

TRI-COUNTY LIVESTOCK NEWSLETTER

Serving residents of Anson, Stanly and Union County

IN THIS ISSUE

CASTRATING CALVES

INCORPORATING CRABGRASS IN YOUR GRAZING PLAN

MANAGING ALGAE IN YOUR LIVESTOCK WATER TANKS

CONTACT US

Katelyn Stegall- Area Agent,
Livestock in Anson and Stanly
Counties
704-983-3987
katelyn_stegall@ncsu.edu

Rachel Owens- Livestock Agent in
Union County
704-283-3739
rachel_owens@ncsu.edu

Upcoming Events

FAMACHA Certification Workshop

Aug 3rd or Oct 12 5:30-8:30

Simpson Event Center-307 Cultivation Circle Monroe, NC 28112

This workshop will cover parasite management in sheep and goats. Cost is \$25 and covers dinner and the FAMACHA Certification. Register: go.ncsu.edu/famacha_union

Youth Showmanship Clinics

July 15th and Aug 10th

Simpson Event Center- 307 Cultivation Circle Monroe, NC 28112

Our summer showmanship series continues. Join us to develop showmanship skills to be ready to show this fall! Registration: go.ncsu.edu/showmanship_201

Anson County Cattlemen's Association Meeting

August 8th 7:00

Dinner will be served, \$5 per person
501 McLaurin St Wadesboro

Union County Cattlemen's Association Meeting

Aug 17th 6:30

Simpson Event Center- 307 Cultivation Cir Monroe

Amazing Grazing Workshop

See flyer below for details

Stanly County Livestock Show- Aug 19th

Anson County Heifer Show- Aug 26th

Union County Livestock Show- Sept 16th

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.

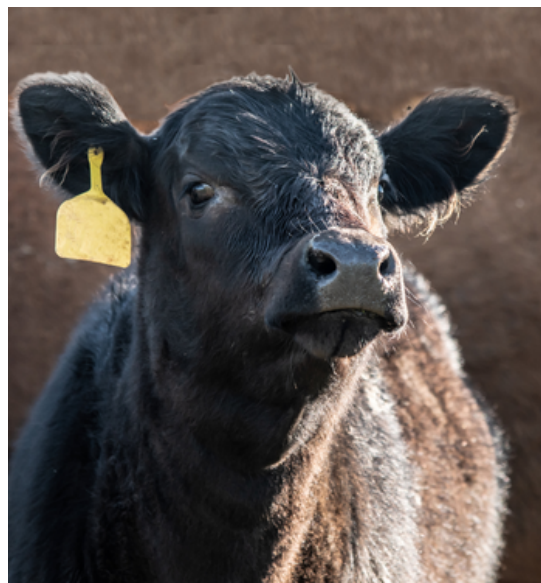
N.C. Cooperative Extension prohibits discrimination and harassment regardless of age, color, disability, family and marital status, gender identity, national origin, political beliefs, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation and veteran status. NC State University, N.C. A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and local governments cooperating.

Castrating Calves

by Rachel Owens

An important management tool for cattle producers is castration. Industry studies have shown castrated steers bring on average \$6/cwt more than an intact bull through the traditional marketing channels. It is frequently a requirement for anyone looking to sell at a BQA or graded feeder calf sale.

In general, it is recommended to castrate earlier in the calf's life to reduce the pain and loss of production due to castration. However, some producers prefer to keep calves intact until later in order to increase growth, as testosterone can help bulls grow faster than steers. Studies have shown that there are no carcass differences between animals castrated early or later. In steers castrated later, the increase in early growth is often offset by the loss in production (ADG) from healing from castration.



Castration of bull calves can be done several different ways. The two main methods are either banding or cutting.

Banding is done with a strong rubber band that is placed around the scrotum in order to restrict blood flow and kill off the testes. The elastrator is ideal for calves from birth until three to four months old. Eventually the scrotum becomes too large for the elastrator to fit over. Then a larger, higher tension option is needed, like a callicrate bander. Banding has less acute pain when compared to cutting but has much longer chronic pain as the tissue slowly dies off.

Cutting simply uses a knife or sharp instrument to cut open the scrotum and physically remove the testes. A simple knife or scalpel blade can work or a tool like a newberry knife may be used. The newberry knife is safer and opens the entire scrotum in one cut. The cutting method is better for young calves as an older calf has a higher risk of bleeding excessively. It has higher acute pain but lower chronic pain as the incision heals.

There is also a bloodless method using an emasculator, where the spermatic cord is crushed. This crushing action destroys blood flow to the testes and causes testicular degeneration. This method can have the highest rate of operator error. It can be difficult to determine if the process was done correctly and larger, older animals can have fat pockets in the scrotal region that prevent the correct pressure from being applied.

When making decisions on which method to use, one of the most important factors is your skill level with the method you use. You should know how to properly perform your castration method in order to reduce pain and loss of production in your calves.

Additionally, cleanliness of tools is incredibly important. Use disinfectants to keep tools clean and make sure the animals are able to stay clean and dry after the surgery. Calves are at an increased risk of tetanus during castration. It is recommended to vaccinate 2-4 weeks before castration and then give a booster on the day of.

Incorporating Crabgrass in Your Grazing Plan

by Rachel Owens



Crabgrass is a summer annual that most people associate as a weed. While not desirable in your yard or in a fescue hay field, crabgrass is actually a nutritious and palatable forage option that can be utilized in many livestock operations of all species. It has been shown to have higher protein and lower fiber than many other summer grasses. Crabgrass either by itself or filling in the gaps of a perennial pasture has many benefits.

