Virginia Cooperative Extension
A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University

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College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

VSU VIRGINIA STATE

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Livestock Update

Beef - Horse - Poultry - Sheep - Swine

August 2012

This LIVESTOCK UPDATE contains timely subject matter on beef cattle, horses, poultry, sheep, swine, and related junior work. Use this material as you see fit for local newspapers, radio programs, newsletters, and for the formulation of recommendations.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Scott P. Greiner, Extension Project Leader
Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences

Dates to Remember

BEEF

AUGUST

6-7 Tri-State Beef Cattle Conference. Washington County Fairgrounds. Abingdon. ***Contact:*** Scott Greiner (540) 231-9159; email: sgreiner@vt.edu

OCTOBER

11-14 VA Junior Livestock Expo. Rockingham Fairgrounds. Harrisonburg. ***Contact:*** Paige Pratt, (540) 231-4732; email: pjpratt@vt.edu

26 18th Annual Hokie Harvest Sale, VT Beef Cattle Center, Blacksburg. ***Contact:*** Dr. Dan Eversole, (540) 231-4738; email: deversol@vt.edu

HORSE

SEPTEMBER

13-16 VA State 4-H Horse and Pony Championship. Virginia Horse Center. Lexington. ***Contact***: Celeste Crisman, (540) 231-9162; email: ccrisman@vt.edu

SHEEP

AUGUST

25 Virginia Performance Tested Ram Lamb Sale. Shenandoah Valley AREC. Steeles Tavern. ***Contact:*** Scott Greiner, (540) 231-9159; email: sgreiner@vt.edu

SEPTEMBER

1 Virginia Tech Sheep Center Production Sale. Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena. Blacksburg. ***Contact:*** Scott Greiner, (540) 231-9159; email: sgreiner@vt.edu

22 Sheep Field Day & Ram Lamb Sale. SWAREC. Glade Spring. ***Contact:*** Lee Wright, (276) 944-2200 or Scott Greiner, (540) 231-9159; email: sgreiner@vt.edu

SWINE

OCTOBER

26-27 Virginia Tech Small-Scale and Niche Market Pork Production Conference. Tidewater AREC. Suffolk. ***Contact:*** Mark Estienne, (757) 657-6450, ext. 408; email: mestienn@vt.edu

August Beef Management Calendar

Dr. Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Spring Calving Herds

- End breeding season early in month (if not already stopped); remove bulls
- Manage 1st calf heifers separately- provide access to highest quality forages and supplement if needed
- Plan marketing program for calf crop
- Line up pre-weaning vaccinations for calves to be sold value-added programs such as VQA
- Continue fly control program
- Continue feeding high Selenium trace mineral salt
- Continue creep grazing and grazing warm season grasses
- Fertilize pastures that will be stockpiled for fall-winter grazing
- Move cattle to some hay fields to give pastures a rest
- Evaluate winter feed supply and options

Fall Calving Herds

- Body condition score cows
- Separate thin cows from rest of the herd- provide access to highest quality forages and supplement if needed
- Prepare for calving season; make sure you have all equipment and supplies
- Continue fly control program
- Continue high Selenium trace mineral salt
- Move cattle to some hay fields to give pastures a rest
- Fertilize pastures that will be stockpiled for fall-winter grazing
- Market calves early in month if not already done, or continue backgrounding program
- Evaluate winter feed supply and options

Evaluate Nutrition Needs and Plan for Winter

Mark A. McCann
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Dry conditions in the Midwest are already impacting forward pricing of by-products for the upcoming winter. While not a done deal yet, the odds of more expensive feeds increase as the dry spell lengthens. In Virginia, many areas have experienced dry periods which have negatively impacted crop and hay production. July has offered spotty relief to some areas. In view of the conditions and feed outlook, cattlemen should begin plotting strategies for the remainder of the forage growing season. Three goals need to emphasized: 1) maximize the length of the grazing through stockpiling and perhaps the use of annuals, 2) forage harvesting should emphasize quality in an effort to minimize or eliminate supplementation, 3) more than ever forage testing will be important to insure that supplementation is minimized while meeting nutrition requirements.

Table 1 contains the estimated total dry matter needs of a 1200 lb cow over varying winter periods. The dry matter requirement was set at 2% of body weight for ease of comparison. Hay quality and cow stage of production will impact dry matter intake. The dry matter requirement is also adjusted to an as-fed (86% DM) value to reflect actual hay needs. Finally, storage and feeding waste is estimated to average 30%, the larger hay requirement listed should be of the greatest interest since it denotes the actual amount of hay to be produced or purchased to meet cow needs and allow for storage/feeding loss.

