New Year Resolutions for the Livestock Producer

Written By: Lauren Langley, Livestock Extension Agent

As we look towards the new year, I thought it would be fun to do a new year resolutions list for livestock producers in the area. For some of you, this list is a lot shorter and for new producers it is a lot longer. There is no better way to start off 2014 than to get going on that list that just seems to be getting longer! For some of us, we need to win the lottery to accomplish our list and for others it is as simple as taking soil samples this year! Okay, here we go:

- I will keep better records.
- I will take soil samples on all of my pastures (should be taken every 2-3 years).
  Note – Soil sampling from November 26-March 31 is $4/sample.
- I will develop a herd health plan and a relationship with a veterinarian.
- I will attempt to establish legumes or an alternative forage crop for variety grazing.
- I will practice rotational grazing in some capacity.
- I will submit forage samples for analysis (great value at only $10).
- I will not let my animals overgraze, let’s repeat that one, I will not let my animals overgraze.
- I will not be defeated by pasture weeds.
- I will set short and long term goals for my livestock operation.
- I will have a set breeding season so I can better manage and market young animals.
- I will look into all marketing opportunities and choose the best for my operation.
- I will do my best to reduce soil erosion by keeping good ground cover in my pastures.
- I will practice best management practices every day all day when working with livestock.

This is definitely not a complete list, but you get the idea. As livestock producers, it is our job to reflect and think about the previous year and what we did and what we could of done better for ourselves, our livestock, and our farm. What will be on your list for 2014?

Happy New Year!
4 Tips to Cut Your Winter Feed Bill
Source: Joe Roybal, BEEF Editors’ Blog

It’s estimated that winter feed makes up more than half of the annual cost of keeping a beef cow in some regions of the country. That being the case, maximizing the feeding value and minimizing the waste in harvested feed are important considerations.

Research conducted at the University of Tennessee (UT) a few years ago studied hay losses in storage. The research compared different methods of storing large round bales of grass hay. The hay was cut and baled in June in Moore County, TN. The bales were weighed at the time of harvest and storage, then weighed again the following January at the time of winter feeding. Different storage methods were used and testing indicated the level of feed quality losses using each.

Here’s how various storage methods of large round bales fared in the UT research:
- Stored on the ground with no cover, 37% loss.
- Stored on tires with no cover, 29% loss.
- Stored on the ground and covered, 29% loss.
- Stored on tires and covered, 8% loss.
- Net wrapped and on the ground, 19% loss.
- Stored in the barn, 6% loss.

Here are four helpful tips:
- Feed hay in small amounts or in a feeder to minimize waste. When fed a limited amount of hay at a time, cattle have less opportunity to trample and soil the hay. Feeding hay in a rack or a "hay ring" also limits the opportunity that animals have to trample or soil hay, and will reduce waste substantially if you intend to provide more than a day's worth of hay at one time.
- Feed hay in well-drained areas.
- If you intend to feed hay in a single location all winter, provide a footing such as crushed gravel or concrete to help minimize mud. Perhaps more cost effective is to move hay-feeding areas around the farm to minimize the damage to any one area of the pasture.
- Feed hay stored outside before hay stored inside.

For more information (click link):
- Round Bale Hay Storage
- Reducing Losses When Feeding Hay to Beef Cattle

Equine Winter Care– Hooves
Marcia Hathaway, PhD and Krishona Martinson, PhD, University of Minnesota

Horse hooves generally grow more slowly in the winter. However, horses should still be trimmed every six to twelve weeks. The trimming or shoeing interval depends on each horse and the amount of hoof they grow. Horse hooves are very susceptible to developing "ice or snow balls" in their hooves during the winter (photo shown). These balls are compacted ice or snow that make it difficult for the horse to walk, increase the chance of slipping and falls, and may put increased pressure on tendons and joints. Hooves should be picked clean daily, especially after a heavy snow. Horses have better traction on snow and ice when left bare foot compared to being shod. If the horse must be shod, care should be taken to avoid slipping and compaction of snow and ice in the hoof. Snow pads and studs that are attached to shoes can be used to help offset the effects of slipping and snow compaction in the hoof. Sole bruising can also be a problem in the winter, especially when working on uneven or frozen ground.

