Forage Systems—Making Things Work
Richard Melton, County Extension Director, Union County Center

Any time most of us hear the word system we start to think about some technical or engineered item. Usually forage crops do not enter that picture. However, beef cattle producers should look at how to more systematically approach a forage program. Using a system approach allows producers to divide their forage programs into segments to increase productivity and efficiency of production and harvest. A sound forage program also has the potential to increase overall profitability of the operation.

The first question that has to be asked by a beef producer is what is the primary product produced on their operation. Hopefully when you ask yourself that question, you answer forages. Too many times there is confusion about what most beef operations actually produce. Forages should be the primary product and beef cattle just provide a way to market that product. If we take that approach, then we can start to establish a more defined approach to management. That in turn should help lead to better overall management for the operation.

The second question we need to ask is what is your forage program based on. No matter where a beef operation is in the country, there will typically be a dominate forage based on soil type, weather conditions and/or producer preference. Here in south central North Carolina there are two predominant forages. They are tall fescue for most producers north of US 74 and west of the Pee Dee River and bermudagrass for most producers east of the Pee Dee and south of US 74.

Both of these forage crops offer several production advantages. First, they are both perennials, therefore there are no yearly establishment efforts or worries. Second, they are both highly productive when managed properly. Third, they fit the environments they are grown in extremely well.

However, both crops have disadvantages. One big disadvantage is that they are seasonal producers. Fescue provides one-third of its growth from mid-September to mid-December and two-thirds from mid-February to mid-June. That leaves two periods very forage limited for fescue only producers.

Bermudagrass grows from mid-April to mid-October leaving bermuda only producer’s very forage limited for six months of the year.

A second disadvantage is that they are both perennial therefore they occupy the land they are on year round whether they are growing or not.

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So the question is how do we compensate for the seasonality disadvantage? The primary way is to grow another forage that compliments either the fescue or bermudagrass production windows. Obviously if you think about their growth windows, those forages do an excellent job of complimenting each other.

The problem is that it is much easier to compliment a fescue program with bermuda than a bermuda program with fescue. In most case we are forced to compliment a bermuda program with a winter annual such as rye, triticale or ryegrass. There are advantages and disadvantages to all those. The primary disadvantage is that as annuals they must be replanted each year. Another disadvantage could be their growth pattern. In any case you must evaluate them to see which fits best for you.

A fescue based program requires a summer forage to compliment it. As stated earlier, bermudagrass can fit that system very well. One mindset we must get away from in the “fescue belt” is that we can not grow bermudagrass. There are several bermudas (both hybrid and seeded) that work very well in the cooler loamy or clay based soils of the region. Some folks are averse to planting a bermuda pasture due to tying that acreage up year round with a warm season crop. If that is the case, you can still grow a warm season forage by using an annual such as pearl millet, sorghum-sudangrass or sudangrass. As with any annual the issue with those forages is that they must be replanted each year. There are also the native warm season perennials such as eastern gamagrass and switchgrass that can fit a system. Because they are native they are a more adapted to the soil and weather conditions of this region. However, a small acreage of warm season forage whether annual or perennial can make a fescue based forage program much more efficient.

The primary goals with matching any forage into a system are to improve productivity, add efficiency to your forage program and in the end improve the overall profitability of your operation. Visit with your local extension agent about the potential forage program for your operation.
Sale Requirements

- Producers must have a current BQA (Beef Quality Assurance) certification.
- Farm must have a premise identification number.
- Calves will be source and age verified according to USDA specifications. Contact Bruce Shankle, NCDA&CS at 919-733-7912, ext. 251 or 704-826-8848 for information and procedures.
- Calves must be weaned and bunk broke at least 45 days before sale.
- Final vaccinations (2nd set of shots) must be given at least 3 weeks before the sale and no more than 6 weeks before the sale.
- 1st set of shots should be given 2 to 4 weeks before Final Vaccinations according to label directions.
- If cattle are weaned and processed for the first BQA sale and held over for the second BQA sale a third dose of respiratory plus pasteurella (Pyramid + Presponse SQ) is required 3-5 weeks before the sale date.
- All heifers will be guaranteed open and traced back to the individual producer via the electronic identification if found otherwise. (How the producer decides to guarantee them open is up to his/her individual management decision.
- Vaccination records, dates and products must be maintained and provided to the market operator if requested.
- Cattle will be graded, weighed and penned according to grade, weight, breed and sex. Over filled cattle will not be graded. Cattle will be graded and sold in truckload lots whenever possible.
- Sire ID recommended, but not required.

