I have had several calls this summer asking how to get rid of crabgrass. I wanted to ask these people “Why would you want to get rid of it? Why spend money on killing it when you can utilize it?” The only reason I can think of for destroying this fantastic weed (aka forage) would be for haying purposes, particularly in horse hay where the concern about mold is more prevalent.

Crabgrass is called a weed in many circles, but in the livestock world, particularly in cattle groups, it should be called a forage. A wonderful, nutritious, hardy forage that can feed our cattle for next to nothing (especially if you already have an abundance in your field).

**The Good:**
- Extremely nutritious
  - NDF (neutral detergent fiber) from 50 - 62%
  - CP (crude protein) from 15 - 25% in early season, 12% in late season
  - DDM (digestible dry matter) values of 74%
- No known toxicity problems
- Palatable: cattle will choose to eat crabgrass over several other summer grasses
- Fermentable: broken down faster in the rumen than other grasses (i.e. bermudagrass)
- Works well with a winter interseeding grazing program (use this for summer forage, plant rye/ryegrass for winter forage)
  - Grows well between 80 - 100°F
  - Once growth has declined, fertilize, lightly disc the soil and plant your annual cereal
- Will reseed itself
- Can grow with the pH anywhere from 5.5 - 7.5, with 6.0 - 7.2 being ideal
Crabgrass: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly…continued

- Tolerant of overgrazing
  ◦ Can be routinely grazed to 3”
- Stocking rates can be as high as 800 - 1200 lbs. animal/acre depending on fertility and rainfall
  ◦ ADG: 0.75 lbs/day on poor-mature crabgrass, 2 - 2.5 lbs/day on well managed stands
- Dairymen have noticed increased lactation when crabgrass was grazed
- Can be used for hay or pasture purposes

The Bad:
- Growth declines around the beginning of September
- Shallow annual tilling needed for regrowth
- Some research suggests that too much crabgrass may reduce the yield of your hayfield
- Best used in a rotational grazing system
- Slower drying time than other grasses, may mold if included in hay (i.e. bermudagrass hay) if not properly managed
- Yield is variable and depends heavily on soil fertility and rainfall
  ◦ Typically 3 - 5 tons/acre, can be as low as 1 ton/acre
- Possible pests include grasshoppers, fall army worms, and the southern cinch bug
- May need heavier loads of N than other grasses

- Color of hay is dark and may not fair well on the visual hay test (looks worse than it is)

The Ugly:

The take home message concerning crabgrass seems to be that it may look funny, and have a weedy reputation, but if managed correctly it can be a highly valuable addition to your forage program. Regardless of your end goal — hay or pasture — consider adding crabgrass (or at least not destroying the crabgrass you may already have) to the grazing plan. You won’t regret it!

Contact your local extension agent for more information on crabgrass and how it may fit in your grazing system. The following link offers a ton of information regarding crabgrass as well: http://www.noble.org/ag/pasture/crabgrass-for-forage/winter-pasture/

Beef Herd - To Expand or Not to Expand

Submitted By Katie Tyndall Extension Livestock Intern, with Eve H. Honeycutt, Extension Livestock Agent, Lenoir and Greene Counties

Adapted from Purdue Agriculture News (Feb. 20 and May 8, 2014) and University of Missouri Extension News (March 24, 2014)

In the past few months, cattle producers across the nation have been reaping the benefits of the soaring prices beef cattle prices. Within the first quarter of 2014, the average sell price for steers was $147 per live hundred weight, which is about $20 higher than the previous first quarter record. There has been a 17% increase in the price of cattle since last year.

The increase in price is based on two things; the cost of grain and the total number of cattle.

Weather in previous years has affected the price and yield of grains. Corn has reached the lowest price it has been at since 2011, and yields have increased. This creates lower feed prices and a more abundance supply of feed.

The number of total cattle in the United States is at the lowest point it has been at since 1952. In 1952,
Beef Herd - To Expand, or Not to Expand? continued

there were about 90 million head of cattle, which was the previous record low. Today, there are 87.7 million.

