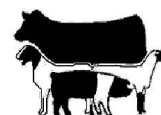




January 2026

Johnston County Center

Livestock News



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JOHNSTON COUNTY GOAT PRODUCERS

ANNUAL MEETING

Join us for the 2026 membership meeting of the Johnston County Goat Producers Association. The meeting will begin with a sponsored dinner. Meeting to be held at the Johnston County Ag Center, 2736 NC Hwy 210, Smithfield.

**1/20/26
6:30 PM**

Educational Program-What Buyers are Looking For
[RSVP-go.ncsu.edu/jcgoat](https://go.ncsu.edu/jcgoat)

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.

JOHNSTON COUNTY CATTLEMEN'S MEETING

Join us for the 2026 membership meeting of the Johnston County Cattlemen's Association. The meeting will begin with a sponsored brisket dinner. Meeting to be held at the Johnston County Livestock Arena, 520 County Home Rd, Smithfield.

**2/17/26
6:30 PM**

- Educational Program- Beef Herd Management Calendar; What and When
- Speaker- Jeff Bradley, Rutherford Co. Extension Director
- Officer Elections
- [RSVP-go.ncsu.edu/jcbeef](https://go.ncsu.edu/jcbeef)

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Animal Waste Management Updates

By: Becky Spearman, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Bladen County

Initial 10 - hour Animal Waste Operator Class (OIC)

There will be an initial class on January 29 and 30 in Bladen County. Participants will be able to take the March exam. To sign up, call (910) 862-4591 or email becky_spearman@ncsu.edu. Cost of the manual is \$20. Cost to take the exam has increased to \$90. Details of the exam will be discussed in class.

****General Permits Extended to September 30, 2028** - date change**

This fall, the General Assembly passed Session Law 2025-97 which extended the expiration of the General Permits and the Certificates of Coverage until September 30, 2028 for permitted animal feeding operations. This means you are still on the 2019 general permit regulations. This is for swine, cattle, wet poultry, and digester operations that are on the general permit. This is a date change from a 2024 session law.

Aerway or Hose Drag Systems

A relatively new application method that has potential for some farms is the Aerway and a hose drag system. The hose drag system uses a hose to transport wastewater or sludge from a storage unit to an application unit pulled by a tractor. The discharge unit has tubing that allows wastewater to be distributed close or into the ground by tines on the machine.



Advantages:

- Ability to put out a high rate of volume at one time which can improve the timeliness of application, so you are not burdened by weather or extreme events that may occur during the application season.
- Due to the high rate you are putting out, you can control the lagoon level faster.
- Reduces odor compared to spray irrigation.
- Some nitrogen conservation because you are creating a furrow in the ground where the water can infiltrate the soil at a quicker rate.
- You can do irregular shaped fields and get the whole field covered.
- Reduced fuel costs versus running irrigation equipment.

Disadvantages:

- High upfront costs of the unit.
- The need for a person to drive the tractor the entire time and the need for someone to turn off the system.
- The high flow rate - some systems can have 2,000 gallons per minute under high pressure, so if there is a leak in the drag hose or connections fittings - we can have a pretty terrible spill quickly. Also dangerous for the operator if a hose busts right behind the tractor operator.
- May have increased weed pressure where you are disturbing the soil.
- May need a larger horsepower tractor depending on the size of the unit.

Other considerations:

- Need to have a 2nd person around to cut off pump if needed or have a remote control shut off.
- Consider ahead of time how you are making turns, so you aren't overapplying in these areas or causing compaction where you are backing up to make turns.
- May need RTK (real-time kinematic) or auto steer to minimize overlap.
- Consider soil moisture and compaction issues to make sure you are preventing ponding and runoff.
- Best used for forage crops, small grain crops at early growth, and preplant on corn, beans and cotton.

You can check out some NCSU videos on the Aerway and how to calibrate them on YouTube - go.ncsu.edu/aerway or go.ncsu.edu/aerwaycalibrate or you can contact your Extension Agent.

It's Never Too Early to Control Sandspurs!

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

In my career with Extension I could not tell you how many conversations I have had with livestock and hay farmers about controlling sandspurs. Usually these conversations take place in late summer or early fall after the spurs were out in full force. Inevitably the conversation involves me explaining that it's too late to kill them, and once you have a bunch of spurs emerged and headed-out in August/September, there's not a lot that can be done at this point. No, you need to start killing sandspurs way ahead of when you will actually start seeing the spurs.

