

# The Pasture Post

## Tri-County Livestock Newsletter

Serving Anson, Stanly, and Union Counties

*Fall 2024 Edition*

### In this Issue:

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- Fall Youth Livestock Show Season Recap
- Timely Reminders
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### Upcoming Events

**Title: NC Cattle Assessment Referendum**

Description: Vote to continue the NC Cattle Assessment-vote in your county of residence

Date/Time/Place: 10/30/2024, 8:30-5:00, County Extension Offices

**Title: Animal Waste Credit Virtual Zoom Viewing**

Description: Earn 3 hours of animal waste credits by viewing a live zoom covering topics including ventilation, weed management in forages, and crop pesticide updates

Date/Time/Place: 11/7/2024, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM, Farm Bureau Livestock Arena (26130 Newt Rd, Albemarle)

**Title: Animal Waste Credit Virtual Zoom Viewing**

Description: Earn 3 hours of animal waste credits by viewing a live zoom covering topics including regulatory updates, first aid, generator maintenance, and sludge management

Date/Time/Place: 11/19/2024, 1:00 -4:00 PM, Anson Co. Extension Office (501 McLaurin St. Wadesboro)



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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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# Recovering from Fall Armyworms

*By: Katelyn Stegall and Rachel Owens*



***Armyworms left many pastures empty and bare this fall.***

Many pastures and hay fields in our area were hit hard by the armyworm invasion this year. Some places saw extreme defoliation overnight before they had a chance to treat and most farms had to make repeat applications of insecticides to keep the armyworms at bay. Now that the threat of the armyworm is passing with the rise in cooler temperatures, many farmers are in the position of deciding what to do with their pastures for the fall.

When making decisions about your pastures this fall, several things must be taken into consideration before deciding upon a plan of action. The first consideration is forage type. Bermuda grass is a much tougher grass overall and is headed into fall dormancy this time of year. Regardless of damage, there is no need to do anything to a bermuda pasture or hayfield this fall unless you are overseeding with a winter annual. A nitrogen fertilizer boost in the spring at green up will be all that is needed for this type of grass to bounce back.

On the other hand, fescue and other cool season grasses are normally in their second growth peak of the year and the armyworms may have knocked it back some. This year in our area, the damage levels have varied from complete stand loss to minor or patchy defoliation. The good news is that the armyworms did not damage root systems, just stem and leaf tissue. So if you had a thick healthy stand, it should be able to bounce back this fall. But if you had a freshly established stand or a patchy or overgrazed stand, then it may not recover as well. As a result, your fescue field may simply need some overseeding to repair holes in the stand, or it may need a completely new stand established. When determining when to replant, armyworms do not develop at temperatures under 50 degrees. Planting any earlier puts new growth at risk of another armyworm attack. But as nights begin to get cooler, there are opportunities to get seed in the ground. In the Piedmont of North Carolina, the ideal planting window for fescue goes until about mid October, but with mild weather this can be pushed into early to mid November.

# Recovering from Fall Armyworms

*By: Katelyn Stegall and Rachel Owens*

This year fertilization may be necessary to help your forages recover and have any stand at all, but it would also be beneficial to highlight why fertilization is important for increasing yields on your pastures and hay fields in general. Facts and numbers tell us how fertilizer benefits our pastures, but a visual assessment really helps tell the story. Below is a picture of a demonstration plot of winter annuals planted in October of 2021. Half of each strip plot was fertilized with 50 lbs/acre of 24-0-4 fertilizer. In most of the plots the benefits of just a single nitrogen application are obvious. While the differences in fertilized versus unfertilized forages may not always be this drastic, fertilizing pastures and hay fields will increase productivity, giving you more tonnage for consumption by your animals, and has the added benefit of choking out weeds.



***Fertilizing with  
nitrogen boosts  
plant yields***

Regular soil testing will tell you exactly what your pasture needs, but a general recommendation of 100-200 lbs/acre of nitrogen is typically recommended for cool-season perennial forages. Nitrogen is generally used or lost through leaching or volatilization within 6-8 weeks, so it is best to split this into two applications, half in mid-February to March and half in mid-August to September. These recommendations also vary depending on the use of your pasture or hayfield. In grazing systems, a high percentage of the nutrients may be returned to the soil via manure or urine. In this case, fertilization rates can be reduced by 25% in a continuous grazing system, and 50% in a rotational grazing system. Since most of the nutrients have been removed and not replaced when making hay, you should stick to recommended rates in hay fields. If manure has been applied to the field, you should reduce the nitrogen rate by 25% as well.