Table 1. Tons of hay needed per 1200lb cow for varying feeding periods

	Days of Hay Feeding		
1200lb cow	60	90	120
Dry Matter basis (24 lb/cow)	.72	1.1	1.4
As-Fed basis (28 lb/cow)	.84	1.3	1.7
As- Fed Basis (w/30% hay waste)	1.2	1.8	2.4

Costs displayed in Table 2 are based on the hay value of $110/ton for grass or mixed hay. Expected hay costs are presented with and without 30% storage/feeding loss. These loss or waste percentages vary a good bit by farm and other factors, but 30% is a conservative estimate unless bales are stored in a building or under a hay tarp. Bale losses can reach and pass 50% under the worst conditions of weather, bale density, time exposed and a poor feeding system.

Table 2. Hay costs on a per cow basis with or without hay storage and feeding loss.

	Days of Hay Feeding		
	60	90	120
Hay consumed basis	$92	$139	$186
Hay consumed + waste basis	$132	$199	$279

Stretching the grazing season

The first goal should be to maximize grazing and minimize the amount of stored feed needed. Stockpiling tall fescue is our most reliable method of accumulating forage for fall and early winter grazing. Stockpiled forage that offers high quality grazed forage into the winter begins 60-90 days before the end of the fall growing season. That allows each cattleman to determine the typical end of cool season grass growth and count backwards. A good rule of thumb would be early August for northern and western parts of the commonwealth and mid-August for central, southern and eastern portions. The addition and amount of nitrogen fertilization will have an impact on the amount of forage which can be accumulated. In a review of stockpiled fescue research, Moore et al, 2000 suggested a practical expectation of 10-20 lbs of additional forage dry matter per lb of N. Teutsch, et al, 2005 reported a range 5-13 lb of additional forage dry matter per lb of N in research plots in Blackstone and Amelia. The range in values was related to the form of N used. Ammonium nitrate and ammonium sulfate produced the highest yields. Urea and urea-ammonium nitrate produced the lowest yields and were the N sources most susceptible to volatilization. It was suggested that N volatilization rather than efficiency was the foundation for the differences. The recent price increases in nitrogen have reduced the investment many cattlemen are willing to invest. *It is important to remember that returns in forage growth are proportional to N applied.*

A second possibility of accumulating fall forage could be the planting of oats in August. Extension demonstrations in Ohio over the past several years have found that planting oats in early to mid-August can produce 3,000 -5,000 pounds of high quality dry matter. The oats have been planted behind small grain or after corn silage harvest. Recommendations suggest a 80-100 lbs/acre planting rate and 40-50 lbs N/acre. We have done a little of this on the VT farms and been pleased. Our planting behind silage harvest is later than ideal, but we have produced a good amount of forage that has allowed us to postpone hay feeding till after New Year.

Producing quality forage and knowing it

The surges in feed costs make every unit of TDN or Protein worth more. If you have used corn gluten feed as a supplement this would apply.

Cost of corn gluten feed, $/ton	Lbs of TDN/t	Cost, $/lb TDN	Lbs of Crude Protein	Cost, $/lb Crude Protein
150	1440	.105	383	.39
200	1440	.14	383	.52
250	1440	.175	383	.65

Given this example there is quite an incentive to produce high quality forage which would not require supplementation.

The only way to take advantage of producing high quality hay is to know it and modify your feeding program accordingly. This is where forage testing can provide the answers you need. Although the implications on cow nutrition are well into the future of next fall and winter, there are a couple of advantages to sampling hay as it harvested:

- Testing results provide quick feedback as to how successful your efforts in making quality hay were. Many times the weather and other uncontrollable factors (equipment breakdowns, etc) spoil the best intentions. Forage testing indicates how far from the goal the hay quality is and provides some perspective on how much rain or maturity impacted forage quality. Many times the results exceed expectations.

- Second, the early identification of high quality hay can allow decisions to be made regarding storage of the hay if options are available. If limited shelter is available, clearly the best hay needs to be in the dry.

- Third and perhaps most overlooked. Quick testing allows quick identification of cuttings which need to be recorded for future reference. Too many times hay of varying quality is stored together. Next winter it will all look the same when it is covered in snow. As the above table indicates, there are major nutritional impacts on the cow.

- Lastly, correctly matching hay and cow needs is the most efficient and least costly method of feeding cows through the winter. Without forage analysis, many times additional feed is provided needlessly or inadequate supplementation is provided.

