when working with an animal in close quarters.

**Facilities** - Many livestock handling injuries are directly related to equipment or building structures. Poor facilities and equipment can also cause injuries to animals. This can mean considerable economic loss at market time. - Tripping hazards such as high door sills, cluttered alleyways and uneven walking surfaces can cause serious injury and a considerable amount of lost work time. Studies have found that falls account for 18 percent of all animal-related accidents.

- Concrete floors are best for livestock. The finish on concrete floors should be roughened to prevent slips under wet conditions. High traffic areas, such as alleyways, should be grooved. Floors should allow water to drain easily. Slatted floors often are used to keep animals dry in a confinement system.

- Fencing and gates should be strong enough to contain crowded livestock. A variety of materials are available, but the key is strength and durability. A protruding piece of lumber, a nail or a bolt can cause painful and infectious injuries. If backed or pushed into, one of these objects can cause a serious back injury.

- Alleys and chutes should be wide enough to allow animals to pass, but not wide enough to allow them to turn around. A width of 30 inches is recommended for a cow/calf operation. For cattle in the range of 800 to 1,200 pounds, a 26-inch width is recommended. Solid wall chutes, instead of fencing, will lower the number of animals that balk in the chute.

- Lighting should be even and diffused. Bright spots and shadows tend to make animals more skittish, especially near crowding or loading areas. Animals move more readily from dark areas into light, but avoid layouts that make them look directly into the sun.

- Handling equipment can speed up livestock confinement work operations, reduce time and labor requirements, cut costs, and decrease the risk of injury.

**Animal health and hygiene** - Hygiene is vital to good livestock management, particularly in confinement systems where diseases can spread quickly. Maintaining a clean, dry environment is obviously important, but other factors also are crucial. - Ventilation should minimize dust. Various molds that can cause respiratory as well as digestive problems may be present in feed. All

feeds should be carefully checked before they are fed to livestock. Deal only with reliable feed dealers and have suspect feed tested.

**Animal diseases affecting people** - All animals, domesticated or wild, can be a source of human illness and parasitic infestation. Diseases that can be transmitted between animals and people are referred to as zoonoses.

**Rabies** is a deadly virus that affects the central nervous system. It can be transmitted by saliva from an infected animal through a bite, open wound or sore. Although widespread pet inoculation has greatly reduced the threat of rabies, rural people are at greater risk due to their proximity to wild animals. A veterinarian should be called to examine animals observed acting abnormally. Seek immediate medical attention if you are bitten by an animal that you suspect is rabid.

**Lyme Disease (LD)**, another potential threat. The ticks are known to transmit LD or the organisms that cause LD have been found the Lone Star Tick & the black-legged tick (deer tick). If LD occurs, its symptoms may develop within 2 to 30 days of the tick bite. A small red bump appears near the bite and enlarges into a spreading red ring. This is followed by a general sickness, including fever, chills, headaches and backache. Some may experience palpitations, dizziness and shortness of breath. - LD responds well to antibiotics in its early stages, but if left untreated, it may advance into a chronic stage involving rheumatoid arthritis or cardiac problems. <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Urban/ticks.htm>

**Brucellosis (Bangs Disease)** affects cattle, goats and swine. It can be transmitted to people in unprocessed milk, infected carcasses, or by an aborted fetus or afterbirth from an affected animal. Good sanitation practices reduce the chances that herds will be infected. Animals should be tested periodically for this disease. **Trichinosis**, caused by tiny parasites, can be painful and sometimes fatal to humans. It is transmitted by consumption of uncooked or partially cooked pork. Trichinosis has nearly been eradicated in North America. Thorough cooking is the best prevention. **Salmonella** organisms are found in poultry and in wild and domestic animals. They can be transmitted to people through contaminated food or water. The disease can cause severe gastrointestinal distress and fever. Prevention includes proper storage and cooking of animal-derived foods. Good sanitation procedures when handling food reduce the risk of salmonella poisoning.

