



TRI-COUNTY LIVESTOCK NEWSLETTER

Serving residents of Anson, Stanly and Union County

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Upcoming Events

Showmanship 101 Clinic

For anyone wanting to show a sheep, goat, or heifer/steer this fall, join us for a beginner showmanship clinic. We will be covering the basics for new showmen.

May 20th 1:00-3:30

Contact Katelyn or Rachel for more information and to register

See the end of this newsletter for information about the winter annual demo plots that were held in Union County.

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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Importance of Weaning Calves Before the Sale

by Katelyn Stegall

As it gets closer to time to start thinking about selling your calves, it's a great time for a refresher on why it is so important to make sure that your calves are weaned prior to being sold, and what weaning processes are less stressful on the calf. Weaning calves will keep them happier and healthier, in the end benefitting the calf, the buyer, and you as the producer.

It is important to wean calves at least 45 days prior to selling them for several reasons. First and foremost, it will decrease the amount of stressors present on one particular day. If you wait until the day they are sold to "wean" calves (meaning they are taken directly from mama and put on the trailer), they not only



have the stress of being trailered and commingled with other cattle at the sale barn, they now have the compounded stress of not having mom around as well. This puts the calves at a higher risk for several diseases. Calves that are not weaned before selling can also result in a lower price per head for you as the producer. Calves can shrink up to 15% when they go straight from the pasture to the sale barn without first being weaned. This decrease in weight can be significant, costing the producer anywhere from \$20 to over \$100 per head due to the loss of pounds.

Your weaning method plays a part in decreasing stress on the animals as well. If possible on your operation, fence-line weaning has shown to be the least stressful on the cow and the calf. Fence-line weaning, simply put, is having cows and calves on opposite sides of a fence where they can still see and smell each other. Fencing does need to be strong enough to keep cows and calves from walking through, and to keep calves from nursing. To take this a step further, it may be beneficial to turn cows and calves out together on the pasture you plan to keep the calves a few days before weaning so they have a chance to settle in and find feed and water, or put a dry cow or heifer in the pasture with the calves to lead them to feed or water however this is not necessary, and calves will eventually settle in and find feed and water on their own. Traditional weaning (shutting the calves in a barn or holding pen, moving the cows several pastures away, and turning the calves out) works if that is your only option, but can prove to be more stressful on both the cow and the calf leading to increased illness and longer periods of time to adjust and start gaining weight. These calves typically eventually catch up with those that are fence-line weaned, but they may have a harder time starting out.

Additionally, on the day you decide to wean your calves it is best that you do only that. Weaning day is not the best time to vaccinate, castrate, deworm, or do anything else to your calves that can cause more stress. Calves should be vaccinated a few weeks before weaning, and castration should already be done at this point as well. This will help to decrease illness potentially spread through stressed weaned calves.

Something we often hear from producers is “I can’t wean my calves, I don’t have room.” There are ways to combat this! You may find the two-step weaning method useful. In the two step method, you start with an anti-nursing device (weaning flap) in the nose of the calf for five days. After the 5 days, you do some variation of fence line weaning, which can even be as simple as a single strand of temporary electric wire across the pasture your cows are in, eliminating the issue of not having enough room to wean.

Go ahead and start making a plan for weaning. For some of you, your calves need to be weaned sooner rather than later if you want to get them sold early. For others, you have some time to really think about your plan. Either way, start thinking today about the best way to wean your calves, and they will thank you for it!

What Weeds Are You Seeing Right Now?

by Katelyn Stegall

Take a look at these weeds that you may be seeing in your pastures and hay fields right now. Remember, identification is the first step to controlling these weeds! Call your local agent for help with identification and herbicide recommendations!



Henbit: annual weed with square stems and pink-purple flowers, reaching 16 inches in height. The leaves are opposite, reach 5 inches in length, and are circular to heart-shaped, with hairs on the upper leaf surfaces and along the veins of the lower surface. The leaf margins have rounded teeth. The lower leaves occur on petioles, while the upper leaves are without petioles



Buttercup: Buttercup is a cool season annual weed. Most commonly in this area you will see hairy buttercup. It is important to control buttercup early, as it can invade an entire pasture in one growing season.



Chickweed: a low-growing annual. The leaves, which range from ½ inch to 1¼ inches in length, are light green in color and smooth or possibly hairy toward the base and on the petioles. Common chickweed has oppositely arranged small oval or elliptic leaves and stems with rows of hairs.



Curly Dock: a perennial weed. Curly dock has a deep taproot, a basal rosette of wavy-margined leaves, and an unbranched stem that may reach 5 feet in height. Lower rosette leaves are petioled, lack hairs, are alternately arranged on the stem, and are dark green with wavy margins. The leaves become reddish-purple with age. As the plant matures, effective control becomes more difficult as the taproot develops.



Buckhorn Plantain: perennial weeds that reproduce by seeds and roots. They form a spreading or upright basal rosette of narrowly oval leaves that grow above a long, sturdy taproot with lateral branches. The leaves of buckhorn plantain are longer and narrower than those of the other plantain species; they are also dark green, are sometimes twisted and curled, and grow up to 1½ inches wide and 8 inches long.



Dandelion: Carolina false dandelion is a winter annual or biennial weed. The hairy leaves of Carolina false dandelion are deeply lobed and form a basal rosette with a taproot. The flower stalk can have many branches that end with flowers, unlike common and cat's ear dandelion.

Lamb and Kid Processing

by Rachel Owens



.There's a lot of planning and waiting before you finally get lambs or kids on the ground. But once they are here, what are the next steps? Here are some basic management steps you should take with your new arrivals.

.Before the lamb or kid leaves the jug, make sure you add appropriate identification, which allows you to keep track of your animals and make the best management decisions. No matter the size of your operation you should be keeping basic records and identification is an important part of that. Ear tags are the most common form of identification for small ruminants. Place ear tags between the veins in the ear. If it is a tag that is made from one piece that connects around from front to back, make sure there is enough space between the tag and the edge of the ear to allow for growth. Make sure the tag is legible and the tag ID is recorded in your system.

If you have a male that you do not intend to keep for breeding purposes then it is best to castrate. Castration is best done within 24-48 hours of birth as it is less stressful on the animal when they are younger. After the lambs or kids are a few weeks old the castration process becomes more difficult and may require veterinarian assistance. Castration is usually performed using an elastrator to place a band around the scrotum. Make sure you have both testicles in the scrotum before releasing the band. You can apply iodine around the site to help reduce the chance of infection in the area.

Tail docking is another common practice for sheep, especially for wool breeds. Docking is done to prevent a build-up of manure which can lead to health issues like fly strike. Some hair sheep have limited hair or wool growing on their tail which might make tail docking optional. Use the same tool and bands for castration to place a band on the tail. The band should be placed at the end of the caudal fold. Tails docked too short can create health issues such as an increased chance of prolapses. You can apply iodine to the tail at the band site to help prevent infection. Tail docking should also be done as early as possible, and can be done at the same time as castration.

2022/2023 Winter Annual Demo Plot Updates

This plot was planted on 11/2/2022. Progress pictures were taken:

- 11/22/22
- 12/08/22
- 01/06/23
- 02/28/23

All plots were planted at 100 lbs/acre with the exception of ryegrass, which was planted at 25 lbs/acre. A hard freeze occurred 12/22/22-12/24/22.

BARLEY (NOMINI)



TRITICALE (HY TON)



OATS
(REEVES)



WHEAT
(EK 102)



CEREAL
RYE
(ABRUZZI)



RYEGRASS
(KOGA)