For such a small part of the year, winter nutrition programs can have a dramatic impact on annual cow costs. Decisions involving stockpiling fescue in the fall and storage of round bales can reduce the costs of a winter forage program. Be aware that the recent large shifts in other input costs (fuel, fertilizer, equipment, etc.) have made large changes in hay costs and potential value. As with all economic evaluations, the inclusion of individual cost data into an enterprise budget will add more accuracy and validity to the financial conclusions.

Goat Day 2012

Saturday, September 29, 2012, 8:30am until 4:00pm

Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, Duck Pond Drive, Blacksburg, VA

Sponsored by: *Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.*

Goat Day 2012 will offer some of the latest information to help you manage your herd. Whether you have dairy goats, fiber goats, meat goats or just a few pets, the topics covered can help you keep your goats happier, healthier and more productive. We are excited to offer a symposium that includes some of the most knowledgeable speakers in the Commonwealth. Multiple classes will be offered throughout the day, allowing you to select topics that are of utmost importance to you. Please join us for this wonderful opportunity to share in our common goal of improving goat husbandry.

Topics include:

Mr. John Beers - Regulatory requirements to produce and sell dairy products in VA
Dr. Sherrie Clark - Assisted Reproduction Techniques
Dr. Joe Garvin - Laboratory Diagnostics
Dr. Sierra Guynn - Drug Usage in Goats
Dr. Richard Hackenbracht – Regulatory requirements for selling goat meat in VA
Dr. Sarah Holland - Feet
Dr. Hollie Schramm - Chronic Diseases of Goats
Dr. Megan Shepard – Mineral Nutrition
Dr. Anne Zajac – Understanding Parasites and Parasitism
and Gross Anatomy Labs with Dr. Garvin, Dr. Halsey and/or Dr. Robertson
and several producer talks!

Questions??? Contact Anne Cinsavich - aclapsad@vt.edu or Sue Garvin – garvin.sue@gmail.com

Pre-registration is required and must be received by September 22, 2012.

Name(s):_____

Street: _____

City: _____State:_____Zip:_____

Phone: _____Email: _____

Adult Registration/Lunch Fee: _____ x $20

Child under 18 Registration/Lunch Fee: _____ x $5

Total Enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to Treasurer of Virginia Tech and mail to:

Anne Cinsavich, LVT, Phase II Room 301, Duck Pond Drive, VMRCVM, Blacksburg, VA, 24061

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Ann Cinsavich at (540)231-5261 at your earliest convenience.

Large Animal Emergency Response Training Still a Hot Topic

Shea Porr, PhD, Assistant Professor, Equine Science,
MARE, VA Tech

Emergency preparedness isn't something most people think of, particularly where their animals are concerned, until the disaster or emergency happens. In the midst of a crisis, they wish they'd been better prepared. Even afterward, the memory of the need fades quickly and people often still aren't prepared when it happens again. Virginia Cooperative Extension has been working with first responders and animal industry groups to try and encourage people to be ready ***before*** it happens to them.

One of the programs conducted annually in Virginia is the Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue (TLAER) training. This year, nearly 100 fire fighters, animal control officers, veterinarians, and horse owners from Virginia and surrounding states participated in the 2012 TLAER trainings held in Henrico and Middleburg in June. During this three-day event, participants engaged in discussions on various topics, including animal handling and manipulation, trailer safety and incident management, barn fire response, and how to deal with down or trapped animals. They also participated in hands-on training in simulated exercises covering typical emergency incidents.

Only a quarter of those participating had ever had training in handling large animals during emergencies before this program, but nearly half of them had been involved in an incident with one – mostly animals trapped in fences or holes, or in relation to a trailer accident on the road. During this training, participants learned most about using not only specialized large animal rescue gear, but also about how to use equipment that comes on most fire trucks in a large animal rescue. They also learned how to handle animals, including where to stand and how to manipulate the limbs safely, which increased their comfort level in being around and dealing with large animals. Indeed, nearly three-quarters of the participants became more comfortable handling and being around horses as a result of this training, which may facilitate a faster, more successful rescue in the future. Comments included, "Tomas and Rebecca [instructors] are awesome! They are down-to-earth and approach situations practically and realistically!" and "Great class! I learned more at this training than I have in 12 years of being an animal control officer!"

Since 2009, nearly 500 participants have been involved in 9 sessions of this training. These events have been supported by such groups at the Virginia Horse Industry Board and the Virginia Horse Council, as well as local and state businesses with an interest in the horse industry. Visit www.tlaer.org for more information on this training, or contact Dr. Shea Porr at cporr@vt.edu or your local extension office for information on programs in your area.