Other zoonoses also exist. However, preventive measures such as keeping animal facilities clean, testing and immunizing, and using sanitary practices in handling animals and their products minimize the danger.

**Manure pit gases** - Toxic gases, especially in confined spaces such as manure pits, silos and grain bins, can pose hazards to humans and animals. Four gases of major concern can be found in manure pits. They are hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). - The primary health hazards of these gases are: Toxic or poisonous reactions that can occur in people or animals. Hydrogen sulfide is the most toxic of these gases. - Oxygen depletion, which can result in asphyxiation. Hydrogen sulfide, ammonia and carbon dioxide gases are all heavier than air. During agitation of the pit and under conditions of poor ventilation, these gases will replace the oxygen in the air. - Explosions that can occur when oxygen mixes with the gases. This is primarily a problem with methane.

**Characteristics - Hydrogen sulfide** - Most dangerous gas associated with waste decomposition. - Distinct rotten egg smell; heavier than air. - After breathing this gas a short time, sense of smell becomes fatigued and you may no longer be able to detect any odor. Gives a false sense of security. At low concentrations the gas irritates the eyes and respiratory tract; at moderate levels, causes headaches, nausea and dizziness; at high concentrations, death will occur.

**Ammonia** - Distinct, sharp, penetrating odor detectable at very low concentrations. - Heavier than air. - At moderate levels of concentration, can irritate eyes and respiratory tract; at high concentrations, can cause ulceration to the eyes and severe irritation to the respiratory tract. **Carbon dioxide** - Odorless, heavier than air, difficult to detect. - Primarily replaces oxygen in air and acts as an asphyxiant. At moderate concentrations, shortness of breath and dizziness can occur. - A major contributing factor to animal deaths by asphyxiation in confinement buildings, which often occurs during ventilation failure. **Methane** - Odorless and lighter than air, so it tends to accumulate near the tops of manure pits. Considered an asphyxiant at extremely high concentrations. Main hazard is its flammable, explosive nature.

Prevention - Under normal conditions in a well-designed, properly constructed building with good ventilation, you should not have many problems with gas accumulation. But serious problems can occur if the proper precautions are not followed. - Provide as much ventilation as possible in the pit and building during agitation of the waste. Although pits are agitated only a few times a year, most human and livestock deaths or illnesses occur at these times. - No workers should be near the pit or in the building during agitation. If possible, remove all animals from the building. - Avoid entering a manure pit at any time, if at all possible. Even if the pit has been emptied, it still may be lacking in oxygen or have high concentrations of toxic gases. - Always keep at least one foot of space between the highest manure level and the slats. This protects the animals who lie on the slats and inhale the gases that will accumulate at the surface of the pit.

Silo gases - Grain, particularly corn, can accumulate high amounts of nitrates. During the first 24 to 48 hours of fermentation, significant amounts of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) can be released. When this gas is inhaled by silo workers, it can cause a severe chemical pneumonia known as "silo filler's disease." Nitrogen dioxide is one of the most hazardous lung irritants. It has a pungent, sweetish odor, even in low concentrations of 5 parts per million (ppm). It has a reddish-brown color, visible only when concentrations reach a dangerous level (75 to 150 ppm). It is heavier than air and can settle at the bottom of enclosed spaces. - Any concentration over 25 ppm can be hazardous. The effect on the lungs is often so subtle that the victim may not realize the serious nature of the exposure until too late. Inhalation of 50 to 75 ppm for 30 to 60 minutes can cause bronchitis; 50 to 100 ppm causes chemical pneumonia; 150 to 200 ppm, a severe fibrosis type of pneumonia; 300 to 400 ppm, severe lung damage, fatal in 2 to 10 days; over 500 ppm, acute pulmonary edema, fatal in less than 48 hours. Prevention - Do not allow anyone to enter the silo during the filling process until the blower has run for at least 30 minutes. The height of the chute doors should be kept as close as practical with the silage level. This allows heavier-than-air gases to be blown down the chute. - Do not for any reason allow anyone to enter the silo for 7 to 10 days after the filling process is completed. It is during this time that the fermentation process is occurring and producing the toxic gases. - Provide

