Have you heard of the We Care Program developed by the National Pork Board (NPB) and the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC)? We Care is an outreach program developed to improve the image of US pork production by highlighting pork producers and helping them tell their stories. The program was developed in an effort to communicate to the public a better understanding of today’s modern and responsible pork production practices. We Care is just one component of the pork industry commitment to “do the right thing” while producing pork. Other components include the Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Program and Transport Quality Assurance (TQA) Program.

A very important part of the We Care Program is the “Ethical Principles for US Pork Producers”. The following is a list of producer principles to follow:

- Produce Safe Food
- Protect and promote animal well-being
- Safeguard natural resources in all of their practices
- Provide a work environment that is safe
- Contribute to a better quality of life in their communities

It’s important for us as producers and caretakers of swine to participate in the program and follow the above principles, since many Americans today know little about agriculture and how their food is produced. So, how can YOU participate in the program? Contact the North Carolina Pork Council for We Care promotional
material and look for opportunities to share the information in your community and with family, friends and neighbors. They can provide you with the “producer to consumer” talking points to bring up in your conversation, but be sure to tell YOUR story about your farm, employees and animals. There may even be an opportunity to invite a school or church group to your farm and show them how you provide a safe, wholesome pork product. For more information and guidance on the program and getting involved, contact Jan Archer, Director of Producer Education and Outreach, at 919-781-0361 or jarcher3@nc.rr.com. Jan is a pork producer in Wayne County as well so she shares your perspective as a producer and is experienced in how to communicate your story and the We Care Program to your community.

Revised Sludge Plan of Action

Reminder to swine producers: There is a new Plan of Action for Lagoon Sludge Reduction form, revised March 22, 2010. The new document includes the requirement of the current State General Permit, stating that “sludge levels must be achieved within two years of the non-compliant sludge survey”. The new form is available on the Division of Water Quality website, or you can contact your Cooperative Extension agent for one. DWQ asks that all producers begin using the new form when a plan of action is required.
Progressive ranchers and feedlot operators work hard to reduce stress on cattle during handling. They may wonder how mimicking the initial stalking movements of a predator can be a low stress way to gather cattle on large pastures. What many people do not realize is that common low stress cattle handling principles such as entering the flight zone to make an animal move and using the point of balance to control the animal's direction of movement are all based on instinctual behavior patterns that the animals use to escape from predators. Cattle are a prey species animal and over the eons they have evolved behavior patterns which enable them and all their wild cousins to protect themselves from predation. The predator avoidance behavior patterns are hard wired into the brain and they function like bits of computer software.

The early naturalists called these behavior patterns instincts and modern animal behavior specialists call them fixed action patterns. Some instinctual behavior patterns are very rigid and fixed and others can be modified by learning. The flehman, or lip curl of a bull, is an example of a fixed pattern which requires no learning. Other instinctual behavior which affect an animal's movements during handling can be modified by experience. Cattle have a tendency to turn and face a handler, but keep a safe distance. The tendency to turn and face a person is instinctual, but the size of the flight zone is greatly affected by experience. When the person enters their flight zone they will turn away.

Observations of both cattle movements and watching many nature shows indicate that both wild and domestic grazing animals have three basic instinctual behavior patterns or "software programs" which help them avoid predators. They are:

1. The flight zone and the tendency to face people and other perceived threats
2. The point of balance at the shoulder and its effect on movement direction
3. The tendency to bunch together when they are threatened.

Turning and facing a potential threat enables the animal to keep track of where the predator is. If you watch the nature shows you will see antelope following lions, but keeping a safe distance.

The point of balance behavior pattern aids a grazing animal in escaping from a predator that is chasing it. An impala chased by a lion will run in the opposite direction when a lion passes it shoulder. This maneuver helps the antelope to escape. This same principle is also used to quietly move cattle both on pastures and through chutes. The main difference is that the cattle are moved at a walk instead of at a run. The animal will move FORWARD when a handler inside its flight zone passes the shoulder going in the OPPOSITE direction of desired movement. This is much less stressful than using an electric prod to induce cattle to enter a squeeze chute.

The third behavior pattern which can be used by herders and handlers is the tendency of cattle to bunch together when there is a threat. Creating a very slight anxiety will induce the cattle to come out of the hills and bushes to join the herd. The handler must NEVER circle the cattle. This is much lower stress than chasing cattle and acting like an attacking predator. By mimicking the initial stalk of a predator the cattle will come together.

Cattle living in bear country will graze in tighter bunches than cattle which live in areas that are free of bears or lions. The constant possibility of being eaten makes the cattle stay together. Even though they are in a tighter group they can still graze. To keep stress on the cattle at an absolute minimum, inducing cattle to bunch must be done at a slow walk. The handler must also be careful to avoid tight bunching. The idea is to do only the initial stages of what the predator does and this will keep stress low.

It is likely that inducing cattle to bunch by "stalking" them on the edge of the collective flight zone is more stressful the first time the cattle experience it. Cattle which are handled quietly on a regular basis will learn that the handler is not going to apply suffi-
Low Stress Cattle Handling Continued...

cient pressure to cause them to panic. A person who works with his or her animals can train their cattle. They will learn that the handler will release pressure on the collective flight zone when they have moved in the desired direction. This will further reduce stress.

A handler acting like a quiet stalking predator who induces the cattle to bunch is much less stressful than chasing cattle like an attacking predator. All handler movements must be at a slow walk and great care must be taken to NEVER cause the cattle to run or start milling.

A good handler using low stress herding principles has to make movements which trigger the innate anti-predator "software" in the animal's brain. To keep stress very low only the first stages of the "program" are turned on. When a bunched group of cattle is moved to a new location they should all be headed in the same direction and walking quietly. They must NOT be bumping into each other or turning. If they start doing this, it is an indicator that the next step in the "program" is being turned on and the animals are getting ready for a predator attack. This will cause high stress.

