Farewell Announcement

I wanted to take this opportunity to inform each of you that I have accepted the position of County Extension Director in Rutherford County. I will begin in this position on July 12, 2010.

As I reflect on the last three years, we have all been through some challenging times. I came here immediately following an Easter freeze that severely stunted our spring grass growth. In addition to the freeze, we experienced extreme drought that lasted much longer than any of us expected, leaving us scrambling to feed our cattle.

We have experienced a roller coaster of market prices and have experienced some challenges with marketing locations for our cattle. We banded together as a group and soon will have a state-of-the-art marketing facility in our back yard. You are to be commended for your overwhelming support of this project.

I have mixed emotions about leaving Buncombe County. This new position will keep me closer to my family and allow me to work in my home county, but I leave knowing I have been able to serve some of the best people in North Carolina. Although I have had challenges of covering three counties, the last three years have been the best of my career; and I wouldn’t trade the experience and friendships for anything in this world.

I hope that I have been able to help you and make a positive difference in your lives and your farming enterprises. I thank each of you for taking me in as one of your own and will miss having the opportunity to work with you and for you.

During the phase that the county is without a livestock agent, Steve Duckett, Buncombe County Extension Director, and Jim Turner, Extension Livestock Specialist, will assist you with your needs. It has been a pleasure to serve you.
Forage Field Day

The annual Forage Field Day will be held on Tuesday, July 20, at the Mountain Research Station near Waynesville, NC. Educational stops planned for this event include demonstration and calibration of seeding equipment, a demonstration of strip grazing, herbicide spraying demonstrations and a side-by-side demonstration comparing different herbicides and their effectiveness of control on certain broadleaf weeds. Educational presentations on weed identification, soil sampling and livestock watering equipment will also be part of the day’s activities.

There will be several hay equipment manufactures on hand to display and demonstrate equipment for cutting, tedding, raking, and baling hay. Additionally, distributors of hay storage systems, hay feeding equipment, animal health products, and chemical applicators will be in attendance to answer your questions about their products. One and one half hours of pesticide credits will be available at this field day. For more information contact the Mountain Research Station at 828-456-3943 or the Buncombe County Center of NC Cooperative Extension at 828-255-5522.

Mountain Research Station
Forage Field Day Agenda

9:30-10:30  Seeding Equipment Demonstration and Calibration of Seeders
10:30-11:30 Strip Grazing Demonstration – Dr. Jim Turner, NCSU Animal Science
Weed Identification in a Pasture – Jeff Bradley - Buncombe, Henderson & Transylvania Counties, NCCE and Tony McGaha – Haywood, NCCE
11:45-12:15 Trade Show
12:15-1:00 Lunch - sponsored by Carolina Farm Credit
Welcome and Introductions - Dr. Jim Turner and Kaleb Rathbone, Superintendent, Mountain Research Station, North Carolina Department of Agriculture
North Carolina State University Agriculture Research Service
Representative
North Carolina Department of Agriculture Representative
1:00-1:30 Regulations for Hauling Ag Equipment – NC Highway Patrol
1:30-2:00 Introduction of Nondemonstration Vendors - Will Morrow, Mountain Research Station, North Carolina Department of Agriculture
2:00-3:00 Watering Systems – John Ottinger, Soil Conservation Technician, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Soil Sampling – Bill Yarborough (NCDA – Agronomic Division)
3:00-3:45 Herbicide Spraying Demonstrations
3:45-4:15 Herbicide Plot Demonstrations – Jeff Bradley

Coming Events

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<td>July 20</td>
<td>Forage Field Day</td>
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Horn Flies and Cattle

Horn flies are small (3/16 inch), dark gray, blood-sucking flies that stay on cattle almost continuously. Both males and females are blood feeders that spend most of their time on the shoulders and backs of cattle. During extremely hot weather or when it rains, they may move to the protected underside of the animal. When disturbed, horn flies will fly up in a swarm but they will return to animals almost immediately. Female horn flies lay their eggs in fresh cattle manure within a few minutes after it has been deposited. The immature, or maggot state, develop best in the grass manure of pastured cattle; few can survive in the manure of cattle fed concentrates or silage. The horn fly life cycle is completed in 10 to 14 days; since each female can lay up to 500 eggs, very large populations can build up over the summer. These pests overwinter as pupae beneath manure pads or in the soil.