good ventilation around the base of the silo during the fermentation process so that the gases will be carried away. - Provide fencing to prevent children and animals from straying into any spaces adjoining a silo during this dangerous period. - When the silo is opened, the blower again should run for a minimum of 30 minutes before entry. Given a proper fermentation, no further gas production should occur. - Never enter a silo without someone on the outside monitoring your activity.

Dusts - Dusts are the most common danger in the air when working around livestock. Some types of dust are more dangerous than others. But all dust can cause serious health problems to an individual, depending on the amount, type and length of exposure. - Some dust carries antigens that cause severe irritation to the respiratory tract and lungs. This often results in lung damage. The most common form is known as "farmer's lung." It results from breathing moldy forage or grain, normally hay. Farmer's lung is one of the most disabling diseases among dairy farmers. - Farmer's lung symptoms often are not noticed until several hours after exposure to the dust. Symptoms often are mistaken for bronchitis or pneumonia. If the disease is not diagnosed early, irreversible lung damage and sometimes death can result. - Farmer's lung will limit the amount of work a farmer can do because shortness of breath will require frequent rest periods. - "Nuisance dust" is the term for other forms of dust that are often inhaled while working with livestock. Breathing dusty air of this type for long periods will cause areas of your lungs to become hardened and inelastic, and your capacity to take in needed oxygen will be reduced. Furthermore, your susceptibility to respiratory diseases like pneumonia may increase. Prevention - Store only dry, well-cured forage or grain. Mold develops from the heat generated by moist or wet stored forage and grain. - Burn moldy grain or hay. - Keep livestock areas as clean as possible to prevent dust from collecting. - Wear a dust mask in dusty work areas to keep harmful dust out of your lungs.

Personal protective equipment - Foot injuries are frequent in all types of livestock facilities. Wear safety shoes or boots. Composition and type of sole configuration also are important to combat the problems of uneven and wet footing. - If you must enter a manure pit or silo without a self-contained

breathing apparatus, turn on all forced ventilation equipment for a minimum of 30 minutes. - Wear a harness or tie a rope around your waist and have at least one person holding the lifeline. If you are overcome by the gas, this lifeline is your only means of rescue without endangering other people. - A self-contained breathing apparatus is recommended, but its high cost may make it impractical to have this equipment readily available on most farms.

Safety reminders for livestock handling - Liquid manure holding facilities should be secured against entry. Outdoor lagoons and ponds should be fenced. - Good housekeeping is essential, not only for your personal safety, but also for the health and well being of your stock. - Keep children away from animals, particularly in livestock handling areas. - Most male animals are dangerous. Use special facilities for these animals and practice extreme caution when handling them. - Be calm and deliberate when working with animals. Always leave yourself an "out" when working in close quarters. - Respect all animals. They may not purposely hurt you, but their size and bulk make them potentially dangerous. - Most animals tend to be aggressive when protecting their young; be extra careful around newborn animals. - Stay clear of animals that are frightened or "spooked." Be extra careful around strange animals. - Monitor entry into your operation; sales and service personnel could bring diseases from other farms. - Keep facilities in good repair. Chutes, stalls, fences and ramps should be maintained regularly.