Thar She Blows! Hurricane Preparedness Tips

One of the best things you can do when a hurricane is approaching is to leave. If you chose to evacuate with your animals, particularly if you're hauling them in a trailer, be sure to leave ***early*** – at least 48 hours before the hurricane is supposed to make landfall, in order to miss the high wind advisories and traffic jams. Know where you're going, and have alternate routes to get there. Call ahead to make sure you have a place for your horses and to let people know you're on the road.

Whether you stay or go, make sure you secure loose objects, such as jumps, lawn furniture, and trash cans. Place any vehicles left behind in an open field so they don't end up under trees or collapsed buildings, and turn off the power to the barns and out-buildings to prevent fire in case of downed wires. Plan ahead and have enough feed and water for your animals to last at least 72 hours, if not longer.

The biggest key is to make a plan and follow the plan – be prepared!

More information on emergency preparedness can be found at www.virginiasart.org or www.virginiahorsecouncil.org/emergency-info/, or through your local extension office.

Sheep Field Day, 37th Annual
Virginia Performance Tested Ram
Lamb Sale and
Replacement Ewe Lamb Sale

Saturday, August 25, 2012
10:30 AM - Field Day
1:00 PM - Ram & Ewe Sale

Virginia Sheep Evaluation Station
Shenandoah Valley Research and Extension Center
Raphine, Virginia (exit 205 off Interstate 81)

Selling 50 Performance Tested Rams and 35 Replacement Ewe Lambs
Dorset, Suffolk, North Country Cheviot, Katahdin, & White Dorper

Field Day Program to include information on Lamb Market Dynamics, Winter Feeding Strategies, Breeding Season Management, Ewe Synchronization, and Sheep Health

Sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia Sheep Producers Association

For a sale catalog or more information contact:

Dr. Scott Greiner, Virginia Tech (540) 231-9159
Website -- www.vtsheep.apsc.vt.edu

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Scott Greiner at (540)231-9159 at your earliest convenience.

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Virginia Tech Sheep Center to Host 12th Annual Production Sale September 1st

Dr. Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The 13th Annual Virginia Tech Sheep Center Production Sale will be held Saturday, September 1st at the Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena on the campus of Virginia Tech. The sale offering will include Suffolk and Dorset ram lambs, along with Suffolk and Dorset ewe lambs. Complete performance data including EPDs and carcass ultrasound records are available. Proceeds from the sale will be used to support the sheep teaching, extension, and research missions of the Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences. Sale details and catalog are available on the web at http://www.apsc.vt.edu/centers/sheepcenter/index_sheep.htm For additional information contact Dr. Scott Greiner, phone 540-231-9159 or email sgreiner@vt.edu

Sheep Field Day & Ram Lamb Sale

Saturday, September 22, 2012
2:30 PM - Field Day (with Meal)
5:30 PM - Ram Sale

VA Tech Southwest Agriculture Research & Extension Center
12326 VPI Farm Rd.
Glade Spring, Virginia
(exit 29 or 26 off Interstate 81)

Selling a select group of 60 Registered & Commercial Katahdin rams from 13 Consignors, rams were developed on forage-based grain on grass system which includes evaluation for parasite resistance.

Field Day Program to include information on Ram Genetic Evaluations for Growth & Parasite Resistance, Forage & Feeding Management, Breeding Season Management, Ewe Synchronization, and General Sheep Health Topics

Sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension
For a sale catalog or more information contact:

Lee Wright, Virginia Tech Southwest AREC (276) 944-2200
OR
Dr. Scott Greiner, Virginia Tech (540) 231-9159
Website -- www.vtsheep.apsc.vt.edu

List of Consignors:

- Jeff & Kathy Bielek – ***Misty Oaks Farm***, Wooster, Ohio
- John Bruner – ***Leaning Pine Farms, LLC***, Science Hill, Kentucky
- Travis Gilmer – ***Gilmer Sheep & Livestock***, Nickelsville, Virginia
- Jim & Sally Hash – ***Big H Livestock***, Marion, Virginia
- Kenneth & Connie Jessee – ***Jessee Farms***, St. Paul, Virginia
- Milledge & Roxanne Newton – ***Hound River Farm***, Hahira, Georgia
- J. Pete Odle – ***OW Farm***, Nickelsville, Virginia
- David Redwine – ***Hillcrest Katahdins***, Gate City, Virginia
- Frank Stahl – ***Destiny Acres***, Frazeysburg, Ohio
- Donna Stoneback – ***Wade-Jean Farm***, Loudonville, Ohio
- Larry & Lisa Weeks – ***Triple L Farms***, Waynesboro, Virginia
- Lee & Cindy Wright – ***Rolling Spring Farm***, Chilhowie, Virginia
- Virginia Tech – ***VA TECH Southwest AREC***, Glade Spring, Virginia

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Sheep Breeding Season Tips

Dr. Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The start of the fall breeding season is just around the corner. Proper management of both rams and ewes prior to, during, and after the breeding season is critical for a successful subsequent lambing season.

