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Cattle Round Up



March – April 2011

Rockingham County Extension Beef Newsletter

My absence - I have not been working or in the office due to my wife's stroke. She is in Critical condition. I am sorry that I have not been able to attend recent programs or return phone calls or messages. In fact, many phone messages that had been on the phone system were lost over the past 3 weeks. I am overwhelmed. This week I have been able to come into the office in the mornings and do some work and on the laptop by her bedside in the afternoons. I will try to start returning Emails and phone calls all in due time.

Any Prayers that you would like to send up for her healing would be great. They are very much needed.

March Cattlemen's Program -Coyotes & Feral Dogs In Our Future? - March 10th

This is Part II of the Two-Part Educational Program aimed for the Northern Piedmont of North Carolina and Neighboring Counties in Virginia called "COYOTES AND FERAL DOGS IN OUR FUTURE?" This program will take place on March 10th for the purpose educating all that are interested about this growing concern. We have arranged for numerous Wildlife Biologist, State & Federal Wildlife Officials, Law Enforcement and University Extension Specialist to be apart of these programs.

PART II - Thursday, MARCH 10th - 7pm - Managing Coyotes and Feral Dogs. This will be held at the Rockingham County Agricultural Center, 525 HWY 65, in Wentworth, NC

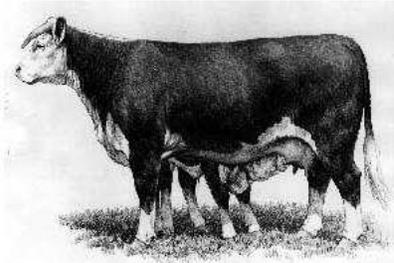
This part of the program will cover - Introduction and Laws affecting Coyotes and Feral Dogs, Presented by Barry Joyce, Master Wildlife Law Enforcement Officer, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, Rockingham County, also to be covered will be the History of Coyotes in the Northern Piedmont presented by Perry Sumner, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Wildlife Management Division, Section Manager Surveys/Research & Wildlife Diversity. Dr. Chris DePerno, Associate Professor of Wildlife Science and Wildlife Extension Specialist, North Carolina State University, will cover The Ecology and Management of Coyotes and Feral Dogs on the Landscape with a Wrap-up. & Q&A session to follow.

The Sponsors for these programs are:North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service - Rockingham & Guilford Counties - USDA-APHIS, Wildlife Services, North Carolina Office - North Carolina Trappers Association - Hunting Advisory Committee, Rockingham County Board of Commissioners - Dumaine Farm Trust, Wentworth, NC - Area Cattleman's Associations - Area Sheep and Goat Producers – Area Poultry Producers - Area Horse Owners

Workshop: Leadership and Cattle Handling for Women Producers - The NCSU Animal Science Department will be working with the North Carolina Cattlemen's Association to provide women cattle producers with a chance to network and enhance their cattle handling skills. The "Leadership and Cattle Handling for Women Producers" workshop is designed to offer leadership training for women cattle producers in North Carolina and to offer them the opportunity for hands-on experiences led by professionals in the field. The goal is to encourage more women to be active as leaders in the North Carolina Cattlemen's Association and in their communities.

This event is limited to twenty-one participants so that work groups will be small and the opportunity for active, hands-on experience will be maximized. The workshop will cover Low Stress Cattle Handling, Reproductive Health Practices, Pasture Management, and General Health Management (including proper vaccination techniques, deworming, and ear tagging). Space is limited and the Deadline for the application is March 14, 2011.

For a Participation Application and Agenda, please send me an Email or give me a call at ben_chase@ncsu.edu or 342-8235, or 800-666-3625



Understanding Beef Cattle Vaccinations Part II - Understanding vaccines and how to develop a comprehensive vaccination program. All vaccines work by introducing a tiny but harmless portion of the targeted disease into the animal to cause an immune response that will build-up antibodies in the animal to prevent the animal from getting the disease if ever exposed. There are traditionally two types of vaccines available for this procedure; killed vaccines and modified live vaccines. In the last few years, a third option, a killed/live blend has become available as well.

