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Johnston County Center

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SCREWWORMS: SHOULD YOU BE WORRIED?



The flesh-eating parasite has reappeared in the U.S.



The New World screwworm was detected in a calf in Texas in June 2026, marking the first mainland U.S. detection in decades.

While there is no need to panic, livestock owners should stay informed and monitor animals closely.



1. WHAT IS A SCREWWORM?



The screwworm is the larval (maggot) stage of the New World screwworm fly.



Unlike most maggots that feed on dead tissue, screwworm larvae feed on living flesh.



Female flies lay eggs in:

- Open wounds
- Cuts and scratches
- Surgical sites
- Body openings (eyes, ears, nose, mouth)

The larvae burrow into tissue and continue feeding as they grow.

2. WHO IS AT RISK?

Any warm-blooded animal can be affected:

- Cattle
- Goats
- Sheep
- Horses
- Dogs
- Cats
- Deer and wildlife
- Humans (rare)

"Any warm-blooded animal in the Southeast is a potential host."



3. SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

Animals with:



Open wounds that won't heal



Foul-smelling wounds



Visible maggots in wounds



Irritation or excessive licking



Depression or reduced appetite



Head shaking or discomfort around ears, eyes, or mouth



Seek veterinary assistance immediately if infestation is suspected.



4. SHOULD PEOPLE BE WORRIED?



- ✓ Stay informed
- ✓ Monitor livestock and pets
- ✓ Treat wounds promptly
- ✓ Report suspicious infestations

Experts indicate there is no need for public alarm at this time.

5. HOW WERE SCREWWORMS ELIMINATED BEFORE?

THE STERILE INSECT TECHNIQUE



Male screwworm flies are sterilized.



Sterile males are released into affected areas.



Females mate only once in their lifetime.



Mating with a sterile male means no offspring are produced.



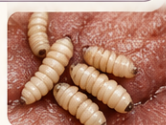
The population declines and can eventually be eradicated.

This method successfully eliminated screwworms from the U.S. in the 1960s.



KEY TAKEAWAY

Screwworms are a serious livestock threat because they feed on living tissue, but proven control methods exist and experts believe they can be eradicated again. Early detection and wound management are critical.



STAY INFORMED.

Protect your animals. Report suspicious cases. We can stop screwworms together.



Source: UGA Today – Should You Be Worried About Screwworms? | news.uga.edu/screwworms

For any meeting 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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Animal Waste Reminders

By: Kaelyn Mohrfeld Livestock with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Lenoir & Greene Counties

Tasks to Remember

- A Lagoon Analysis is required every 60 days before or after applying animal waste.
- Sludge surveys are due yearly by 12/31 unless you have released an extension
- Check to see if your calibrations (every other year) or soil samples (every 3 years) are due this year by 12/31
- After each irrigation event, make sure to record on IRR 1 and IRR 2 Forms.
- Record all rainfall events on approved forms. Record freeboard weekly (try to do on the same day each week).
- If you need your Initial OIC License, Lenoir County is hosting a class in July and Duplin County will host a class in November.
- By 12/31/2026 make sure to pay your OIC License Fee (\$26), if it is late you will owe an additional \$52.
- You can find all reporting forms at this link--> <https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-quality-permitting/animal-feeding-operations/reporting-forms>
- Check to see if you need hours for your OIC Pumping License (due 6 credit hours every 3 years)



INITIAL OIC WASTE MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION

**LOCATION: LENOIR COUNTY LIVESTOCK ARENA
1791 NC-11
KINSTON, NC 28504**

**CONTACT: KAELYN MOHRFELD, LIVESTOCK EXT. AGENT -
LENOIR AND GREENE COUNTIES
(252)560-6094 OR KEMOHRFE@NCSU.EDU TO REGISTER**

**JULY 13TH AND 14TH
10 AM - 4 PM**

Managing Bermudagrass Pastures in Drought Situations

By: Anthony Growse, Livestock & Field Crops Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Richmond County

Over the last six months, nearly all of our state has been in some form of drought. Stream flow and pond levels across the region are at historic lows and scarce rainfall has also thwarted the growth of pastures and hayfields that grazing livestock heavily rely on for nutrition. Recent rains have somewhat helped our situation but as we say in the Sandhills, "We're always a week away from a drought". Luckily, there is some more rain in the forecast and we can only hope that regular showers will bring relief to our pastures and crops.