Cattle farmers across the country are taking these favorable market conditions as a sign to expand their operation. An increase in production can already be seen based on the reduced numbers of heifers on feedlots and the decline of heifers and cows being slaughtered. Expansion of cattle operations takes time and a lot of money. Purdue Extension Agricultural economist, Chris Hurt, believes that expansion of beef cattle herds will be a slow process for the following reasons:

- Retaining heifers as replacements is expensive for producers
- Producers have struggled to make a profit from their cattle for a long time
- Areas with the largest amount of beef cattle are still affected by the drought.

According to Hurt, the challenges will allow the price outlook for beef cattle to be “extremely favorable for 2014 to 2016”.

With expectations of the beef industry to continue to thrive through the year 2016, University of Missouri beef economist, Scott Brown says, “The time to expand may be now.” However, Brown reminds producers “there are always risks”. By the time calves from cows bred this spring go to market, prices could be much lower than they are now. “Before you go home and double the size of your cow herd, remember the cattle cycle,” Brown said. When cow numbers go down, prices go up. However, when numbers go up, prices go down.

PEDV's impact: Now and Tomorrow

Written by Steve Meyer, President of Paragon Economics and a Pork Checkoff Consultant
Submitted by Paul Gonzalez, Sampson County

A new disease always brings a chill of apprehension, but I doubt anyone knew just how concerned they should have been on May 17, 2013 when the first U.S. case of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDV) was diagnosed at the Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. As it turns out, “very concerned” or “scared to death” both may have been appropriate.

Not the Foreign Animal Disease We Feared
For years, the U.S. pork industry has feared, considered and planned for the introduction of a foreign animal disease, with virtually all of the attention on Foot-and-Mouth Disease, African Swine Fever and Classical Swine Fever. Any of these would immediately close exports markets, destroying demand for roughly 23 percent of U.S. production. Domestic supplies would increase dramatically, pushing prices down sharply in order to clear the market. PEDV though, is not a demand-killing bug. In fact, pork demand has remained strong since PEDV first appeared, with real per capita pork expenditures growing nearly 6 percent in 2013 and over 5 percent in 2014 through March. The irony of PEDV is that as a supply-impacting disease, producers could be financially better off this year:

1. Demand for pigs is inelastic. This means that any reduction in the pig supply will cause a price increase that is larger in percentage terms than
the supply reduction. Further, the relative price change (i.e., price flexibility or multiplier) normally ranges from -2 to -3. So, for every 1 percent reduction in quantity supplied, prices will usually rise 2 to 3 percent.

2. Some producers are not losing a large percentage of yearly output to PEDV. Current evidence indicates that most herds return to normal production within five to eight weeks, with most losses in the first three to four weeks. The obvious exceptions are single-site producers who farrow less frequently than once every two months or so.

Record Profits Expected
For producers as a whole, add to higher revenue the fact that production costs are 10 to 15 percent lower this year, and it is easy to see that 2014 will likely be a year of record profitability for producers. So who will be hurt by PEDV? Consumers and middlemen (packers, processors, distributors, retailers) and people who work for them.

How Big Has the Impact Been? How Big Will It Be?
No one knows the answer to those two questions with certainty because our data systems are not geared to accurately tell us how many pigs have died from the disease. There are three different data sources, each of which approaches the issue from a different point of view.

1. National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) – This network provides weekly data to USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on the number of case submissions and positive case accessions.
2. University of Minnesota Swine Health Monitoring Project – The College of Veterinary Medicine publishes weekly updates from large farms. Participants have steadily increased to 16 as of mid-May, with nine participating publicly and the identities of the others confidential. The 713 breeding herds account for about 2.5 million sows, with 57 percent having been infected by PEDV in the past 12 months.
3. USDA’s Hogs and Pigs Report – USDA’s March 28 report represents March 1 inventories and should reflect PEDV baby pig losses to that date.

