As 2007 comes to a close, I just wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on 2007 and to wish everyone a happy holiday season. This past year will go down on record as one of the toughest years that agricultural producers have had to face. It began with a deficit in rainfall during the winter months, and then we had the Easter freeze. Those two situations hurt our spring hay crop and pasture growth, but we all were hopeful that the rain would come.

As each summer day passed, our grass continued to wane away; and we found ourselves on one of the worst droughts in 50 years. Hay was hard to find, and if we were lucky enough to find any, it was a stretch to pay the high prices to get it here. We are still in a drought, and feed is still hard to find; but I want to commend each of you for banding together and helping your neighbor in need. It is in these difficult times that we see people come together, and it going to take a continued effort from each of us to get through this winter.

Thanks for all that you have done to make me feel welcome this year and know that I will continue to help each of you in any way that I can. As we move into a new year, let us be thankful for the blessings we have and enjoy our time with family and friends over the holiday season. Let us also look forward to a good year and a prosperous year in 2008.
WNC AREA BEEF CATTLE CONFERENCE  
& WAYNESVILLE PERFORMANCE TESTED BULL SALE  
Saturday – January 5, 2008  
Mountain Research Station – Waynesville, North Carolina

Program – Haywood County Agricultural Office Building

9:15 am    Registration
9:45 am    Welcome and Introductions – Dr. Jim Turner
10:00 am   Bull Management – Dr. Jim Turner
11:00 am   Adjourn to Bull Test and Receive Final Results
11:15 am   Bull Test Station – Receive Final Results on Individual Performance and View Bulls – Gary Gregory and Danny Hyatt
12:00 noon Haywood County Agricultural Office Building

Sponsored Lunch – Prepared by Haywood County Livestock 4-H Club

1:00 pm    28th Annual Waynesville BCIP Bull Sale – Bundy Plyler

Everyone will have an opportunity to see the bulls at the Mountain Research Station Saturday morning. They will be auctioned Saturday afternoon while viewing a video of the bulls by sale order. The bulls will remain at the Research Station and can be picked up Saturday evening or between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm the following week. They must be picked up by Friday, January 11.

EACH ANIMAL SOLD BECOMES THE PROPERTY OF THE PURCHASER AS SOON AS SOLD BUT WILL NOT BE RELEASED UNTIL SETTLED FOR. ANIMALS WILL BE FED AND CARED FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK AT THE BUYER’S RISK.

Speakers

Mr. Gary Gregory  
Extension Beef Cattle Technician
Mr. Bundy Plyler  
Executive Director  
N. C. Cattlemen’s Association

Mr. Danny Hyatt  
Livestock Technician  
Mountain Research Station  
N. C. Department of Agriculture
Dr. Jim Turner  
Western Area Livestock Specialist  
N. C. State University

Sponsors

Carolina Farm Credit Service  
Ken Wilson Ford, Inc.
Fort Dodge Animal Health  
Southern States

For further information, please contact the following:  
Jim Turner at (828) 456-7520 or Gary Gregory at (919) 515-4027.
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**Angus**

**WILLIAM BAIRD - BAIRD ANGUS FARM - BLUFF CITY, TN - 423.538.7547**

**MIKE CONNATSER - J & M WINDY ACRES - MARIVLY, TN - 865.414.7885**

**DENNIS OVERCASH - OVERCASH ANGUS - MOORESVILLE, NC - 704.336.2547**

**ERIC & ELIZABETH NICHOLS - DOUBLE DOWN RANCH - MARION, NC - 828.738.0392**

**DOUGLAS DARCH - DARCH DALE - WAKE FOREST, NC - 919.556.3848**

**BUDDY HAMRICK - H & H FARM - BOILING SPRINGS, NC - 704.434.9493**

**KENAN RAND - NUTBUSH FARMS - DURHAM, NC - 336.504.7268**

**DENNIS OVERCASH - OVERCASH ANGUS - MOORESVILLE, NC - 704.663.2547**

**JERRY PRITCHARD - TWIN OAKS ANGUS FARM - MARION, NC - 828.738.3468**

**JASON BROOKS - BROOKS FARM - VILAS, NC - 828.297.1140**

**WILLIAM BAIRD - BAIRD ANGUS FARM - BLUFF CITY, TN - 423.538.7547**

**W. HENRY VINES - H & D ANGUS - SNOW CAMP, NC - 336.227.1761**

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**AVERAGES:**

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**North Carolina BCIP Bull Test**

