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Upcoming Events

Title: **Raising Your Own Freezer Beef**

Description: In this virtual class, learn about fencing, feeding and care for cattle you plan to raise for freezer beef. Contact Katelyn for more information.

Date: October 1, 2020 6:00 PM

Title: **Horse Health: Nutrition**

Description: Learn about proper feeding and nutrition of horses in this virtual class! Contact Katelyn for more information.

Date: October 29, 2020 6:00 PM

Title: **Small Ruminants 101 Series**

Description: This virtual series covers the basic of raising small ruminants for production. Join us Monday afternoons from 3-4:30. Contact any of the Tri-County Agents for more information and to register.

Date: Oct. 26th, Nov. 2nd, 9th, and 16th 3-4:30

For any meeting or program listed, persons with disabilities may request accommodations to participate by contacting the Extension Office where the meeting will be held by phone, email, or in person at least 7 days prior to the event.

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Are You Ready for Fall Calving?

By Katelyn Stovall

For many, September marks the beginning of the fall calving season. For most producers, this is the most important part of their year, as a healthy calf on the ground is the return for all of the work and expenses that have gone into the herd over the past year. In order for a cow-calf producer to have a successful and profitable year, a healthy calf is a must. Are you ready for your fall calving season? Following are some tips and things to remember as the fall calving season approaches, because as the old saying goes “failing to plan is planning to fail.” While these tips may seem obvious to some, it is always good to have a refresher!

Be Prepared: Before your calving season, make sure you have everything on hand and in place that you may need should a problem arise. Things like OB chains, halters and ropes, and OB glove should be on hand in the event of cows needing a little assistance getting those calves out. Colostrum or colostrum replacer* should be on hand and easily accessible should a calf not get colostrum from the cow. Make sure that your facilities and equipment are in good working condition in case they are needed, and make sure that chutes are set for cows and not for calves. It is always a good idea to double check to make sure that you know where all of these things are in case they got moved around since last year's calving season.



Know What You're Looking For: Knowing the signs of a cow that is in distress and cannot calve on her own is crucial, and can mean the difference in a live or dead calf. Cows should be monitored closely and should be assisted if you notice any of the following:

- Abnormal presentation of feet and legs. In a proper presentation, it should look like the calf is “diving” out.
- Feet and/or legs have been showing for close to two hours and the calf is still not on the ground.
- The cow is very restless for 4-6 hours and the cow has not gone into active labor (visible straining).
- The cow is straining and in active labor for around two hours with no sign of a calf.

It is also very important to know when to ask for help. In some situations, the producer is perfectly fine assisting the cow on his/her own. In other, more serious situations it is important to know when to call a vet for the health and safety of both the cow and the calf. Make sure that you have an established relationship with a veterinarian, and their phone number on hand should you need help.

Body Condition Scores: You should be monitoring the body condition score (BCS) of your cows closely as they approach calving. Cows should have a BCS between 5.5 and 6.5 at the time of calving to make sure that they have the energy required for labor, and will have adequate body composition for rebreeding. Cows with a low BCS will not have the energy it takes for calving and will give up in the middle of the process, and cows with a high BCS are more likely to experience problem calving due to extra fat.

Keeping these things fresh in your mind as you go into the calving season will ensure that you are prepared for any problems, and on your way to a successful calving season. Good luck, and happy calving season!

*Make sure you are getting colostrum replacer and not colostrum supplement. Colostrum product should have a minimum of 1,000 IgG

Preparing for Winter Hay Feeding

by Rachel Owens

Even though the weather is still warm, it's not too early to be thinking about winter feeding. Purchasing hay before the winter months set in is a good practice. Once winter gets here hay prices begin to rise and good quality hay becomes hard to find at any price. But first it is important to know how much hay you will need in order to know how much you should buy. For cattle and horses, a good rule of thumb is animals will eat about 2% of their body weight in dry matter each day. For example, a 1200 pound cow will eat about 24 pounds of dry matter every day. Since hay typically has between 8-15% moisture we can estimate this cow will eat about 26 pounds of hay per day.