Horn flies are blood feeders that primarily attack pastured cattle. Individual flies pierce the skin with their short, tube-like mouthparts 20 to 30 times per day to ingest a small amount of blood. Their feeding activity is painful and annoys the animals, as well as causing some blood loss. This stress is probably the cause of reduced weight gain during the summer. Horn flies can cause a 12 to 20 pound lighter calf at the end of the summer, as well as greater weight loss per nursing cow.

In addition, horn flies have been implicated in the spread of summer mastitis, a disease of non-lactating mammary glands. Incidence of this disease is highest during the fly season and decreases in response to effective fly control. Horn fly feeding lesions on teats may serve as entry sites for the pathogen and these, and other pasture flies, may carry the disease organism on their bodies.

There are many effective options to keep horn fly numbers below the 50 fly per side treatment threshold:

- **Backrubbers** allow cattle to treat themselves while loafing and scratching. The insecticide should be diluted with a good grade of mineral oil (diesel oil evaporates more quickly and is harder on the cattle's skin) according to label instructions. Do not use motor oil.

- **Dust bags** are most effective when used where cattle have to pass under them daily to get to water or mineral. The bag will leave an insecticide deposit along the back, where horn flies spend most of their time. The bag should be inspected regularly and recharged as needed. Keep the bag dry to reduce clumping of the insecticide and premature loss of effectiveness.

- **Feed additives** target horn fly maggots breeding in fresh animal manure. All animals must eat a minimal dose of a feed additive regularly. Supplementary control measures must be taken to deal with flies moving in from nearby herds.

- **High pressure sprays** can be used to treat cattle thoroughly and inexpensively on a per-head basis. More handling is required because the animals must be confined in a corral so that they can be sprayed thoroughly. Several applications probably will be needed during the fly season.

- **An insecticide bolus** is a large pill-like formulation that is given to the animal with a standard balling gun. For best results, the entire herd should be treated. The active ingredient, usually an insect growth regulator, is gradually released from the bolus and prevents development of face fly and horn fly larvae in manure.

- **Insecticide-impregnated cattle ear tags** release small amounts of an insecticide which are distributed over the animal during grooming or rubbing. In general, ear tags have provided excellent, long term control of horn flies and a reduction in face fly numbers.

- **Pour-on insecticides** are ready-to-use formulations that are applied in measured doses to animals based upon body weight. Most function as contact insecticides. Typically, they provide fly reduction for about 4 weeks, so they must be reapplied at intervals. The length of control will vary with weather and other factors so re-apply when fly numbers build back up to about 50 per side but no sooner than the label instructions allow.

- **Self-applicator sprayers** can be set up at mineral feeders or gates between fields. A switch, tripped by the animal, releases a small amount of spray. While the actual treated area may be relatively small, horn flies move around on the animal enough to come in contact with the insecticide.

- **Large walk-through fly traps**, placed at pasture gates where animals must pass through them regularly, can reduce horn fly numbers by up to 70 percent without the use of an insecticide. Ideally, the tunnel-like trap should be placed where animals can pass through it several times a day. Flies are brushed off of the animals while they are in the device.

Cost, convenience, and herd management practices, such as grazing rotation, should be considered when designing a control program that fits your operation. For more information about fly control, call the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center at 828-255-5522.
**Tri-State Stocker Conference**

A Tri-State Stocker Conference will be held at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Abingdon, Virginia on August 17 and 18. This will be the second stocker conference held in recent years. It will include a tour of local stocker operations on the afternoon of the 17th with an evening meal and speaker. The main educational program will be on the 18th with speakers on Managing the Health of Purchased Stocker Calves, Market Outlook, Livestock Risk Protection Insurance, Managing Pastures for Stocker Cattle, Considerations in Buying Stocker Cattle and How to Work With an Order Buyer.

There will also be a panel of stocker operators who will share information about their operations. A trade show will include representatives with agribusiness firms supporting the stocker business from animal health and equipment companies, feed suppliers, marketing agencies, lending institutions and related businesses. The meeting is being sponsored by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, University of Tennessee Extension and North Carolina Cooperative Extension and BEEF Magazine. Registration information will be available through local County Extension Offices after July 1. You may also get information from this web site: [http://www.tnbeefcattleinitiative.org/](http://www.tnbeefcattleinitiative.org/)

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**Attention Livestock Producers**

The staff of WNC Communities are doing some background research for the new WNC Regional Livestock Center in Haywood County. They need some feedback from the livestock producers to know what to expect when it opens. Please contact Alec Bare, NC State University Intern, at 828-551-6628 (or by email ajbare@ncsu.edu) to let them know the following:

- Who you are.
- Where you are located.
- What livestock you produce.
- The size of your operation.
- How and where you typically sell your livestock.