The debate over modified live versus killed vaccines - For years the great debate in the cattle industry has been killed vaccines versus modified live vaccines. There are pros and cons to each. What most cattle farmers must ask themselves is how much work are they willing to do versus risk of a future infection. In simple terms, killed vaccines do not give as strong an immune response but require at least one booster vaccination 2-4 weeks after the initial shot. An annual booster vaccination given every year after that is also a very good idea for long-term immunity. However, it is a relatively accepted belief that they also are not as effective (especially for respiratory diseases) as their modified live counterparts. Almost all of the company vaccination programs and most cattle buyers do not consider cattle to be vaccinated at all unless they have been vaccinated with a live vaccine.

Modified live vaccines generally give a quicker and stronger response. There are certainly some drawbacks to this route though. Due to the way they work, modified live vaccines for reproductive diseases (Lepto, Vibrio, etc) can possibly cause a strong enough immune response that pregnant cows can abort after either receiving the vaccine directly or having close contact with other vaccinated animals that were recently vaccinated. If these brood cows were previously vaccinated with a live vaccine though, this possibility is almost nonexistent. The old rule of thumb with live vaccines was that you only had to give one shot to achieve immunity. Over the last few years though, most vaccination programs will still call for two rounds of modified live vaccines to make sure cattle have received full immunity.

The somewhat new player in the vaccine world are vaccines that have both modified live strains of certain diseases (usually respiratory), but killed strains of other diseases (usually reproductive). This way you get a stronger response while avoiding potential problems in your pregnant cattle.

How to set up a program for your farm - A quick look on the Internet or in any animal health catalog will give you what options are available for vaccination blends. Most of your reproductive and respiratory diseases are usually available in one vaccine. Blackleg vaccines (which are a killed vaccine) are available either as a stand-alone vaccine or are often blended with other bacterial diseases. Pretty much no matter what you want to vaccinate for, there is usually a blend available to suit you.

Vaccinating calves to sell - What you vaccinate calves for to sell them is usually dictated by the sale guidelines. Graded feeder calf sales usually only require a single Blackleg vaccination. Preconditioned sales will normally require a "named" vaccination program, such as Select Vac or Vac 45. For farms selling truckload lots through the Internet or video auctions, the current trend is to also go with one of the company programs. This not only gives brand recognition to the buyers, but also comes with the company's financial protection in case the vaccines fail and the cattle get sick.

I've never vaccinated any of my cattle before, how do I get started? The only real tricky part of starting a program from scratch is avoiding potential problems with pregnant cows. If you have a controlled breeding season this is really not a big problem. Simply time your vaccinations after all of your cattle have calved and before the start of breeding season. This way you can use a single dose of modified live vaccine without worrying about any abortion problems. If you calf year round or have multiple calving seasons then this is a little more difficult, but still doable if you can work everything out logistically. All you need to do is avoid direct exposure for a few weeks between the recently vaccinated and non-vaccinated pregnant cattle. Exposure can be running side-by-side in the same pasture of course, but also drinking out of the same water trough or nose to nose contact through a fence line. Once you are able to vaccinate all the cattle on the farm over time, then this potential problem is much less likely. This rule of thumb will also go for any heifers you keep as replacement, herd bulls, etc. While this may seem like a tall order starting from scratch, calculate how much it would cost to vaccinate your cattle (at most \$3.50-\$5.00/head) versus what it would cost you to have an outbreak of a major cattle disease that would rob you of calf performance, possibly abortions, and/or dead calves.



Yearling Bull Management - Dr. Scott P. Greiner, Extension Animal Scientist, Virginia Cooperative Extension
Spring bull buying season has arrived. Beef producers spend a great deal of time studying performance information, EPDs, pedigrees and other pertinent information to acquire the next herd bull. Of equal importance is the care and management of the newly acquired bull. In most cases, this bull is a yearling bull and proper management and nutrition are essential for the bull to perform satisfactorily during the breeding season as well as in subsequent breeding seasons.