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## 5. Freeze Branding- Ben Chase, Rockingham County Livestock Extension Agent 342-8235

### Needed materials:

- Clippers - with surgical blades
- Branding Irons
- Dry Ice
- Denatured Alcohol

- 2 Coolers or Containers ( 1 for the Dry Ice and 1 for the mixture)
- Clean Rags, towels or cloths
- Stop Watch, Watch or Clock with second hand

#### General Recommendations

- Dry Ice — generally buy ½ pound per head, if you plan on keeping over night ¾ to 1 pound per head (you do not want to run out of this once you get started)
- It probably take anywhere between 3 to 5 gallons of DENATURED ALCOHOL
- The Coolers or Containers should be large enough for the Irons to set down in, aluminum or steel coolers work best, like the military MRE Containers (Styrofoam does not work well, and many of the plastic containers crack and fall apart)
- Freeze Branding can be done anytime, probably the best results is when its done in Spring or Fall (with the new hair coat)
- It is probably best that you mix the Ice and Denatured Alcohol in Batches. Each time you add Ice, cover Ice & Irons with the Denatured Alcohol
- Make sure you clip area and get the area wiped clean with the Denatured Alcohol , this skin saturated in the alcohol creates a good bond with the Branding Iron
- Watch the clock — make sure you hold Irons on long enough, anywhere between 50 seconds to 2 minutes, depending on age and hide color.
- Ensure that the entire Iron is making good contact with the hide (this can be difficult)
- If only one set of Branding Irons are used, and you have to use the same number back to back, MAKE SURE YOU GIVE THAT IRON TIME TO GET COLD ENOUGH between each one - usually wait and let the bubbles settle, about 2 minutes
- After you pull the iron off, the area should feel frozen or hard, and within an hour you will be able to see the numbers where the skin has slightly swelled
- It will usually take a couple of months before you will see the white numbers

There are local suppliers of Dry Ice - Usually will cost in the neighborhood of \$11/25lb block, \$17/50lb block

— You can get Denatured Alcohol (buy by the GALLON) from most Agricultural Dealers in the County (you may need to call and order)

— Can be bought at many Hardware stores & Pharmacies

— Have seen at some large variety stores.

Identification of Beef Animals <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/Y/YANR-0170/>

Freeze Branding Cattle <http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/ansci/g02201.htm>

Freeze Branding Cattle

<http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2005/F-3250web.pdf>

Beef Herd Records: What Should You Know About Your Herd?

[http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an\\_sci/extension/animal/news/augsep95/as953art.html](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/animal/news/augsep95/as953art.html)

This Purdue Site supports Dr McCraws publication (Z is used, V is not)

Methods of Livestock Identification

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/as/as-556-w.pdf>

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## **6. Make a Choice for More Grass**

**Scott Goodwin, Dow AgroSciences**

**In many pastures, broadleaf weeds are very effective at competing with grasses. As weed pressure increases in your pasture, you grow less feed for your cows.**

**So what does this mean?**

**You have choices. Reduce stocking or haul more feed to your cows or accept lower weaning weights and conception rates. Or you can take control of the weeds and get back your lost forage production.**

**Given current economics, this is not the year to grow *less* grass.**

**In Extension demonstrations, weed spraying has yielded a pound of grass for every pound of weeds controlled. The more weeds you control, the more grass production you can reclaim.**

**There are many tools for weed control, but you need to manage broadleaf weeds and at the same time take better care of the land. GrazonNext<sup>®</sup> HL is one of these herbicides. (better than longtime-used Grazon<sup>®</sup> P+D herbicide)**

**GrazonNext HL is more effective on most broadleaf weeds, particularly tough perennials such as nightshades and horsenettle. Safe to desirable grasses, GrazonNext HL provides soil residual activity to control new weeds that germinate *after* spraying. It mixes easily with liquid fertilizer for one-pass, weed-and-feed programs.**

**GrazonNext HL combines aminopyralid, which is relatively new chemistry, with 2,4-D for cost-effective weed control. With GrazonNext HL, you can spray seasonally dry wetland and up to the water's edge of running water, ponds and lakes.**

**GrazonNext<sup>®</sup> HL has no grazing restrictions for any class of livestock, including lactating dairy cows, horses (including lactating mares) and meat animals prior to slaughter. GrazonNext HL can be sprayed while livestock graze in the same pasture.**