USDA’s September through November pig crop was as large as a year earlier, a finding that does not fit with March slaughter that was 6.7 percent lower than in 2013. March slaughter is made up primarily of pigs born in September.

So Where Do We Stand?
The honest answer is that we do not know. If more than 50 percent of sows have indeed been infected, with pig losses of 2.7 to 3.0 pigs per sow as widely established by producers dealing with the disease, we lost 7-8 million pigs from June 2013 through April 2014. Distributing these numbers according to the accession data suggests hog slaughter could be down 10 percent from 2013 levels from July through September.

Higher weights will make up 3 to 4 percent of the reduction, but pork supplies will, in my opinion, be tight in the second half of 2014. I expect weekly slaughter to drop quickly after June 1 and national barrow and gilt prices to spend most of the summer in the mid-$120s per cwt., carcass.

There is little data to suggest what may happen beyond September. Warmer weather has slowed the rate of positive accessions, so slaughter reductions should get smaller in the fourth quarter. The same should apply to the first quarter of 2015 if case numbers fall as expected this summer.

Beyond that, PEDV’s impact depends on:

1. Whether an effective vaccine is developed,
2. The degree to which immunities persist in herds that have already dealt with the disease, and

How effectively producers apply management practices they have learned to prevent future breaks. Things are better now. But the only certainty is that the future of PEDV’s impact is still quite uncertain.
Have you ever thought about biosecurity on your farm? What is biosecurity? Biosecurity is various different practices you can implement on your farm to reduce the risk of introducing disease into your herd. This is a very important part of your herd’s health. Even one animal having a disease on your farm could affect the rest of your animals. Read on to learn more about how to make biosecurity improvements to your herd and your farm in general.

Herd Additions
Every time you add a new animal to your herd, you run the risk of introducing disease. There are three good practices to fend off disease from new animals. First, you can choose to have a closed herd, meaning the only way you add animals is through kidding on your farm. Obviously, this is not ideal for all farms because there is no way to add new bloodlines or improve genetics in a closed herd. Second, new animals should be quarantined and checked for signs and symptoms of disease for at least 30 days. Lastly, health management practices are a good way to help ensure your herd stays healthy. These may include: veterinary exams, deworming, vaccinations, and testing for disease.

Usage of Needles
By reusing needles between animals, you greatly increase your risk of disease transmission. The best practice would be to not reuse needles. However, if this is not possible, you can reduce your risk of disease transmission by disinfecting needles between each use.

Veterinarian – Patient – Client Relationship
It is very important to have a veterinarian who has a good client – patient relationship with you and your goat herd. Veterinarians are a good source of information about the goat industry as well as goat health. Regular farm visits by your veterinarian may help improve your herd, genetics, and provide a great opportunity for you to ask questions about your herd.

Farm Visitors
When visitors come to your farm, it is very important that they take precautions not to spread disease. Disease agents can be spread through various locations such as clothing, hands, boots, vehicles, or instruments. You can require that visitors take any and all of the following precautions: change into clean boots, use shoe covers, wash hands before touching the animals, don’t park near the goat area, and use a footbath before entering goat area.

Kidding Management
It may be a very good idea to keep does that are kidding for the first time away from the rest of the herd because if they become infected with bacterial pathogens while pregnant, they could abort, have abnormal kids, or kid early. Also, it is important to promptly remove placentas and aborted fetuses because they can hold infectious organisms that could possibly spread to other goats.

You should also consider taking precautions with your goats having physical contact with other animals including raccoons, skunks, and opossums. These animals can carry disease and infect your herd. Also, it is very important to make sure your animals are properly identified with an identification number, such as a Scrapie tag. Various forms of identification are required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture when animals are sold or moved from the farm.