Culling

When producers ask about what to do about their low pasture productivity, the best solution is to try to avoid overgrazing pastures, and one solution to avoid overgrazing is adjusting the stocking rate by culling underperforming animals. I understand that producers may not like the idea of reducing herd numbers, but current market prices, specifically for cattle, have given producers a great opportunity to "clean up or fine tune" their herd while getting a justifiable price for the culls at the stockyard. Cows that have bad confirmation, poor feet and teats, or are open (not bred) can be marketed at a decent price.

Don't Forget Pasture Management

Even when consistent moisture returns to our area, there will still be lingering effects on our forages, even bermudagrass, which is a highly drought tolerant species. I expect to see increased weed competition and slower forage growth, especially in those pastures that have been overgrazed and look like putting green. When dealing with drought situations, it is critical that producers focus on the management practices that encourage plant growth that will speed up recovery (proper fertilization). The only caveat is that the success of our management practices is going to be dependent on available moisture...

Proper Grazing Height

Ultimately, the key to successful pasture recovery following a drought is patience. This means don't turn animals out on pasture before the grass has had time to truly recover. Many livestock owners have pulled animals from their pastures and have been feeding hay since last October. Although this is an expensive option, it is the best practice in terms of allowing our pastures to rest and recover.

With bermudagrass, producers should hold off on grazing until the stand has reached *at least* 6 inches in height and in our current situation, 8 inches would be better. More importantly, be sure to rotate to a new pasture once the grass is grazed down to 3 inches. We need to "leave enough leaves" for our grasses to continue photosynthesis and produce sugars that are needed for re-growth.

How do we know rest is important? Right now, our bermudagrass hayfields are in much better shape than our pastures. Yes, they are behind on the growth curve, but I have seen minimal stand loss in hay fields. This is due to the fact that hayfields are managed to have longer re-growth periods between cuttings (5-7 weeks of rest), and during drought conditions, this lowers the impacts that lead to stand loss.

Stocking up on Hay

Livestock producers who don't raise their own hay should consider stocking up on hay while there is a supply. Obviously, hay is going to be in short supply (hay producers are reporting that yields are roughly 60 percent of their average first cutting of hay) so when given the opportunity, livestock owners should plan to purchase hay as soon as possible instead of waiting until the fall. We should also consider the fact that feeding hay during drought periods in the summer will eat into hay inventories which will further shorten our supply. Additionally, when bermudagrass hay harvest is delayed due to drought conditions, the grass becomes more mature and less digestible to our livestock. This means that hay may need to be tested and supplemented with an additional feed source this winter.

Producers should be proactive and make good agronomic decisions, such as keeping soil fertility in check and practicing rotational grazing, to help in the recovery of their pastures. If drought conditions do not improve this summer, livestock owners should consider overseeding pastures in winter annuals to help combat hay shortages.

If you have any questions about pasture management, hay testing, or livestock management, please contact your local Extension office.

Cross Breeding in Beef Cattle

By: Randy Wood, Livestock & Field Crops Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Scotland County

Everybody in the cattle business has a favorite breed of cattle. Whether they are black cows, white cows, ones with big floppy ears, or long shiny horns that look cool standing out in the pasture, everyone in the cattle business has a breed they prefer. As well they should. Different breeds of cows are better at certain things than other breeds of cows. What breed-specific traits work on your farm may not work on mine.

Regardless of which breed you prefer, if you're in the business of selling commercial feeder cattle by the pound, then you need to have at least two cattle breeds you use because in the long run, crossbred cattle will be more profitable and perform better in a pasture setting.