The problem with sandspurs, unlike most other weeds, is that you're not going to get rid of spurs with a single spray of anything. Nor are you going to get rid of a significant infestation in one season once you start trying to control them. It will take two if not three seasons to fully wipe out a stand of sandspurs.

Controlling sandspurs is really a three step process.

- 1) Control burning in late winter
- 2) Herbicide application in the spring or early summer
- 3) Physical removal of any break through plants before the spurs drop-off the stalk in late summer/early fall

Let's look at each of these steps.

Control winter burning. Does burning-off a sandspur laden field actually accomplish anything? Yes and No. What it will do is greatly reduce the potential spread of the spurs outside the infested area. Sandspurs have an incredible ability to spread its seed on tractor and ATV tires, horse legs or a sheep's wool coat. Fire will greatly reduce the seeds ability to travel because you remove the tiny thorny spines on the spur pods. This stops their ability to cling to things. What burning will not do is kill the remaining seeds or the parent plants' roots that are already there waiting to emerge in the coming summer. If you had a bunch of spurs in an area of a field last year, you're going to have spurs in the same spot the following year. Burning will not prevent this but will hopefully stop the situation from getting worse.

Herbicide Application. There are two types if herbicides that are effective in controlling sandspurs. Pre-emergence herbicides keep annual weeds (such as most sandspurs) from germinating and stops them from emerging for several weeks in the summer. Post-emergence herbicides kill the targeted plants after they emerge out of the ground in the spring. With either

herbicide type, timing is critical to achieve significant control.

Pre-emergent chemicals include Prowl H2O (Pendimethalin) and Rezilon (Indaziflam). Both of these products work well but only if you apply them before the sandspur seeds germinate. This starts once the soil temperature reaches 52 degrees. Usually this is mid to late February in most years. Now, does this mean all is lost if we have a couple of warm days in early February and soils reach 52 degrees earlier than expected? No, as not all seeds will magically start to germinate all at once, so even if it gets warm earlier than expected you can still get *some* control if you put it out a *little* bit late. BUT, do not wait 2-3 weeks too late. If you let mid-February turn into late March you have probably missed the window. The other critical piece to the pre-emergent success puzzle is rain. Pre-emergent herbicides have to get rain shortly after application so they will be washed into the root zone where the seeds are. If there is no rain in the forecast, you need to wait.

Post-emergent herbicides. There are two herbicides that are effective in killing sandspurs once they have emerged in late spring. Pastora (Niclosulfuron + Metsulfuron) and Plateau/Journey (Imazapic). Both are fairly effective if applied at the proper time. Pastora must be sprayed quickly after sandspurs first emerge in the spring. It will kill freshly emerged sandspur plants up to an inch tall, which is not very big! So when is that? In most years usually this is late April through early May. Just like with pre-emergence products, wait too late to spray and you're not going to get a good kill. Imazapic products do have a wider application window and will kill sandspurs later in the summer. The downside of this product is it will result in bermudagrass injury and will greatly reduce yield for 2-3 weeks until the bermuda recovers.

Removal of late summer surviving sandspurs. Odds are no matter how effective any herbicides sprays are, you're probably going to have some spurs still come up in late summer. Prompt removal of these spurs by digging them up and removing them from the field will ensure these spurs do not spread or will not fall off the plant stalk once they get mature and turn black.

Of all the summer weeds we have to deal with, sandspurs are probably the hardest to control. Remember, staying on time with your control methods is critical to eradicating this weed.

Value-Added Cattle Still Pay

By: Dan Wells, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Johnston County

In the last several years, the NCDA&CS Market News reports for weekly auctions and the NC Weekly Livestock Auction Summary have included "Value-Added" notations for feeder steers and heifers that come through our state's market channels with a stated health history. When the calves are unloaded at the market, the driver might say they've had a round of shots. Or two rounds of modified-live vaccine. Or they've been weaned and fed for 45 days. Any of these practices, if they're true, help differentiate these calves from others in the market. From the perspective of the buyer, these calves are worth a higher bid because they're less likely to get sick later in life.

Buyers look for opportunities and try to avoid pitfalls. A calf that comes through the market bawling for its momma with no tag in its ear and no evidence of any management is a huge red flag to a buyer. If it has never been ear-tagged, or castrated, then it has almost certainly never had any vaccines. The fact that it's bawling for momma indicates it has just been weaned that day and perhaps has never learned to drink from a waterer or eat from a bunk. That is a calf that will likely not eat or gain weight, and most likely will become sick from the combination of stresses on an unfortified immune system. In most backgrounding/feeding scenarios, a calf that gets sick once is a break-even calf at best. If it gets sick twice, they've lost money on it. So that calf is not going to arouse more than common interest from the buyers.