For full article on equine winter care: http://www1.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/horse/care/equine-winter-
### January

- To get maximum use of stockpiled fescue, restrict grazing area (electric cross fencing) so that four to six cows are grazing on an acre.
- If winter pasture is limited, feed hay in the pasture or allow cows to graze every other day. The priority for limited pasture is for (1) calves by creep grazing, (2) stockers, (3) nursing cows, and (4) dry cows.
- Winter annual pastures that were planted on a prepared seedbed may be severely damaged if animals trample on them during wet periods. Allow calves first priority to these high-quality annual pastures.
- Sample hay bales which are stored outside that will be fed during the next four to eight weeks.
- Decide which fields will be re-seeded or overseeded during late winter and early spring; obtain soil test and supplies for planting.
- Lime may be applied on sod during this “off season.”
- Keep a record of winter weed problems (especially in alfalfa) so that control measures can be taken next fall. This is the latest month that some herbicides may be used on legumes.
- Determine animal feed requirements for the year (about 6 tons hay equivalent/cow-calf pair) and outline a 12-month forage production and use plan to meet the needs.

### February

- Apply nitrogen to cool-season grasses to stimulate early spring growth.
- Overseed legumes (ladino, red, alfalfa) into well-grazed (2 inches or less), well-limed grass pastures.
- Remember to inoculate legume seeds.
- Lime fields that will be prepared for spring plantings.
- Divide pastures to improve quality and persistence of pasture plants.
- Locate sources of hybrid bermudagrass sprigs for planting next month.
- Burn warm-season grass residues in late February or early March.
- Get herbicide sprayers ready to control weeds in dormant bermudagrass fields. It is also the last chance to control winter annuals in dormant alfalfa fields.

### March

- Apply nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to the cool-season grasses to increase spring production.
- Begin grazing of fall-planted fescue, orchardgrass, and clovers when growth reaches about 6 inches.
- Overseeding clovers (ladino, red, and alfalfa) into grass pastures should be completed early.
- Scatter manure droppings in pastures where hay was fed or where cattle congregated during the winter.
- Dig weed-free bermudagrass sprigs and plant them before growth begins. Consider using a herbicide.
- If pure stands of alfalfa are to be planted on prepared seedbeds during the spring, use a preemergence herbicide because weeds will be more troublesome than they are for autumn plantings.
- Control winter annual weeds in dormant bermudagrass with herbicides or by burning.
- Grass tetany may be a problem as rapid grass growth and cool, wet weather prevails.
- Check alfalfa plantings made last fall for nodules. If there are no nodules or they appear ineffective, consider “emergency” application of inoculant.
Piedmont Regional Beef Conference
Thursday, February 27, 2014
Guilford County Extension Office, 3309 Burlington Road, Greensboro, NC 27405

12:30 p.m.  Registration and Trade Show Opens

1:30 p.m.  Conference Begins
“Alternative Nitrogen Sources”
   Dr. Miguel Castillo, NCSU Forage Agronomist

2:15 p.m.  “Cattle Industry Structure and Changes”
   Duane Lenz, Manager of Operations and Marketing Analyst, CattleFax-Englewood, CO

3:00 p.m.  Break

3:15 p.m.  “Animals Rights vs. Animal Welfare- Industry View”
   Novartis Animal Health US, Inc.-Greensboro, NC

4:00 p.m.  “Cattle Market Outlooks”
   Duane Lenz, Manager of Operations and Marketing Analyst, CattleFax-Englewood, CO

4:45 p.m.  Break

5:00 p.m.  “Keeping Calves Alive Once They’re Here”
   Dr. Dee Whittier, Virginia Tech

6:30 p.m.  Dinner; Sponsor Introductions

Piedmont Regional Beef Conference- Registration Form

Name: ____________________________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip: ____________________________________________________
Phone/Cell: ________________________________________________________
Email: ____________________________________________________________

Pre-Registration Fee (Before February 17, 2014): $12.00
At the Door: $20.00

Number Attending: __________ Amount Enclosed: ________________
Name(s) of Additional Participants: ________________________________

Make check payable to: Caswell County with Regional Beef Conference in subject line

Send Registration to:
Caswell County Cooperative Extension
P.O. Box 220 Yanceyville, NC 27379-0220

For more information: Call 336-570-6740 or 919-245-2058

Persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate in activities mentioned. Please contact the Guilford County Extension Office at 336.375.5876 during business hours at least 3 days prior to the event to discuss accommodations.