**Waynesville**

**FINAL REPORT**

**NOVEMBER 27, 2007**
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LIVESTOCK NEWS

BEEF CATTLE PRODUCERS NEED TO DO MORE PLANNING THAN USUAL TO GET THROUGH THIS WINTER

Western North Carolina is still under severe drought conditions, and the feed supply is already getting very tight. The growing season started with a late freeze which damaged many forage crops, and then the weather turned dry which further hurt pasture and hay production.

In 2007 there were an estimated 25,000 cows in five counties in Western North Carolina. While that may seem like a small number in the grand scheme of things, it is still a significant amount of cattle; and it will take a lot of feed to keep them fed through the winter.

We normally are blessed with adequate moisture and a mild climate, making for good forage production conditions and potential for year-round grazing. However, due to our normally good grazing conditions, we have high stocking rates, and that makes us vulnerable to drought. The current drought has severely limited forage growth and as a result many producers started feeding during the summer when they normally would have abundant pasture. Additionally, they grazed any pastureland that would have been stockpiled for this winter.

The excessive amount of feeding done early in the year exhausted normal winter feed supplies, and producers are now struggling to find enough feed to get to spring. Many cows have been sold out of our area to places with a lot of available forage (e.g., Texas and Oklahoma). Despite the reduction in cow numbers on many farms, there is still a severe feed shortage.

Currently there are a number of programs being put into place that will help producers locate and bring hay in from out of the region, and/or to help them find other local alternative feeds. It is imperative for producers to plan carefully to make sure they can feed their cows appropriately until the beginning of next grazing season. We will have to get rain before late winter to even hope for pasture recovery next season, but for now we just have to have faith that it will rain in time for that.

Producers need to make sure they have enough feed on hand before it gets any later. We as Extension agents have been equipped with a feed budgeting tool designed to get a general idea of the adequacy of your feed supply. If you are not sure that you have enough feed to get through, feel free to call our office for help. We will need to know your cattle numbers and your current feed inventory to help you with this. When you take your feed inventory, remember that cows need pounds of feed, not bales; so you need to know the number of bales and how much they weigh to accurately assess your feed inventory.

Searching for alternative feeds is still a viable option in our region. Much of the hay has been sold or fed, but there are still supplies of crop residues (corn stover, soybean stubble, and cotton gin trash), recycled poultry bedding, and concentrates available. There also is a lot of hay available out of the region that may be shipped in. Again, we as Extension agents have a tool that can help you determine the relative value of these alternative feeds to make sure you make wise purchasing decisions.

Finally, producers need to make sure they provide a balanced ration for their cattle. We normally have hay or pasture that comes very close to meeting a cow’s nutritional needs; but this year many unusual feeds are being used, and producers should not make the assumption that just keeping out all a cow wants to eat is adequate. A good example is corn stover. While cows do like corn stover, and it has a reasonably good energy level, it is very deficient in protein and a substantial level of protein supplement must be fed, especially when feeding lactating cows. Again, Extension agents are trained to balance simple rations, and they have access to a nutritionist for more complex rations. Make sure you call on us for help as you fine tune your feeding program.

Careful planning will be critical to the survival of our cattle farms. These farms are a real asset to our local economies, and also provide an important part of that green rural landscape we have come to expect in the Carolinas. Cattle producers are encouraged to work hard to sustain their cattle production systems, and the general population is encouraged to be understanding and supportive of pasture-based agriculture that is so important to our region’s heritage and beauty.

For help in determining if you have enough feed on hand, alternative feed recommendations, or balancing rations, give Jeff Bradley a call at 255-5522.
The 2007 Census of Agriculture gives you the opportunity to shape your future. Your response provides vital information that influences decisions about community development, funding availability, farm policy and other critical issues. Your feedback in the Census helps create a brighter tomorrow.

Look for your Census form in the mail in early January 2008. Please complete and return it by February 4. Your participation ensures a better future for your operation, your family and your community.

United States Department of Agriculture • National Agricultural Statistics Service
www.agcensus.usda.gov