Management Prior to the Breeding Season - Many newly purchased yearling bulls have recently completed a performance test, which provided a high plane of nutrition to properly evaluate the potential growth of the bull. Upon completion of this test, the energy level of the diet should gradually be reduced to prevent excessive fat deposition. The reduction in energy may be accomplished through restricting intake of high energy grain supplements, in conjunction with supplying a total diet lower in energy content (primarily forage). Young bulls should be managed to be a body condition score 6 at turn-out. This will give the bull adequate reserves of energy for use during the breeding season. Yearling bulls can be expected to lose 100 pounds or more during the course of the breeding season.

Acquiring a new yearling bull at least critical from several aspects. First, adjusted to the feed and environment several new bulls to be comingled for adequate exercise, in combination "harden" these bulls up prior to the bull that allows for ample exercise will help breeding season. The nutrition of the bull will be dependent on body condition. Yearling bulls are still growing and developing and should be targeted to gain 2.0 to 2.5 pounds per day from a year of age through the breeding season. Bulls weighing approximately 1200 pounds will consume 25 to 30 pounds of dry matter per day. This intake may consist of high quality pasture plus 12 lbs corn, grass legume hay plus 12 lbs corn, or 80 lbs corn silage plus 2 lbs protein supplement. Provide adequate clean water and a complete mineral free-choice.



60 to 90 days prior to the breeding season is this leaves ample time for the new bull to get of his new home, as well as an opportunity for a period of time prior to turnout. Secondly, with a proper nutritional program, is essential to breeding season. A facility for the newly acquired create bulls that are physically fit for the

Prior to the breeding season, all bulls should receive breeding soundness exams (BSE) to assure fertility. All bulls that are to be used should have a BSE annually. Because a variety of factors may affect bull fertility, it may be advisable to re-test young bulls before the breeding season even if it has only been a few months since their pre-sale BSE.

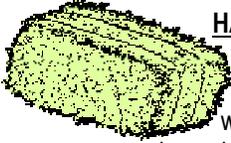
Management During the Breeding Season - The breeding season should be kept to a maximum of 60 days for young bulls. This will prevent over-use of the bull, severe weight loss and reduced libido. Severe weight loss may impair future growth and development of the young bull and reduce his lifetime usefulness. When practical, supplementing young bulls with grain during the breeding season will reduce excessive weight loss. In single-sire situations, young bulls can normally be expected to breed a number of females approximately equal to their age in months. Using this rule of thumb, a newly purchased bull that is 18 months of age could be placed with 18 cows or heifers. Bulls used together in multiple-sire breeding pastures should be of similar age and size. Young bulls cannot compete with older bulls in the same breeding pasture. A common practice is to rotate bulls among different breeding pastures every 21 to 28 days. This practice decreases the breeding pressure on a single bull. Some producers use older bulls early in the breeding season, and then replace them with young bulls. The appropriate bull to female ratio will vary from one operation to the next based on bull age, condition, fertility, and libido, as well as size of the breeding pasture, available forage supply, and length of the breeding season.

All bulls should be observed closely to monitor their breeding behavior and libido to ensure they are servicing and settling cows. Additionally, observe the cowherd to monitor their estrous cycles. Many females coming back into heat may be the result of a subfertile or infertile bull. All bulls should be monitored for injury or lameness that may compromise their breeding capability.

Management After the Breeding Season - Young bulls require a relatively high plane of nutrition following the breeding season to replenish body condition and meet demands for continued growth. Yearling bulls should be maintained in a separate lot from mature bulls, so these additional nutritional requirements can be provided. Body condition and projected mature size of the bull will determine his nutrient requirements during the 9 months following the breeding season. Bulls should be kept away from cows in an isolated facility or pasture after the breeding season. In the winter months, provide cover from extreme weather that may cause frostbite to the scrotum resulting in decreased fertility. All herd bulls should receive breeding soundness exams (BSE) to assure fertility on an annual basis. Assess the bull battery well in advance of the breeding season so that new herd sires can be acquired in a timely fashion.

