Graded Feeder Calf and BQA Sales

Graded feeder calf sales will be held at Turnersburg on August 5 and September 23. These sales are for steers and heifers of at least 300 pounds. These calves must have received a clostridial (blackleg) vaccine and must be completely healed from castration and dehorning. Weaning is NOT required. These sales are excellent opportunities to market your calves in larger, uniform groups with other producers.

The Beef Quality Assurance Sale in Turnersburg will be held August 12. These calves must be weaned for a minimum of 45 days, receive 2 rounds of vaccinations and be age and source verified. Heifers must be guaranteed open. Total cost for vaccines and deworming have been approximately $10 per head in past years. The last date to wean calves for this sale is June 28.

All of the calves on these sales are graded and sorted by NCDA personnel and we have a few rejects at every sale. Some of the main reasons for having calves rejected include bad eyes, warts, horns, staggy (bull) appearance, injuries or heifers that appear to be bred.

Consignment forms will be mailed to past consignors. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for rules and regulations just contact our office and we will send one to you.

Cattlemen’s Association News

The Catawba Valley Cattlemen’s Association meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 PM. Be sure to call the Catawba County Extension office for the location of summer meetings as this group tries to meet on private farms during the warmer months.

A group of dedicated cattlemen are successfully working on organizing a Gaston County Cattlemen’s Association which will meet every other month on the 3rd Tuesday at 7 PM. This group has been averaging about 25 persons at each of their first 3 meetings. Next meeting is scheduled for July 20 but the location has not been determined yet – call our office for details.
Price Projections for Fall

At the risk of being proven bad wrong I’ll offer a market synopsis with some projections for the rest of the year. By now all of you have seen (and hopefully taken advantage of) the dramatic increase in calf prices for this spring. While it appears now in early June that the high seasonal prices may have fallen back a bit, comparatively speaking we are still in a good situation in terms of prices for our product. Here are a few facts to help frame the discussion:

- We have the smallest US cow herd in 50 years. Cow liquidation due to droughts, the poor state of the cattle segment, high feed prices and low margins has brought our available supply back in line with demand. There won’t be as many calves for sale in the coming years as we have seen in the recent past.

- Hardly anyone is keeping heifers yet. The first quarter of 2010 saw the largest increase in heifers placed in feedlots in 12 years. If we eat them we can’t breed them, so this helps keep supply down for another year or two. More evidence that there won’t be as many calves for sale for a few years.

- 2009 saw one of the largest corn crops in recent memory. So far in the current year planting progress is running well ahead of normal which helps set the crop up for a favorable yield (good moisture during pollination and grain filling time will determine the final outcome). All these factors have helped bring corn prices back to the high side of normal instead of the $7 per bushel figures that plagued the livestock sector during 2008.

- Cash fed cattle prices for fed cattle are in the range of 94-95 cents per pound. Futures contracts for fall are in the low 90’s and April, 2011 is at 94 cents. Fed cattle have declined somewhat from their highs of a couple weeks ago, but clearly the market is stronger than last year at this time.

- Feeder cattle futures are our best crystal ball and they are currently trading at $1.07-1.08 for summer into January, 2011. You will need to adjust this price to reflect the basis between “here and out there” and allow for any weight differences between the weight you normally market your animals at and the 700-800 lb contract specifications.

- We’re definitely in better shape than last year at this time. Anything can happen but we are clearly past the bottom of the cattle cycle and the market fundamentals are more favorable than the past 2 years or so. Keep a tight rein on your management, apply proven practices that increase the value of your calves and market them to the best advantage.

**Beef Quality Assurance Training, June 17**

If you need or want to be certified in Beef Quality Assurance the training and exam will be offered at the **Gaston County Extension office on Thursday, June 17 at 7 PM**. This will include training which lasts approximately an hour and a half followed by the certification exam. Certification costs $15 and there is an additional $25 for those not currently members of the NC Cattlemen’s Association. Checks only, no cash.