**However, label precautions *do* apply to forage treated with GrazonNext HL and to manure from animals that have consumed treated forage within the last three days. Treated forage, urine and manure may contain enough aminopyralid to cause injury to sensitive broadleaf plants. Consult the label for full details.**

**The label for GrazonNext HL prohibits use of the product on hay that will be distributed or made available for sale off the farm or ranch where it was harvested unless allowed by supplemental labeling. That supplemental labeling is not available in North Carolina or South Carolina.**

**Unlike Grazon P+D, GrazonNext HL is not a federally Restricted Use Pesticide, but state restrictions on the sale and use of 2,4-D do apply.<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>Some states require an**

individual be licensed if involved in the recommendation, handling or application of any pesticide. Consult your local Extension office for information regarding licensing requirements.

®Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC - Grazon P+D is a federally Restricted Use Pesticide. GrazonNext is not registered for sale or use in all states. Contact your state pesticide regulatory agency to determine if a product is registered for sale or use in your state.

Always read and follow label directions.

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## 7. Snakes

It's That Time Of year when we get a barrage of calls here at the Extension office about snakes, spiders, bees & carpenter bees so I thought I would include some information about snakes since we are getting so many calls.

### DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN VENOMOUS & NONVENOMOUS SNAKES

North Carolina's non-venomous snakes have many tiny teeth. These small teeth will make superficial cuts similar to briar scratches. If you, a child or a pet is bitten by a nonvenomous snake, the bite will look like a horseshoe of tiny scratches. Clean the area well with soap and water and wipe it with hydrogen peroxide. If only one or two puncture wounds are present, or if you are allergic to snakes, or if you are not sure the snake is nonvenomous, go to a doctor. Unlike venomous snakes, most nonvenomous snakes cannot bite through clothing.

Many times people kill snakes such as the young black or gray rat snake and the young racer snake, thinking they are copperheads. This is really a shame, because rat snakes and others do no harm and help keep the rodent and insect population down. Besides, most snakes -- even venomous ones -- are not aggressive and would rather avoid a confrontation with people. A snake can only strike with authority within a distance of one- half its body length. So a reasonable distance will keep you safe. Give the snake time to go on its way.

If a confrontation is unavoidable, how can you tell the difference between a venomous **copperhead** and a harmless rat snake? The rattlesnakes, copperhead, and cottonmouth are **pit vipers**. They are characterized by a pit between and slightly below the eye and nostril, long movable fangs, a vertically elliptical "cat's eye" pupil, undivided scales on the underside of the tail, and a large triangular-shaped head that has a small, smooth, shiny cap over the nose. Nonvenomous snakes have round pupils, a large smooth cap over the top of the head past the eyes, divided scales on the underside of the tail, no pits and no long fangs.

The coral snake, the only other poisonous snake in our region, is not a member of the pit viper family. It is recognized by its distinctive pattern: red, yellow and black rings. Each red and black ring is separated by a yellow ring. The head and tail are encircled by yellow and black. The scarlet snake (*Cemophora coccinea*) and the scarlet kingsnake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*) are often mistakenly killed because they have the same color bands as the coral snake, but they have a different pattern. The coral snake has small, permanently erect fangs and divided scales on the underside of the tail.

Nonpoisonous snakes have round pupils, divided scales on the underside of the tail, and no pits. There are many more nonpoisonous snakes than poisonous ones. For example, more than 37 species of snakes are in North Carolina, but only 6 species are poisonous.

Of the 37 species of snakes throughout North Carolina, only six are venomous:

**Copperhead** (found throughout NC) Canebrake Rattlesnake (found throughout NC)

Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake (found in southeastern NC) Pigmy Rattlesnake (found in southeastern NC) Cottonmouth or Water Moccasin (found in wetland areas in the eastern half of NC) Coral Snake (the rarest, found in the south and southeastern areas of NC). The odds of getting a serious snakebite in the Southeast are low for several reasons. The first is that only 6 of the more than 40 species of southeastern snakes are venomous. The second is that the five species with the most potent venom and greatest potential danger are less likely to bite a person than the sixth one. That sixth snake is the copperhead, North Carolina's most numerous venomous snake.