Purebred cattle are cattle that have the same breed and core genetics all the way back through their pedigree. Purebred cattle may or may not be officially registered through their breed associations, but regardless of whether they have papers or not, they are still genetically pure for that breed.

Crossbred cattle are cattle derived from two or more breeds somewhere in their heritage. They may be $\frac{1}{2}$ breed A and $\frac{1}{2}$ Breed B, or $\frac{3}{8}$ A & $\frac{5}{8}$ B, or whatever. The point is they are more genetically diverse based on their diverse ancestors, because they are a result of the *crossing* two or more breeds.

For as long as people have been selecting which cow needs to be bred to which bull, it's been recognized that when you cross bulls and cows of a different breed, you get a calf that tends to be healthier and grows better. This genetic phenomenon is called hybrid vigor.

Hybrid vigor, or heterosis (they are for all practical purposes the same thing), is a genetic "bump" or improvement you get when you cross two different breeds together. Oftentimes, the greater the differences in the breeds – say Brahma and Angus, for example—the greater this improvement will be. The most noticeable and predictable hybrid vigor bump will occur on the first crossing of two breeds. This is referred to as an F1 cross. A purebred Red Angus cow is bred to a purebred Simmental bull, resulting in a F1 Simmental/Red Angus calf. F1 crosses have become so commonplace that people (even breed associations) often refer to them as their own breed.

Take, for example, the legendary Black Baldie, which is an F1 cross between a Black Angus and a Hereford. SimAngus cattle are a cross between an Angus and Simmental. Balancers are a cross between Gelbvieh and Angus. Santa Gertrudis is a cross between a

Shorthorn and a Brahma--- this list could go on for quite a while. The point is these F1 cattle are not surprisingly found as the foundation females on a lot of commercial cattle farms around the country. So how do commercial cattle farms strategically utilize crossbreeding and hybrid vigor to put more money in their pocket? By having a planned mating system and utilizing breeds that work on your farm.

The most common crossbreeding system is to start with a crossbred cow that has solid maternal traits (such as all the crosses I just listed). Why is this? Well, thanks to hybrid vigor, crossbred cows tend to be healthier, more vigorous, have greater longevity in the herd, and tend to be especially more fertile than their purebred parents. Some cattle farmers are happy with a basic two breed cross and keep the bull and cow crosses the same. A SimAngus cow is bred to a SimAngus bull, for example. One big advantage in staying with a two breed cross is that you have a steady source for replacement females, as the breeds you want for your replacement females are always there every calf crop.

But other farms want to get even more of the hybrid vigor and cross in a 3rd breed at mating. This is referred to as a terminal cross. Often, a terminal cross bull is a bull from a breed that has maximum growth and muscling. Charolais, Limousin, or Maine-Anjou are often used for terminal cross bulls. When a terminal cross is used, no replacement heifers are retained to make future brood cows, hence the name *terminal cross*. The advantage of a terminal cross system is that you can maximize maternal trait breeds on the female side of the pedigree and boost growth and muscling on the bull side. The problem with terminal systems is that you need an outside source for your replacement females.

Regardless of how simple or complicated you choose to make the crossing system on your farm, utilizing two or more breeds will give your cattle heterosis. You would be surprised by the number of commercial cow-calf farms I interact with that will tell you they have crossbred cattle, but when you ask them about their bull usage, they'll tell you they've been using nothing but black angus bulls for the last twenty years. I don't have the heart to explain to them that, in reality, they have a herd of non-registered purebred Angus cows. If you have a favorite breed of cattle that you're going to have on your farm no matter what, that's your decision to make, just realize that bringing in an outside set of genetics every once in a while will give your cows a free lunch ticket to improve vigor, longevity, and health.

Protecting Sheep and Goats from Coyotes

By: Taylor Chavis, Livestock Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Robeson County



Coyotes are a prominent predator for sheep and goat producers. While nutrition, health, and reproduction topics are usually top priorities, a single predator event can reduce the profitability of an operation, destroying whole herds and flocks. Coyotes were first seen in NC in 1983 in 5 counties, but now all 100 counties have coyote populations.