North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.
Winter is here! How is your coop handling the weather? Here are a few helpful tips for winterizing your coop:

**Water**
Water intake will decrease 3.5 times in the winter (40°F) in comparison to a summer day (90°F). Frozen water is not easily broken by chickens, so you need to check water several times daily if temperatures remain below freezing. Looking for an easy fix? Try hanging a brooder lamp above the water (make sure it is secured) or use a heater for the base of your waterer. Also, make sure to insulate pipes and hoses that may be exposed to freezing temperatures.

**Feed**
As water intake decreases with cold weather, feed intake increases by 1.5 times. Make sure feeders are full so birds are able to consume enough energy. You can provide extra energy with supplemental scratch grains each evening.

**Insulation**
Make sure your coop is insulated. Research has shown that a comfortable range in temperatures for chickens is 55-75°F. Insulating your coop can save money in electricity and contribute to egg production and weight gains.

**Heat & Thermometer**
Use your brooder lamps to provide supplementary heat in the house during the winter. They are safe to use if properly hung from the rafters or from a hook in the coop. Rodents can quickly chew through string, so it is recommended that wire or chain be used for hanging lamps to lower the risk of a fire from lamps that fall to the house floor. It is recommended to place 2 min/max thermometers in the coop so that you will know how cold (or hot) it was during the night (one at bird level and one at perch height).

**Bedding**
It is only going to benefit your flock to add more bedding. Extra bedding will create an extra layer of insulation to the floor of the coop.

This does not mean that regular cleaning should be delayed. High ammonia levels can be the result of not regularly cleaning out the coop which can lead to blindness.

**Eliminate Drafts**
Any hole or crack large enough to let light in is certainly letting out heat. The simplest method is to cover the crack or wall with thick plastic. Keep in mind, ventilation is still important for bird health even in the winter time, so do not seal up the coop too tight!

**Frostbite**
Check your birds daily for frostbite, which is more common in birds that have large combs and wattles. You will see black spots on the comb or wattles that indicate frostbite. Additionally, you may see yellowish blisters on affected areas.

For the full article: [http://www.desu.edu/sites/default/files/winterfactsheet.pdf](http://www.desu.edu/sites/default/files/winterfactsheet.pdf)

**Youth Livestock Corner**

Livestock Judging in January- January 27, 2014
*We will have 2 junior teams and 1 senior individual competing!*  

Nance Family Meat Goat Leadership Institute  
February 8, 2014 *Application Process*

Perry & Doris Teeter Beef Leadership Institute  
February 14-16, 2014 *Application Process*

Central Piedmont Jr. Livestock Show & Sale  
April 9-10, 2014 (Tentative Dates)  
*Contact Lauren for more info.!*
NC Sheep Producer’s Association Annual Meeting
Saturday, January 18, 2014
8:30 am– 2:15 pm
Guilford County Extension Center
Greensboro, NC
FMI: www.ncsheep.com or NCSheepProducer@gmail.com

NC Forage and Grassland Council
2014 Winter Conference Series
January 28: Kenansville, NC
January 29: Statesville, NC
January 30: Canton, NC
FMI: 919-552-9111

Orange County Agricultural Summit
February, 2014
Details: TBA
FMI: Contact Mike Lanier, 919-245-2063

Piedmont Regional Beef Conference
February 27, 2014, 1:30 am– 7:30 pm
Guilford County Extension Center- Greensboro, NC
Details: Please see flyer on page 4

FAMACHA© Training
Late April 2014
Details: TBA
FMI: Contact Lauren Langley

Cattlemen’s Association Meetings

Alamance County (ACCA)
Regular meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from September-March, Field Day in April:
♦ January 14– Intro. to BQA
♦ February 11- Dow AgroSciences
♦ March 11
♦ April – Field Day
Meetings begin at 6:30pm at Occasions in Burlington, unless otherwise announced.

Orange-Durham Counties (ODCA)
Regular meetings on the 1st Monday in February, October, & December and 1st Tuesday in April–Summer cattle clinic TBA:
♦ February 3– Internal & External Parasites
♦ April 1– Intro. to BQA
Meetings begin at 6:30pm at Schley Grange in Hillsborough.

For more information regarding upcoming events and/or cattlemen’s association meetings, please contact Lauren Langley at lauren_langley@ncsu.edu or 336-266-0702.