If you or your pet are bitten by any snake that you suspect is venomous, get medial attention immediately. For the most part, if you let snakes alone, they'll leave you alone.

**For more Snake information go to:**

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/wild/wildlife/wdc/snakes.html>

**Adult NC Snake Photos**

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/gaston/Pests/reptiles/snakepix3.html>

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/gaston/Pests/reptiles/sprsnakes.html>

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**8. The Buzz on Bees, Carpenter bees & Blue Orchard Mason Bees**

Mike Waldvogel, Patty Alder, and David Tarpy, Extension Entomology

A lot of people panic when they see the bees. They assume “swarm” means "attack" or that these are “killer bees” (we do not have the Africanized, aka “killer”, honey bees in NC). Swarms are simply nature’s way of forming new colonies. It happens with wild honey bee colonies and can happen with maintained honey bee colonies probably more with novice beekeepers if they are not paying close attention to their hives. This is different from swarms that occur with disruptions of the hive or like incidences we had last summer when bees escaped from hives being transported on trucks. In two Wake Co. area incidents last year, bees covered a Wake County Sheriff Deputy's patrol car on US-64 ([http://www.wral.com/news/news\\_briefs/story/8148337/](http://www.wral.com/news/news_briefs/story/8148337/)) and on a nice Sunday in June, busy bees escaped from hives that were being transported near I-95 in Kenly and took up residence on the canopy over some gas pumps at a truck stop ([http://www.wral.com/news/news\\_briefs/story/9749614/](http://www.wral.com/news/news_briefs/story/9749614/))

Things work a little different with bees compared to humans. Unlike when your parents encouraged you to leave, the current queen bee is the one who leaves with about half or more of the hive occupants. They land on a tree or another vertical surface (preferably) and hang out while some scout bees going real estate hunting. Obviously, it’s not easy to find the ideal home for tens-of-thousands of bees. They want an area protected from the weather and (hopefully) predators and a good

neighborhood with plenty of food resources (flowering plants). It can take hours or even days for them to find the ideal spot. Meanwhile, you find this massive glob of bees clinging to a branch or other surfaces, which are largely in a quiescent (and therefore mostly non-defensive) state.

Understandably, people that are truly allergic to bee/wasp stings will be most concerned. These bee swarms are pretty docile because they're not defending a nest. They're preoccupied with finding new digs. Of course, this doesn't mean you can start smacking at them either, but I've been on swarm calls with people that handle bees routinely and they've touch the swarm (of course, this is something we caveat with "don't try this at home"! ) You can see a picture of our former colleague Steve Bambara from when we responded to a swarm outside the EMS station located on Varsity Drive near the McKimmon Center. Center. (<http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/entomology/ftp/outgoing/bambara.jpg>).

The bees typically leave in a few hours, so if people can "bee patient", the swarm will head off to their new home. We strongly suggest avoiding spraying them with a pesticide or even soapy water which will still kill them. Blasting them with water as an alternative to using chemicals may also produce fatal results if the queen is injured or killed. Even with schools and childcare facilities and other public places where there's always a lot of genuine concern about the consequences of stings, if it's possible to simply rope off the area and keep everyone away, it will produce positive results as a learning experience for the kids (and others) and another opportunity to protect a wild bee colony. The duration of the swarm is definitely another one of those "it depends" situations that can actually end up with the swarm staying for a day or two (weather influences their movement). On some occasions they may actually start producing wax comb in that area and take up permanent residence. Those are times when it's definitely best to have people contact a local beekeeper to remove the swarm. If you don't know any beekeepers, go to: <http://www.bees-on-the-net.com/north-carolina-beekeepers.html>