Yellow Flower in Pastures - Do you remember last spring when your pasture was a sea of yellow flowers? It was pretty as a picture, wasn't it? NO, then have you done something about it? The flower (weed) is buttercup, and spraying with an herbicide is the best way for control but it is too late to spray if you are seeing the flowers. Late February-early March is a good time to spray, since this is a winter weed. You will need 3-4 consecutive days above 50-

55° F, so do not go out and spray when it is 35 degrees outside then call me because you do not get good control. **SPRAY ON A WARM DAY.** You will have to spray 2-3 years to control the buttercup. **REMEMBER: READ ALL LABELS BEFORE YOU USE ANY CHEMICAL – KNOW RESTRICTIONS**



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 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.

CATTLE REMINDERS: Check calving cows. Producers need to be flexible and responsive to the situation. As a rule of thumb, try to check cows as often as possible. (first-calf heifers more frequently) When wet, muddy conditions persist, adjust the observation schedule to observe the calving animals more often. Collect all equipment and supplies that may be needed and store in an accessible location. - Administer colostrum. If a new-born calf has not sucked, be sure to administer colostrum (esophageal feeder or nursing bottle/bucket) soon after birth. One to two quarts is typically recommended within the first four hours. - Provide facility options. A handling facility that includes a head-gate is a necessity during the calving season, not only for dystocia (difficult births) problems but also when there are limited dry areas where newborn calves can be born or lie down. If possible, be flexible with the penning area so cows and newborn calves can be isolated to bond, nurse, etc. Keep the area bedded and free of mud. Also prepare an area to dry and warm chilled calves. - Identify cow and calf. It is highly recommended that newborn calves have ear tags inserted or be tattooed. Producers are urged to record cow identification, calf identification, date of birth and other pertinent information that may be needed for future reference. - Monitor health issues. Monitor for scours and other health issues such as pneumonia. It is recommended to consult with their veterinarian to prevent, identify and treat animals that have health concerns. Producers may want to review options for moving cows to clean, sod-covered pastures. However, note that pasture areas may be damaged due to the wet conditions, impacting forage production for the upcoming growing season. - Attend to cow nutritional needs. Lactating cows have a significantly higher nutrient requirement compared to gestating cows, especially when environmental conditions such as mud increase maintenance requirements. It is important to maintain cow's body condition in order to conceive early in the upcoming breeding season. - Other cow-calf practices that need to be considered include the following: Initiate recordkeeping. Start the recordkeeping process. It is recommended that producers transfer the calving book information to a permanent system. This expands information that will be useful in making future decisions and participating in value-added programs. - Continue grass tetany prevention. Spring is grass tetany season. Feed a mineral mix that contains appropriate magnesium levels and be sure cows consume adequate amounts. One to two ounces of magnesium oxide per head per day is appropriate. - Prepare bulls for breeding season. Producers should finalize plans for the upcoming breeding season. This process includes having bulls in adequate body condition for breeding. Order semen if an artificial insemination program is planned. - Finalize vaccination program. Don't forget to plan a vaccination program for calves to prevent clostridial diseases (Blackleg, Malignant edema). Consider this process in late April or early May.

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.



Calendar of Events

- March 10** - Rockingham County Cattlemen – 7:00pm R Co Ag Center
- March 14** –Horse Management Series - Guilford County, 7pm
- March 15** - Guilford County Cattlemen – Ag Center Barn Arena & Facilities – 7pm
- March 21** - Horse Management Series - Guilford County, 7pm
- March 26** - E-Cycle 2011 – 9 am – 2 pm at the Pleasant Garden Town Hall (e-waste only)

April 14 - Rockingham County Cattlemen – 7:00pm R Co Ag Center

April 16 - Guilford County Collection day- tires, white goods, paint, pesticides, automotive & electronic items - time is 9-3

May 7 - Spring Fever Event at the Research Station

Beef Cattle E-Mail List – If you would like to be added to a Beef Cattle E-mail list, please send me an E-mail at: ben_chase@ncsu.edu and put in the body of the message your name, and the Email mailing list you wish to be on. This will also make it easier to get information to you quicker

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Please Don't Forget Our Troops!