Please call ahead to let us know you are coming so enough manuals and other materials are ordered.
**Forage Management Tips for Summer**

With ample moisture and some magic 2010 has turned into one of the best forage years we have seen in some time. Clover is everywhere, even on farms where none has been planted for a long time. As our fescue begins to mature here are a few suggestions to help provide high quality grazing for your herd and set yourself up for a productive fall season:

- Get the seedheads off as quickly as possible. Most stands should be good enough not to require a reseeding and fescue will propagate vegetatively by growing new tillers anyway. Cattle are reluctant to eat the stems and are usually after the tender leaf material underneath. Removing the stem and seed head through intensive grazing or mowing will put the plant back in a vegetative stage of growth and will provide for more nutritious forage through the summer. Removing the tall, older growth will also allow the clover to get more sunlight and respond to summer rains.

- Plan your rotation to coincide with other management practices. Saving a pasture of good grass near the corral will make catching cattle for processing much easier. Likewise, if weaning is in your future try to begin preparing that pasture now so the calves have plenty of nutritious grass in the correct stage of growth when they come off the cows.

- If you use summer annuals or warm season grasses try to keep them from getting ahead of you. These plants tend to incorporate more indigestible fiber if allowed to get too mature. Graze or mow them off before quality declines too far. These species begin to get more fibrous with decreasing day length so graze them hard now.

- Try to utilize something other than infected fescue during the summer. If you have pastures that are more diverse try to use these for your animals that have higher nutritional requirements like 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} calf heifers and weaned calves. Dry, pregnant cows could be used on pastures that are predominantly fescue.

- Scout for weeds regularly and plan your treatment strategy. Spot treatments are much more economical if you can catch a weed problem before it becomes widespread. If broadcast treatments are needed for more general weed infestations be sure to time it right to get the most control possible. If you have to clip or bushhog pastures anyway try to incorporate that into your control strategy for those weeds that will regrow this summer.

- Plan to stockpile some fescue forage this fall and winter. Go ahead and select the pastures you will stockpile this summer and graze them appropriately so they are ready to respond to N fertilization around Labor Day. The cheapest way to feed cattle is with forage they harvest themselves.

**This Could Be Your Final Issue**

In an effort to use our postage budget more efficiently we need your help to trim our mailing costs. If you can accept an electronic copy of this newsletter please contact our office with your email address so we can reduce our paper and postage costs (email a note to nancy_miller@ncsu.edu). If you wish to continue getting a copy in the mail please call us at (828) 465-8240 and request to remain on the mailing list. **If you are no longer interested in receiving newsletter, please either email or call the office.**

If we don’t hear from you and we don’t obtain your mailing information through a livestock related organization this could be your final issue of the newsletter.
Congratulations to Youth Involved With Livestock

Sincerely,

Jeff Carpenter
Area Specialized Agent
Agriculture-Livestock

4-H Livestock News

Three outstanding young people have been awarded college scholarships by the Catawba Valley Cattlemen’s Association for fall, 2010. Morgan Watts of Dallas will attend Redlands Community College in El Reno, Oklahoma to major in Animal Science and compete on their livestock judging team. Heath Brittain of Catawba will attend Catawba Valley Community College and plans to transfer to NC State University for Agricultural Education. Everett Draughn of Maiden will attend NC State University for an associate degree from the Agricultural Institute.

Our livestock judging team has won 2 of 4 contests so far this year. The team was 3rd at the NC Hereford Association Judging in January, won the UT Knoxville contest in March, was 4th at Johnston County and won the Eastern NC contest in Tarboro in April. Our competitors this year are Laura Elmore, Cole Annas, Heath Brittain, Hannah Parker, John Ross Caldwell, Alex Winters and Claire Annas.

The Catawba Valley Youth Livestock Shows will be held June 25 (lamb show) and 26 (beef heifer show). Come by the Hickory American Legion Fairgrounds to watch our local young people compete against exhibitors from across the state. Our local livestock judging contest will be held June 12 at the fairgrounds.

Sincerely,

Jeff Carpenter
Area Specialized Agent
Agriculture-Livestock