## Carpenter Bees

Carpenter bees have started appearing. It's a little on the early side but activity will take a while to really pick up. Of course some callers may report that they're seeing bumble bees. Remind people that carpenter bees are solitary bees so they're NOT seeing swarms of bees from some colony. At this point, you're mostly seeing males (they have the white spot in the middle front area of their heads). They're busily cruising, feeding (on pollen) and chasing away other suitors for the attention of the females that will begin appearing in a few weeks. The males do NOT drill the galleries in wood; they leave that task to the ladies. We still do not have pesticides that effectively prevent the bees from boring into wood and they are very fond of log

homes. So, tell people to get out their tennis rackets out and practice their forehand and backhand smashes, and then get out the wood putty and spatula to plug the holes before the end of the year. We do have some information you can pass on: <http://insects.ncsu.edu/Urban/carpenterbees.htm>

### Osmia - Blue Orchard Mason Bees

Another solitary bee that will show up within next two weeks and likely generate some attention from homeowners is the Blue Orchard Mason Bee, *Osmia lignaria*. They're about 1/2" in size (males are slightly smaller & sleeker) and a dark bluish metallic color. You may think that the bees are boring holes in wood but these bees let someone else do the work. In nature, they will take advantage of hollow plant stems or galleries made by wood-peckers. They will take up residence in abandoned carpenter bee galleries (which is another good reason for caulking the holes!) Because they will clean out debris in the carpenter bee galleries (and people have short memories about last year), callers may often swear that the bees are causing new damage (or they just swear anyway!). Pesticides are not needed (and wouldn't work anyway)

Blue orchard mason bees are valuable pollinators. There is a nice Insect Note with information about the bees and also has tips for attracting the bees by providing a nesting site from an old piece of wood. You can actually do the same with a cardboard cylinder and paper (not plastic) straws IF they're the correct diameter). This activity can make a good 4-H project or just something for the young (and young at heart) to try out to help our pollinators. Check out : <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Other/note109/note109.html>

\*\*\*\*The combination of a continued warming trend, moderate rainfall (in some areas) and the gradually lengthening day is leading to more mosquito activity. Although many people spent the weekend glued to the TV watching the basketball tournament, it was also a good time to engage in some "Tip and Toss" Our most common mosquito (the Asian tiger mosquito) takes advantage of water-filled objects and now is a good time to correct problems before you start hearing that familiar buzz of mosquitoes in your ear when you're sitting outdoors in the evening.

- Empty or (preferably) get rid of those objects that collect water - old cans, tires, and trash cans missing their lids.

- Put fresh water in bird baths and pet water bowls
- Remove debris from your gutters and make sure water runs freely through through them. And make sure rainwater doesn't just splash and pool at the at downspout.
- If you're going to collect rainwater to save for watering your gardens, make sure you have a screen over the top to keep out debris and mosquitoes that are hunting for a good playing to lay eggs.
- Clean out drainage ditches in front of your property so that they don't impound water and let it stagnate.

You can find these details and more information on our website: <http://insects.ncsu.edu/Urban/mosquito.htm>

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**9. Cattle Management Reminders - April: Fall Calving -**\*In purebred herds, separate cows with bull calves from cows with heifer calves. \*Make initial heifer replacement selections. \* No bulls should be with cows. \*Make sure fencing & waterers are in order for creep grazing. **Spring Calving -** \*Vaccinate and deworm - cows at least 2 weeks prior breeding- \*Castration & dehorning should be completed. \*ALL calves should be dewormed and vaccinated against blackleg and malignant edema \*Start breeding mid April & End breeding season for heifers in May and cows in June. \*Sell stockers and all cows not nursing calves.