Coyote populations continue to expand and are more able to adapt to human activity. They are highly intelligent and capable of traveling long distances for food. The diets can vary depending on the habitat of the coyote. For example, if coyotes live in more rural areas, their diet may be made up of bugs, rodents, fruit and vegetables, and livestock and poultry. If coyotes live close to neighborhoods, their diet may consist of people's trash and small animals. Coyotes are territorial animals and will have a mated pair per territory. They are self-regulating which means they can limit the number of pups being born if there is an overabundance and they can also increase the number of pups that are born if there is a disease outbreak.

As coyote populations expand and become more adaptable to human activity, producers are finding that predator management must be an essential part of their operation. Coyotes usually target newborn lambs and kids, but they can also attack mature animals, particularly during times when natural food sources are limited. Other predators such as domestic dogs, bobcats, foxes, and vultures may also contribute to livestock losses. Not all livestock deaths are caused by predators. In some cases, animals may die from illness, weather-related stress, or birthing complications, and scavengers arrive afterward. Understanding

the difference between predation and scavenging is important when determining management strategies. Evidence such as bite marks, tracks, feeding patterns, and the location of wounds can help identify the cause of death.

Sheep and goat producers should use a number of tools rather than just one single method to successfully manage predators. Fencing is the primary line of defense. Fencing should be at least 6ft. Using electrical fencing can deter predators from digging or climbing over fences. Livestock guardian animals are also another option that provide effective control. Guardian dogs such as Great Pyrenees and Anatolian Shepherds have been used successfully for decades to protect sheep and goats. Donkeys and llamas may also provide protection in certain situations, though their effectiveness can vary depending on herd size and predator pressure.

In addition to fencing and livestock guardian animals, producers should make sure they are removing dead livestock, ensuring that feed storage areas are non-assessable, and removing unnecessary bushes and trees, can make the operation less appealing for predator attacks. During lambing and kidding seasons, moving vulnerable animals closer to homes or barns can increase the visibility and decrease the number of predator attacks. Many livestock producers are also incorporating technology, like trail cameras, solar-powered lights, alarm devices, and other cameras to monitor for predator activity and improve surveillance and response times.

As wildlife habitats change, with landscapes becoming more developed, predator management is likely to become an increasing routine strategy of livestock production. Producers who take a proactive approach and implement multiple layers of protection are often the most successful at minimizing losses. Hunting season is year-round for coyotes and can be hunted day or night and there is no bag limit. Electronic calls can be used. Trapping season is October through February. Trapping is only allowed during trapping season and a trapping license is required, unless you are trapping on personal property. It is illegal to relocate coyotes. More information about hunting and trapping coyotes can be found here: [Trapping and Hunting Coyotes](#). Ultimately, protecting sheep and goats requires vigilance, planning, and adaptation.

Eastern Carolina Showmanship Circuit - Save the Dates!

By: Kristi Welke, Livestock Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Jones, Craven, & Pamlico Counties

Save the dates for a great upcoming season of the East Carolina Showmanship Circuit.
Lots of wonderful prizes to be won and plenty of times to get in the ring to get prepared for the
NC State Fair in October.

Show	Goat	Sheep	Swine	Heifer
AGR	8/7	8/8	8/8	8/8
Halifax	8/15	8/15	N/A	8/15
Jones	8/22	8/22	8/22	8/21
Lenoir	8/28	8/29	8/29	8/29
Albemarle	9/4	9/5	9/5	9/5
Edgecombe	9/11	9/12	9/12	9/12
Duplin	9/18	9/19	9/20	9/19
Pitt	9/20	9/17	N/A	9/15
Wilson	9/24	9/25	9/23	9/26
Sampson	9/26	9/26	9/27	9/27
Wayne	10/2	10/4	10/1	10/4

The banquet will be held on Nov 21, 2026 in Greenville, NC

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