But a calf that comes in the sale ring alert but calm, with ear tag and a statement or even written documentation of weaning and/or vaccination, is an opportunity for buyers. When there is a uniform group of those calves, that is an even greater opportunity. Buyers can recognize calves that are less stressed, not bawling, and other evidence of better management.

Because calves that have been weaned or preconditioned typically receive better prices, NCDA&CS began making the notation on market reports for calves sold as Value-Added. There are also occasional notations for other outliers in the market, such as fancy, full, fleshy, or thin-fleshed. Getting that Value-Added designation translates into dollars. Last week in NC, three Value-Added 450-weight steer calves sold for \$37/cwt more than their contemporaries, an increase of \$166.50 per head! Eleven 650-weight Value-Added steers sold for \$29/cwt more than their contemporary weight group, or \$188.50 more per head! Those are astonishing figures, but it shows the potential for dollars that producers could be leaving on the table. (ncagr.gov/divisions/marketing/market-news)

If you want to get your calves into the Value-Added column, consider weaning them on-farm for 45-60 days before selling and implementing a vaccination program. Document your efforts and share that documentation when you deliver your calves. Better yet, talk to the operator of your intended market and seek their advice on what to do and when to pull the trigger on marketing. That market operator's success depends on the success of those using their services, so take advantage of their knowledge. Most will advise a vaccine program utilizing

modified-live respiratory vaccines, which requires separating those calves from their mothers unless those brood cows have been properly vaccinated.

Before weaning calves, make sure they've become accustomed to eating dry feed. You may also consider fenceline weaning, or using weaning rings for 5-7 days before separating calves to ease the transition away from their dams. And consider this—calves typically gain a couple of pounds per day over a 45-day weaning period. At a 5.5:1 ratio of gain, the cost to add that gain should be less than \$1.25 to \$1.50 per pound, but the calf would easily be worth \$3-4 dollars per pound! It makes good economic sense to add reasonable weight to weanlings, so long as they don't start getting into discounts for being too fleshy too soon.

Consider the cost of preconditioning. NCSU has a Calf Preconditioning Budget that you can download and enter your data into to project the costs and returns of this practice. Certainly there is a cost to vaccines, labor, fencing, and especially feed! So, is it worth it? Back in 2014, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (*Publication G2248*) figured average return above cost of \$43 per head for the preconditioning phase. But they were using a market price of \$172/cwt for 6-weight steers. That weight of steers sold last week for \$326/cwt—so the return would be much higher! So, for those who have the opinion that this current high cattle market makes it not worth the time to precondition, think again! And consider this, the calf that goes straight from its dam's side to the market is likely to shrink 8-10% of its body weight, while preconditioned calves typically experience less than 5% shrink, due to reduced stress. (*Beck, OSU, 2022.*)

In Johnston County, we have implemented a program called *Adding Value to Feeder Cattle*. In this program, Extension will attend and verify when calves are vaccinated, castrated, weaned, etc. and record medications with lot numbers and expiration dates. Then an affidavit attesting that the practices were performed is provided, which the producer can share whenever and wherever those cattle are marketed. We also have scales available to weigh calves on the farm to help capture rate of gain, and corrals and squeeze chutes are available for low-cost rental. In fact, rent is waived if the equipment is being used for a second round of calf vaccines!

Doing all the right things in a cow-calf operation is a large task. You spend hours looking after cattle, feeding, checking minerals, rotating pastures, planting, buying good genetics, watching for calving problems, etc. And then you have no control over the general market conditions. We know the market won't always be as high as it has been recently. But you can control where you position yourself within that market. If you have the right genetics, produce a quality product, add value to that product, and properly market that product, you can keep yourself at the top of the market, whether it is high or low. Preconditioning beef calves is a tremendous tool in that effort. Talk to your livestock agent, veterinarian, or market operator about how you can use these tools to your advantage.

It's Never Too Early for Managing Internal Parasites!

By: Anthony Growe, Agriculture Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Richmond County

Although we are just now beginning the winter season, small ruminant owners should still routinely check their animals for internal parasites, especially if they have a lambing or kidding season that kicks off in early spring.