One of the biggest benefits of crabgrass is due to the timing of its growth season. Crabgrass is very heat tolerant, unlike the cool season fescue that forms the base of most pasture systems in our area. This provides additional summer grazing opportunities when other forages are not producing. It also provides a grazing alternative, keeping cattle off of the infected KY-31 fescue during the hottest months.

Crabgrass is established in the late spring. May is the ideal planting time, but there is a window of possible planting dates from mid-April through the end of June. The biggest cause of crabgrass stand failure is planting the seed too deep. If drilling, seed should be planting no deeper than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. It can also be broadcast on prepared soil and then followed by a cultipacker to ensure good soil to seed contact. This will help it germinate quicker and prevent runoff after a heavy rain. Crabgrass can be seeded at a rate of 3-5 pounds per acre. It is a small seed, so mixing it with a starter fertilizer can help it flow through a seed drill easier.

Even though it is considered an annual, it can reseed itself from year to year. In order to encourage a stand the following year, let the stand to make a strong seed crop in the late summer and then shallow tillage can help incorporate the seeds. Because of this ability to reseed, crabgrass is not a good forage option to plant before attempting to renovate a fescue pasture to a novel endophyte variety.

There are several forage varieties of crabgrass on the market currently that have been developed to perform better than the common crabgrass seed that may volunteer in pastures and yards. These seed varieties can be harder to find and may have to be ordered online or purchased through a seed dealer.

Crabgrass can easily be incorporated into an annual grazing rotation. Winter annual forages have a complimentary growing season to the crabgrass. Crabgrass is also a great choice to repair heavily damaged feeding spots. However you choose to incorporate crabgrass, it can be a very beneficial part of your grazing management plan.

Managing Algae In Livestock Water Tanks

by Katelyn Stegall

'Tis the season of everything turning green. The grass, the trees, and unfortunately, our livestock water tanks. Algae in water tanks is a common problem many producers, farmers, and livestock owners face every year. It is hard to avoid, can be tough to clean, and frankly, it's downright unsightly.



One of the most common questions is “will the algae hurt my horse, cow, goat, sheep, etc.?” There is not a cut and dry answer to this question, but most commonly no, the algae itself will not hurt the animal. There are certain types of blue-green algae that may prove to be toxic to some species, but overall the problem with algae is water quality. This is where the issues with animals may come in. When water quality is affected, it may decrease the amount of water consumed by the animal. As the temperatures rise, getting water in these animals is essential.

To understand some of the methods of reducing algae in water tank, it is important to understand the algae itself. In order to grow, algae need sunlight, water, and a nutrient source. This nutrient source can be anything from organic material that has blown into the tank, manure, or even your animals' saliva. Some methods of algae removal or reduction are as simple as limiting some of these essential factors. One of the simplest methods of algae reduction is to put the water tanks in the shade. With limited sunlight, the growth of the algae will be limited. It will not remove the algae, or even stop growth completely, but it will definitely slow it down. The best shade is something like a shed or a barn, but if that is not possible even positioning the tank under a tree can cut down on the total amount of sunlight.

Another quite simple method of algae reduction is plain old elbow grease. While yes, this will add in some additional time, 5 minutes of scrubbing at regular intervals (every day, twice a week, etc.) can save quite a bit of time in the long run. Regular tank cleaning can aid in avoiding spending hours cleaning and scrubbing algae that has grown for weeks or maybe even months. While cleaning out existing algae, some of the nutrient sources for the algae will be eliminated as well. A long handled, stiff, scrub brush should do the trick. If you are worried about wasting water by turning the tank over regularly, consider turning the water off and letting your animals drink the water down to almost empty first.

There are also some chemical methods to ridding your water tank of algae. Products such as copper sulfate are commercially available and can be added in certain amounts in water tanks in an effort to reduce algae.

You can also mix up your own copper sulfate mixture, but special attention has to be paid to make sure you are mixing in the proper amounts. There are some things that need special attention when dealing with copper sulfate, however. Certain animals such as sheep have a copper sensitivity, and adding a copper sulfate into the water that they drink can prove to be more harmful to them than helpful. Copper sulfate can also be very harsh on metal tanks and metal piping, and it will shorten the useable life of these products. One of what can be considered the most available way to control algae is common unscented household bleach. Some producers may tend to be a bit apprehensive towards this idea, but if done in the correct amounts will not pose a threat to the animals. Common practice is to add 2-3 oz. of bleach for every 50 gallons of water in your tank. Make sure the bleach is mixed uniformly throughout the tank. Heat will burn off the bleach eventually, so this should be done around once a week to continue to remain effective. Animals can access the water right after it is treated with no withdrawal time, but it may be best to give the bleach a few minutes to start working before letting your animals drink from the tank.

Controlling algae in water tanks is and will be an ongoing battle for producers in the summer time. With a few tricks and some elbow grease, your livestock can have access to fresh algae (almost) free water all summer long.

Amazing Grazing Workshop

July 26, 2023 From 9AM-Noon

Stanly County



Register Online Today

go.ncsu.edu/stanlyamazinggrazing



TOPICS DISCUSSED

- Electric Fence Demo
- Soil Biology & Dung Beetles
- Plant Identification
- Pasture Evaluation & Renovation

✉ katelyn_stegall@ncsu.edu



stanly.ces.ncsu.edu
anson.ces.ncsu.edu



6523 Roberts Loop Rd
Norwood, NC 28128



704-983-3987