These are just a few ways you can make your farm less susceptible to disease. Follow these steps to help raise biosecurity at your farm: work closely with your veterinarian, isolate new animals, disinfect or do not reuse needles between animals, limit outside animal contact as well as visitor contact, use proper animal identification, and properly manage kidding areas to reduce disease transfer. If you have any questions about how biosecure your farm is, feel free to contact your local Cooperative Extension agent.
Multiple fly species may be present in and around equine facilities. Some of the more common pests include house flies, stable flies, horse flies, deer flies, face flies, and horn flies. Problems that may occur with our horses vary from minor itching, skin reactions, possible hair loss, extreme annoyance, and even blood loss and fatigue in excessive fly population situations. In our area the face flies have been noticeably more numerous and annoying than in recent years.

The face fly is a non-biting fly that feeds on animal secretions which quickly draws the pest to the horse’s face to feed on tears around the eyes and mucus around the nose and muzzle. Their activity around the animals’ eyes allows face flies to serve as vectors of eye disorders such as pinkeye which may cause permanent damage and vision loss if unnoticed and left untreated. Extreme annoyance and agitation may also be noticed in animals that have numerous face flies present. They are also "facultative blood feeders," which means that they do not bite and cause bleeding but may gather around wounds caused by mechanical damage or biting fly activity to feed on blood and other wound secretions.

Insecticidal control options for face flies include sprays and wipes. These usually provide rapid relief with varying lengths of control time. Masks have proven to be an effective barrier from face fly attacks for horses but should be monitored closely for fit and routine maintenance and allow for a breakaway feature such as velcro in case the horse decides to scratch and gets it caught on something.

An inclusive article on equine fly control that covers multiple fly species and management options can be found at the following link: [http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/FreePubs/PDFs/XF0276.pdf](http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/FreePubs/PDFs/XF0276.pdf)

Written by: Steve Lemons

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### Forage Management Tips

#### July
- Stick to a four to six week schedule of nitrogen applications on summer grasses. Do not delay application because of dry weather unless it has not rained at all since the previous application.
- Maintain harvesting frequency for quality hay.
- Hot, dry weather can result in nitrate poisoning of animals grazing stunted, highly fertilized summer annuals.
- Sample soils and apply lime on fields to be planted in the fall, if not already done.
- Decide which fescue pastures will be stock-piled for winter grazing.

#### August
- Sample soils and apply lime to pastures with pH below 5.8 to be overseeded next month.
- Fertilize warm-season grasses.
- Fertilize fescue and keep cattle off of the pastures to be stockpiled for winter grazing.

#### September
- Fertilize and lime cool season grasses.
- Keep the grazing pressure on the summer grasses and completely use them before grazing cool season forages.
- Continue to watch for armyworms on established and seedling stands of forages.
- Overseed or no-till winter annuals onto summer perennial grass after they have been closely grazed.
- Make a winter feed supply inventory so deficiencies can be avoided now (by purchasing hay or planting more winter pasture).
## Calendar of Events

- **July 16th & 17th** - State 4-H Youth Livestock Judging and Skillathon Competitions, Raleigh

- **July 25th** - Beef BBQ Boot Camp, Raleigh for youth ages 14-18 for more information contact Brent Jennings at (919) 515-4467 or email him at brent_jennings@ncsu.edu


- **August 19th** - Summer Grazing Workshop, Greene County, for more information contact Eve Honeycutt at (252) 521-1706.

- **August 23rd** - Beef Cattle Field Day 9 am to 4 pm, Butner Beef Cattle Field Lab more information will be coming, to register please contact Dean Askew at (919) 471-6872.

- **August 28th 9:00 am to 1:00 pm** - Pork Quality Assurance, Transport Quality Assurance - Duplin County to register call Wanda Hargrove at (910) 296-2143.

- **September 2nd** - Summer Grazing Workshop, Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Goldsboro for more information or to register contact Lisa Forehand at (919) 513-0954 or email her at lisa_forehand@ncsu.edu

- **September 9th** - Outdoor Hog Grower School, Duplin County for more information contact Jeremiah Jones at (910) 290-2547.

- **October 21st & 22nd** - New Animal Waste Certification Training, Duplin County, to pre register please call Wanda Hargrove at (910) 296-2143.

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**Fencelines** is a quarterly 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:

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