Photo by John Lambeth

These numbers can vary based on quality of the forage. Lower quality forage will decrease consumption while higher quality hay can increase consumption rates. It is very important to have hay tested before purchasing. Visual inspection can reveal issues like mold and spoilage, or hay that is too mature with too many seed heads. But a visual inspection will not be able to tell you how much crude protein or total digestible nutrients (TDN) are present in the hay. These numbers can vary between cuttings or time of year even if you purchase from the same hay producer year after year. Your local extension agent can help you get samples sent off for testing.

Knowing the quality of your forage can help you plan out your feeding strategies. If you have groups of animals with different nutritional requirements, you can prioritize your hay feeding. Pregnant and lactating animals should get higher quality forage while animals at maintenance can receive average or lower quality hay. Horses with metabolic issues like insulin resistance will need hay with lower non-structural carbohydrates (NSC).

There are some other factors to keep in consideration when determining needed hay inventory. The weight of a bale can vary due to moisture content, density of the bale, type of grass, and stage of maturity. It is also important to be aware of the weight of your animals. Keeping records can help you track this. For horses, a weight tape can be used to estimate your animal's weight.

Another factor to consider is wastage. While we would like for our animals to eat every bite, there will be hay that is trampled and left behind. Again, this is determined by a variety of factors, but a good rule of thumb is to assume about 15% wastage. This will increase the amount of hay you need to account for. For our previous example of a 1200 pound cow eating 26 pounds of hay, you will actually need to provide closer to 30 pounds to meet her forage needs.

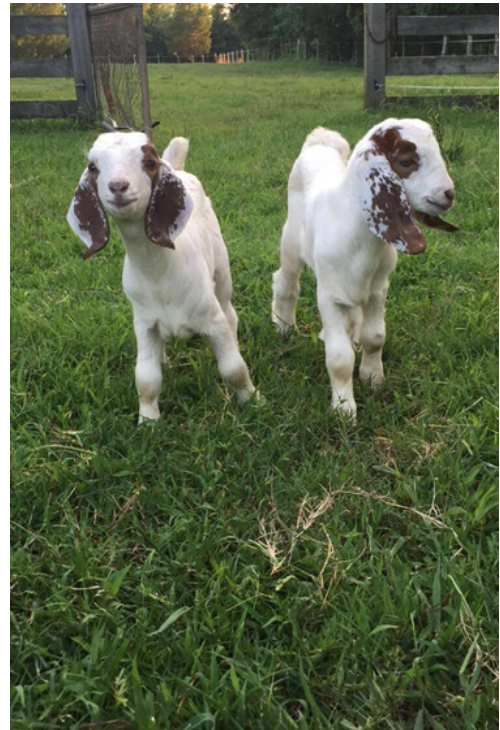
If you are a hay producer, and would like to be added to our hay directory, please contact any of livestock agents in our tri-county area. Contact information can be found on the front page. Please be prepared to share basic information such as type of hay, bale size, cutting, and price.

Goats, Sheep, and Small Ruminants

by Kinsey Everhart

Sheep and goat meat are the fourth most consumed meat in the world. It follows pork, poultry, and beef. However, it is not usually sold in traditional marketplaces in the United States. In the past decade, goat production has increased by about one-third. This is because of a few reasons: a big factor is the larger number of ethnic groups that have settled in this country and prefer goat products. Another reason the market for goat and sheep meat is growing is because of the efficiency of the animals. They are very good at converting forage into quality meat, milk, and hides for specialty markets.

Marketing options include direct marketing off the farm, supplying goat meat for specialty markets (particularly holiday sales to various ethnic groups), or producing kids from commercial marketing firms. Success for a producer is often a reflection of how well a producer tends to all aspects of breeding, health, management, and marketing. All of these factors have their respective roles in producing and marketing a quality product.



To learn more, attend our Small Ruminants Series. Anson, Union, and Stanly County will be hosting an online webinar series covering the basics of raising small ruminants. The webinar schedule is below.

Monday, October 26th

at 3-4:30pm- **What Does Production Look Like**

Monday, November 2nd

at 3-4:30pm- **Equipment, Fencing, and Facilities**

Monday, November 9th

at 3-4:30pm- **Basic Parasite Control, Nutrition, and Selection**

Monday, November 16th

at 3-4:30pm- **Marketing**