Generally speaking, stomach worm populations, such as the barber's pole worm, accumulate over the summer grazing season. This buildup creates internal parasite issues in goats and sheep especially in the late summer months, when there is adequate moisture. Most stomach worms like a warm, moist environment. Temperatures around 85 degrees Fahrenheit coupled with high humidity and moisture make an ideal environment for the eggs to hatch and develop into larvae. With that being said, winter is one of the best times of the year to make a plan and get a handle on your herd's worm issues before the numbers are out of control in warmer weather. Since the barber's pole worm is one of the most significant internal parasites in small ruminants, this article will concentrate on managing this particular species.

Before we begin managing internal parasites, it's important to understand their general lifecycle. In our area, mild winters are not cold enough to kill all worm larvae so stomach worms can overwinter in the ground or even in the animal's digestive system. The worms that were able to overwinter deep in the stomach of the animal are called arrested larva which lay dormant until they are triggered by a stress such as kidding or lambing. After breaking dormancy, these arrested larvae mature into stomach worms and produce eggs. These eggs are shed from the animal and deposited to the ground in their feces.

About a week or so after worm larvae hatch from their eggs in a manure pellet, they climb up 2 to 3 inches onto grass blades that goats and sheep consume. When the animal ingests the larvae, they attach and feed on the true stomach and intestine linings which can be damaged or irritated. This damage reduces the amount of nutrients that an animal can absorb during digestion and causes anemia. Additionally, some eggs are re-deposited back to the ground in manure, continuing the infectious cycle.

If left unchecked, stomach worms will cause weight loss, stunted growth, anemia, poor conception rates and can even cause death. To get an idea of how heavy a worm load is,

periodically examine your animals. Things that usually indicate heavy worm infestations are: thin body condition, weight loss, rough hair coat, pale or white tongue and inner eyelids, and diarrhea. If you are properly feeding your animals but they exhibit these symptoms then you may need to implement some management options. Here are some tips goat and sheep owners can use to manage worm loads in their livestock:

- Provide your animals with a nutritious diet for a good immune system
- Divide up large pastures to allow for rotational grazing
- Graze above the worms by keeping pasture grass at least 4 inches high
- Reduce contamination by keeping feed elevated and off of the ground
- Keeping water troughs and feed bunks clean will also reduce worm ingestion
- Monitor parasite loads by using FAMACHA (checking paleness inner eyelids) or fecal egg counts
- Time deworming around kidding and lambing season
- Refrain from using worm blocks (it's hard to measure a single animal's intake)
- Feeding copper boluses to goats may help reduce barber's pole worm infestations
- When using recommended dewormers: Rotate chemical classes and selectively treat animals to minimize resistance
- Work with a veterinarian who is familiar with internal parasite issues in your area to provide "extra-label" dewormer recommendations

Internal parasites are a significant issue in small ruminant management. Adopting practices, such as rotational grazing and good sanitation, will help reduce infective parasites in your herd or flock. It is also important that producers employ these best management practices to slow internal parasite resistance to our dewormers so that they can continue to be effective on our target parasites. If you have any questions concerning livestock management please contact your local Livestock Extension Agent.

Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1) - A Scary Rodeo Experience for Some

By: Brian Parrish, Livestock Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Harnett County

This most recent horse EHV-1 virus outbreak occurred during and following a barrel racing event in Waco Texas on November 5th -9th. The EHV-1 virus is commonly spread through bodily fluids from nose-to-nose contact or through aerosolized virus particles in the air. It can also be carried on hands, clothes, boots, hay, water buckets, and in stalls. The virus is highly contagious among horses but does not affect humans. The virus can also persist in wet shady environments for up to 21 days. Many horses have been exposed to EHV-1 viruses and up to 80% of exposed horses develop latent infections in their lymph nodes. These horses may asymptotically shed the virus at any time, with stress and stress from shipping likely factors.

There are five Equine Herpes diseases EHV-1 through EHV-5. EHV -1 and EHV -4 are the most common and can cause fever and respiratory disease and may also cause abortions and neurologic disease. The respiratory tract is the primary site of the infection, then the virus moves into the lymph nodes of the head and neck. Then the virus is carried throughout the body in white blood cells. The incubation period for the disease varies and can range from 2 to 10 days. The initial fever and lethargy may first go unnoticed by horse owners. Some horses can also experience complications with secondary bacterial pneumonia. Symptoms of EHV-1 can include: a fever greater than > 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit, nasal discharge, and an intermittent cough.