**ALL CATTLE -** Check cattle regularly & maintain body condition.- Provide magnesium mineral mix - Provide clean fresh non-frozen water at all times - Watch for bloat - To prevent bloat, fill cows with hay before turning onto pasture, or feed bloat preventing block.\*Start Fly control practices.\*Keep good health and forage records.

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**10. FORAGE TIPS: April: \*\*Fertilize cool season grasses if you haven't done so** \*Harvest fescue and orchardgrass pastures or hayfields as soon as the seed heads begin to flower \*Begin grazing of fall-planted fescue, orchardgrass, and clovers when growth reaches 6 inches\*To maintain clover in pastures and maintain quality, develop a rotational grazing system where animals take growth down to about 4 inch height before moving them to another section Fertilize

warm season grasses as soon as dormancy breaks \*Overseeding clovers (ladino, red, and alfalfa) into grass pastures should be completed early \*Scatter manure droppings in pastures and where hay was fed \*Control winter annual weeds in dormant bermudagrass with herbicides or by burning \*Fall is usually the best time for seeding cool-season grasses such as fescue and orchardgrass. However, a February-March seeding (Feb. 15 - March 31) in the Piedmont can sometimes be successful. Recommendations are about 10 lbs. grass mixed with 3 lbs. of ladino clover or 8 lbs. of red clover.

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**11. Grazing Tips - Avoid overgrazing: do not graze canopy to less than 3-4 inches. - Wait for the canopy to reach 8 inches before grazing. This will improve total yield over the season and improve the plant stand – especially by helping the pasture plants compete with weeds. - Intensive rotational grazing (moving the animals every 1-2 days) allows more animals to live off particular pasture acreage--because moving animals frequently optimizes regrowth.**

**- Be cautious with seeding investments. Definitely split fertilizer applications (if applying ...). Hay - In the piedmont and coastal plain drought is expected to persist, intensify or develop this spring, and our summers are often dry. This will pressure pastures and hay supplies. Manage Pastures & Hay Supplies Now!**

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**12. HAY DIRECTORY - A Hay Directory is maintained by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service for the Rockingham and Guilford County area. This directory is intended as a service to both hay producers and buyers in the area. So if you have hay/straw (or if you are in need of hay/straw) and would like to be added to this Hay Directory please call me at 1-800-666-3625, 342-8235 or Email at [ben\\_chase@ncsu.edu](mailto:ben_chase@ncsu.edu) and let me know your name, address & phone #, type of hay, number of bales, (square or round bales) and weight per bale.**

**PLEASE LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE HAY TO SELL.**

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### **13. Take A Load Off -**

**I need your clean Jokes, so please send em to me! -**

#### **Got Circle Flies?**

**A farmer got pulled over by a state trooper for speeding and the trooper started to lecture the farmer about his speed, and in general began to throw his weight around to try to make the farmer uncomfortable. Finally the trooper got around to writing out the ticket, and as he was doing that, he kept swatting at some flies that were buzzing around his head.**

**The farmer said, "Having some problem with circle flies there, are ya?"**

**The trooper stopped writing the ticket and said, 'Well yeah, if that's what they are. I never heard of circle flies.'**

**So the farmer says. "Well, circle flies are common on farms. See, they're called circle flies because they're almost always found circling around the back**

**end of a horse.**

**The trooper says, "Oh," and goes back to writing the ticket. Then after a minute he stops and says, "Hey, wait a minute, are you trying to call me a horse's tail?"**

**The farmer says, "Oh no officer. I have too much respect for law enforcement and police officers to even think about calling you that."**

**The trooper says, "Well that's a good thing", and goes back to writing the ticket.**

**After a long pause the farmer says, "Hard to fool them flies though."**

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I always want to know what you think of the CATTLE CALL, good or bad, especially if it has had ANY IMPACT on you. Let me hear from you!

I NEED YOUR IDEAS FOR FUTURE CATTLE CALLS!

Please remember our Troops who are serving our Country (and there families) those who have come home with wounds and the families that paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Thanks

Ben

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