Ram Management

Often, newly purchased ram lambs are coming off a high plane of nutrition heading into their first breeding season (completing a structured performance test, or managed on the farm for high growth rates to optimize maturity). To prepare ram lambs for the breeding season, rams should be "hardened up" prior to introduction with ewes. This can be accomplished through limit feeding grain while on pasture. The amount of supplementation will vary according to the ram's body condition and pasture quality, but as a guideline 1-2% of body weight will suffice to achieve a moderate body condition at the start of the breeding season (not excessively fat or thin). Be certain that housing and facilities provides adequate shade and ventilation so that rams can stay cool. These principles also apply to mature rams, which may be new to the flock or been in use for several years. Exposure to high temperatures can compromise the reproductive soundness of rams.

Newly acquired ram lambs should not be commingled with older, mature rams either prior to or during the breeding season. Particular care should be taken if rams from different sources (of similar age) need to be commingled, and all commingling should take place prior to the breeding season.

Prior to the start of the breeding season, all rams should be subjected to a breeding soundness exam by a veterinarian. The breeding soundness exam assesses the physical fitness of the ram, and most importantly the ram's reproductive soundness, fertility, and capability of settling ewes. Plan ahead to allow adequate time to find a replacement ram should an existing sire be found to be a non-breeder.

Many factors influence the breeding capacity of rams, including age, breed, nutrition, management, and environment. As a general guideline, ram lambs are capable of breeding 15 to 25 ewes during their first breeding season, and most mature rams can service 50 or more ewes. All rams, and particularly ram lambs should be observed closely to monitor their breeding behavior and libido to ensure they are servicing and settling ewes. The use of a marking harness, rotating colors every 17 days, is an excellent management tool for this purpose. A high percentage of remarks is cause for concern. The breeding season should be kept to a maximum of 60 days for young rams. This will prevent over-use, severe weight loss and reduced libido. Severe weight loss may impair future growth and development of the young ram and reduce his lifetime usefulness. When practical, supplementing ram lambs with grain during the breeding season will reduce excessive weight loss (feeding rate of 2% bodyweight daily). Rams used together in multiple-sire breeding pastures should be of similar age and size. Ram lambs cannot compete with mature rams in the same breeding pasture. A sound management practice is to rotate rams among different breeding pastures every 17-34 days. This practice decreases the breeding pressure on a single ram.

Ewe Management

Some advance planning and simple management practices will assist in having a successful breeding season. Vaccination of the ewe flock for Campylobacter (vibrio) and Chlamydia are important for abortion disease control. For ewe lambs and ewes not previously vaccinated, these products typically require an initial injection prior to the breeding season followed by a second vaccination during gestation. In subsequent years, a single booster vaccination is required. Follow product label directions when administering any vaccine. A month prior to the breeding season is also an opportune time to trim and inspect feet on the ewe flock, and perform preventative foot care. This is also a good time to make final culling decisions and sell poor producing and thin ewes.

Flushing is the practice of increasing energy intake, and therefore body condition, during the 10-14 days prior to breeding. This practice has been shown to be effective in increasing ovulation rates and thereby increasing lambing percentage by 10-20%. The response to flushing is affected by several factors, including the body condition of the ewe and time of the breeding season. Ewes that are in poor body condition will respond most favorably to the increase in energy, whereas fat ewes will show little if any response. Flushing can be accomplished by moving ewes to high quality pastures or through providing .75 to 1.25 lb. corn or barley per head per day from 2 weeks pre-breeding through 4 weeks into the breeding season. Provide a high-selenium, sheep mineral free choice.

Like rams, ewes are also prone to heat stress during the breeding seasons. Prolonged exposure to high temperatures can have an effect on ewe fertility and embryo survival. To help reduce these embryo losses and resulting decrease in lamb crop, minimize handling during the heat of the day and allow the flock access to a cool, shaded area.

Ram Management After the Breeding Season

Young rams require a relatively high plane of nutrition following the breeding season to replenish body condition and meet demands for continued growth. Body condition and projected mature size of the ram will determine his nutrient requirements during the months following the breeding season. Rams should be kept away from ewes 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.