In some horses EHV-1 progresses to EMH (Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy), a neurological form of the disease. It is also important to note that the onset of neurological symptoms may take longer than 10 days. Neurological problems begin to develop when the virus in the blood causes blood vessel inflammation and spontaneous blood clots within the brain and the spinal cord. Symptoms of EHM can include, mental changes, difficulty chewing and swallowing, loss of balance, head tilt, abnormal eye position, seizures, pressing head against wall, toe dragging, hindlimb weakness and stumbling, urine dribbling, difficulty urinating and defecating, loss of tail tone, dog-sitting posture or ataxia (drunken or wobbly gait), and death.

Timing matters with this disease so contact your veterinarian as soon as symptoms start so that treatment can be started as soon as possible. Timing also matters with disease tests as most veterinarians use a combination of nasal swabs and whole blood tests to catch the virus at different stages. A nasal swab often detects viruses early, while blood can test positive longer into the infection. To learn more about EHV-1 visit the Equine Disease Control Center <https://equinediseasecc.org/alerts>

Below are two very informative webinars about this disease.

<https://equinediseasecc.org/news/article/Learn-More-About-EHV-1>

<https://equinediseasecc.org/news/article/USEF-Webinar-on-EHV-1-and-Biosecurity>

Sources: Equine Disease Control Center, NCSU, University of Missouri, NCDA

ADDING \$VALUE\$ TO FEEDER CALVES

JOHNSTON COUNTY EXTENSION CALF PRECONDITIONING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- Vaccination training
- Records Assistance
- On-farm weights
- 3rd-party verification
- Chute rental benefit
- BQA Training



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Email us with accessibility issues with this report.

Livestock Weighted Average Report for 12/7/2025 - 12/13/2025

LIVESTOCK SUMMARY

	Current Week	Last Reported 12/1/2025	Last Year
Total Receipts:	3,473	3,710	3,733
Feeder Cattle:	2,444(70.4%)	2,408(64.9%)	2,449(65.6%)
Slaughter Cattle:	585(16.8%)	698(18.8%)	636(17.0%)
Replacement Cattle:	34(1.0%)	76(2.0%)	87(2.3%)
Slaughter Sheep/Lambs:	155(4.5%)	260(7.0%)	207(5.5%)
Slaughter Goats:	255(7.3%)	268(7.2%)	354(9.5%)

Compared to last week; Feeder Steers sold 3.00-5.00 higher with instances of 10.00-12.00 higher; Feeder Heifers sold 8.00-10.00 higher, with instances of 12.00 higher; Feeder Bulls sold 10.00-12.00 higher; Slaughter Cows sold mostly steady to 4.00 higher, with Slaughter Bulls selling steady to 2.00 higher. Demand and Market Activity was Good to Active, with a Moderate supply of cattle. Supply included: 70% Feeder Cattle (19% Steers, 1% Dairy Steers, 46% Heifers, 34% Bulls, 0% Dairy Heifers); 17% Slaughter Cattle (82% Cows, 18% Bulls); 1% Replacement Cattle (3% Stock Cows, 52% Bred Cows, 6% Bred Heifers, 39% Cow-Calf Pairs); 4% Slaughter Sheep/Lambs (63% Hair Breeds, 19% Ewes, 1% Hair Ewes, 17% Bucks); 7% Slaughter Goats (55% Kids, 20% Nannies/Does, 15% Bucks/Billies, 6% Wethers, 4% Wether Kids). Feeder cattle supply over 600 lbs was 22%.

FEEDER CATTLE

STEERS - Medium and Large 1 (Per Cwt / Actual Wt)

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price	
7	260-295	275	395.00-455.00	423.01	
21	305-345	326	365.00-475.00	435.85	
4	332	332	447.50	447.50	Value Added
22	350-395	373	345.00-450.00	417.20	
48	400-449	426	342.50-450.00	411.98	
2	416	416	422.50	422.50	Value Added
39	450-498	472	337.00-427.50	380.82	
3	455	455	417.00	417.00	Value Added
50	500-549	528	320.00-400.00	358.75	
6	513	513	400.00	400.00	Value Added
45	550-597	571	295.00-375.00	343.43	
38	600-645	626	300.00-350.00	326.57	
18	650-688	678	265.00-340.00	294.75	
11	655-677	667	320.00-330.00	323.59	Value Added
14	705-748	738	255.00-302.00	292.03	
3	755-790	772	230.00-255.00	241.58	
2	815-840	828	250.00-258.00	253.94	
4	850-870	860	237.00-255.00	246.78	