Handler and herdres who understand that their movements are triggering innate behavior "programs" that are in the animal's brain will find it easier to learn low stress handling and herding. Animals that are handled with these techniques perform better physically and mentally. Confident, calm, consistent caregivers can improve disease resistance and promote feedlot performance.

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EPA Registered Herbicide
Emily Herring - Pender County

A new herbicide from Dupont called Pastora (Nicosulfuron) has received EPA registration for its label. This is great news for postemergence control of grasses including field sandbur, Johnsongrass, and foxtails in bermudagrass pastures and hay fields. It also has shown pre-emergence and postemergence control of broadleaf weeds like curly dock, wild mustard, and cocklebur. This too is also great news for producers in the southeast who may have trouble with these weeds among the other weeds this product states to control. The bad news is, Pastora still has to receive a state registration before it can be sold in North Carolina or in any state. This is expected to take about 1-3 weeks (from mid April) depending on the state. After the state registration is complete it will be shipped to dealers to be sold to you. Some good need to know things about Pastora is:

- It will be sold in 20 oz bottles and it is a dry-flowable granule.
- Labeled use rate is 1-1.5 oz/acre, but most applications will be in the 1-1.25 oz range.
- Not expected to be a restricted use pesticide.
- Not expected to have grazing or haying restrictions.
- Apply to established (at least for one growing season) bermudagrass field.
- Applications may result in temporary yellowing or stunting of bermudagrass.
- Best used when bermudagrass has less than 2" of new growth during initial green-up or by treating within 7 days after cutting for hay

When this product receives its registration label from North Carolina, it will be on the shelves for purchasing. Be sure if you purchase this product you read and follow labeled directions. If you have questions about this product, contact your local agent.

The use of brand names in this publication does not imply endorsement of the products or services named or criticism of similar ones not mentioned.
Seven Good Reasons to Cull Ewes

The following tips were compiled by Agriview Newspaper in Wisconsin. While directed at culling ewes, very similar guidelines can be used when culling does (female goats).

With increasing production costs, producers really need to evaluate each and every ewe and decide whether she’s really productive. Marginal ewes (and rams) should not be maintained in the flock. According to an article in Agriview (an ag newspaper in Wisconsin), there are seven good reasons to cull ewes. The reasons apply equally to does.

1. Open: start your cull list with open ewes. They are the most costly in terms of feed, labor, and management.
2. Health issues (footrot, foot scald, mastitis, chronic parasites, etc.). Unhealthy ewes can be a large drain in terms of labor.
3. Udder quality and/or soundness: ewes that have lost all or part of their udder function.
4. Structurally unsound ewes: those with few teeth left and hard-keeping emaciated ewes.
5. Age, though you should not automatically cull a ewes that is six years old, so long as she is still productive.
6. Genetic progress, though most genetic improvement is made through the male.
7. Poor disposition: females that are difficult to maintain in a grazing system should be culled. Ewes that step on or lay on their lambs because of a poor and/or flighty disposition should be culled.

While it is recommended that 15 percent of the flock be culled annually, the decision to cull ewes and does varies from year to year. To read the entire article go to: http://www.agriview.com/articles/2009/05/28/livestock_news/livestock01.txt

Forage Management Tips

May

- Plant warm-season perennial grasses such as common or “Cheyenne” bermudagrass.
- Plant summer annuals such as pearl millet by May 15.
- Fertilize warm-season grasses with nitrogen after each cutting or every four to six weeks on pastures.
- If irrigation is available, hybrid bermudagrass sprigs may be planted, but weed control will be essential.
- Spray pasture weeds while they are small (3 inches or smaller) for most effective control.

June

- Take soil samples from fields that will be overseeded or planted during the fall.
- Apply lime as far in advance of planting as possible.
- A late planting of summer annuals may be made to extend forage supply.
- To stimulate yield of warm-season grass such as bermuda, apply nitrogen after each cutting or every four to six weeks.
- Graze bermudagrass close (1 to 2 inch stubble) and harvest any growth that has not been grazed every four to six weeks.
- Control summer pasture weeds before they get too tall and mature.
Calendar of Events

- **May 8th 10 am to 2 pm CEFS Spring Festival**, Get Goldsboro Growing
- **May 25th Pasture Pork Field Day** Cherry Research Farm/CEFS Goldsboro, for more information www.cefs.ncsu.edu
- **June 29th & 30th NC 4-H Livestock Contests**: Judging, Skillathon and Quiz bowl, Raleigh
- **July 20th & 21st - Type A Animal Waste Certification Training** Mount Olive College to register please call Kim at (919) 731-1520

For more information about any of these events, please call Kim Davis at 731-1520

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Thanks to everyone who helped make the Jr. Livestock Show and Sale such a huge success!

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Extension Agent Contact information

Craven & Jones County: Vacant
(252) 633-1477

Greene & Lenoir County: Eve Honeycutt, Agricultural Agent (252) 527-2191
eve_honeycutt@ncsu.edu

Onslow County: Vacant
(910) 455-5873

Pender County: Emily Herring
Agricultural Agent (910) 259-1235
emily_herring@ncsu.edu

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Fencelines is a bimonthly newsletter written by a team of Southeast District Agricultural Agents for livestock producers of Southeastern North Carolina. For more information on material and events presented in this newsletter, contact your local agent and Cooperative Extension office at:

Eileen A. Coite
Extension Agent
Livestock & Forage
North Carolina Cooperative Extension
Wayne County Center
PO Box 68
Goldsboro, NC 27533-0068
(919) 731-1520 phone
(919) 731-1511 fax
eileen_coite@ncsu.edu

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