If you plan to overseed with winter annuals this year, the same principle of split fertilizer application applies, one shortly after seeding and one around February into early March. Small grains such as rye, oats, wheat, and barley do not need to be fertilized after mid March unless the subsequent crop can use the fertilizer.

# Recovering from Fall Armyworms

*By: Katelyn Stegall and Rachel Owens*

After the seed is in the ground and fertilized, it is incredibly important to give those damaged and reseeded pastures a break. Ways to provide rest on limited acreage or in a situation where all available pastureland has been impacted include designating a sacrifice area, feeding area, or drylot, etc. By restricting animals to a smaller section, the rest of the pasture gets a chance to grow without being grazed to the ground. Even splitting a field in half to give a section a chance to grow will give better results than leaving animals on the entire field. Then animals can swap sections the following year to give the other section a chance to become established.



***Sacrifice areas  
preserve the  
remainder of  
your pastures***

The length of time a pasture needs to rest can depend on weather, seed type, and the amount of damage the armyworms caused. Give newly established grasses at least the fall and winter to rest before evaluating if any light grazing can be done in the spring. Pastures that just received a fertilizer boost should be able to tolerate some light grazing during the fall, so long as proper residual height is left.

These guidelines should help livestock producers make informed decisions when evaluating their pastures and hayfields this year. If additional information or assistance is needed, please contact your county agent.

# Fall Youth Livestock Show Recap



**Congrats to all the winners and participants of the Anson, Stanly, and Union Fall Livestock Shows!**



# Timely Reminders

## Cattle

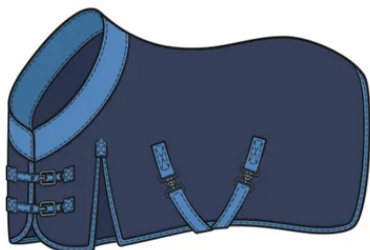
Fall calves are hitting the ground. Make sure that you have your “calving tool kit” ready with OB chains and gloves, tags and a tagger, navel dip, and a flashlight.

## Small Ruminants

Fall is breeding season for small ruminants. Perform a Breeding Soundness Exam for bucks and rams. Consider flushing ewes and does pre-breeding.

## Horses

Inspect winter blankets for holes or repairs that need to be made before cold weather strikes.



## 4-H Youth Livestock

State Fair- Oct 17-27



# Fall Forage Checklist

## Management

- For fescue and other cool season forages, there is a second growth peak in the fall.
  - Beginning around November, you can start to graze any stockpiled fescue. Be sure to remove animals when the grass has reached 3-4 inches.
  - If you are planning to plant winter annuals, go ahead and kill off existing stands of summer annuals in that area starting in September
  - Frost can cause nitrate accumulation in some summer grasses. Be cautious about grazing after a frost.
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## Seeding

- For best results, seed cool season grasses in September, October at the latest.
  - Seed winter annuals in October
  - See the [NCSU Forage Planting Guide](#) for seeding rates, dates, and seed depth
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## Weed Control

- Control winter weeds and biennial weeds in cool season pastures before they get too big.
  - Control winter weeds in annual pastures and hayfields once winter annuals are past the seedling stage
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## Fertilizer

- Fertilize existing stands of cool season grasses for the second growth curve. Fertilize new plantings with nitrogen 4-6 weeks after planting
- Fertilize small grains with 50lbs/acre nitrogen in October

# NC Cattle Assessment Referendum

## Who

All NC Cattle owners who are at least 18 years old as of October 30th 2024

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## When

October 30th, 2024  
8:30 AM-5:00 PM

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## Where

County Extension Offices  
***You must vote in your county of residence.***

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## Why

Started in 1957 and reinstated in 2010, the assessment allows funding at the state level in the following areas:

- Producer Education
- Issues Management
- Youth
- Research
- Beef Promotion