Health Requirements

All Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) cattle marketed through the Norwood Area BQA sales will follow the “Prime Protection” Fort Dodge Animal Health preconditioning protocol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine Schedule Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>If 1st Set of Shots is given at Weaning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Weaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1st set of shots)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• One dose Pyramid 5+Presponse SQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One dose of Vision 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parasite control with Cydectin (pour-on or injectable)</td>
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</tbody>
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*If cattle are weaned and processed for the first BQA sale and held over for the second BQA sale a third dose of respiratory plus pasteurella (Pyramid + Presponse SQ) is required 3-5 weeks before the sale date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sale Dates</th>
<th>Last Weaning Date</th>
<th>Last date for Final Shots (2nd Set)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>July 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>July 27</td>
<td>August 20</td>
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Health Requirements:

- 2 Doses of modified live respiratory vaccine (Pyramid 5+Presponse SQ and Pyramid 5)
- 2 Doses of clostridial/blackleg (Vision 7 and Vision 7+Somnus)
- 1 Dose of pasteurella vaccine (Pyramid 5+Presponse SQ)
- This dose can be administered in combination products in order to reduce the number of injection sites.
- 1 Dose of Haemophilus Somnus (Vision 7+Somnus)
- This dose can be administered in combination products in order to reduce the number of injection sites.
- Parasite Control with Cydectin (pour-on or injectable)
Cattle History of North Carolina Project
Tiffanee Conrad-Acuña Extension Agent, Agriculture, Richmond County Center

The North Carolina Cattlemen’s Foundation is seeking information in order to write a much-anticipated book called The History of Cattle in North Carolina, from the First Settlers to the 21st Century. The primary authors will be Nancy Sorrells and Katharine Brown. It is expected to be available for purchase in the fall of 2011. The book will be an oversized, color, hardback book that will explain the cattle industry’s history in North Carolina. The Foundation plans to highlight the movers and shakers within the beef and dairy cattle industries since the 1870’s. All parts of North Carolina will be covered from the mountains to the sea. The book will describe the breeders, educators, and innovators that have made the cattle industry what it is today. It will discuss such technological advancements as animal health, disease control, breeding techniques, marketing systems, and feeding systems. Some example stories might be about 4-H or FFA clubs that showed cattle or Dairy farms that are no longer in existence. You’ll want to make sure to get your own copy once the book is released. It will also make great Christmas presents for family and friends. If you would like to support the production of this book through a tax-deductible donation to the North Carolina Cattlemen’s Foundation, please write to Clint Reese at 2228 N. Main St, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526 or email him at ClintReese@aol.com. Each County livestock agent has been asked to submit a cattle historical summary to the Foundation. You can help the Extension Agent in your county if you have any family stories or photographs dealing with cattle, please give them a call.

2009 Norwood Area Feeder Calf Sale Schedule

July 16
July 23 - BQA Sale
August 20
September 3
September 10 - BQA Sale
September 24
October 22

Remember that consignments are required and can be made by calling 704.983.3987.
Calf Mortality Issues and Options
Steve C. Lemons, Extension Agent, Agriculture, Stanly County Center

In April of 2008 the Department of Health and Human Services of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration published article 21 CFR Part 589 titled “Substances Prohibited From Use in Animal Food or Feed; Final Rule”. This ruling was put into place in order “to protect animals and consumers against BSE by prohibiting the use of most mammalian protein in the manufacture of animals feeds given to ruminant animals and by removing high-risk materials from all animal feed.” In short this federal law prohibits area rendering companies from accepting and rendering cattle older than 30 months of age without first removing the brains and spinal column and has eliminated the rendering plants as options for area cattle producers when in need for disposing of dead animals.

So now you ask: “What are our options for disposing of dead animals?” You have three legal options; Anson County landfill in Polkton, burial on farm location by specifications below or removal by private industry service. The Anson County Landfill is located in Polkton and the telephone number is (704)694-6900. There is a fee associated with this service so call them for further details. The only private service of this nature that I am aware of is B&B Farms Animal Service of Goldston, North Carolina. This service is done with a fee and for further information call Scott and Amy Bryant at their business phone number of (919)742-5564.

As far as burial of dead livestock, the following rules from Public Health GS apply: § 106-403. (Effective October 1, 2009) Disposition of dead domesticated animals.
It shall be the duty of the owner or person in charge of any of his domesticated animals that die from any cause and the owner, lessee, or person in charge of any land upon which any domesticated animals die, to bury the same to a depth of at least three feet beneath the surface of the ground within 24 hours after knowledge of the death of said domesticated animals, or to otherwise dispose of the same in a manner approved by the State Veterinarian. It shall be a violation of this statute to bury any dead domesticated animal closer than 300 feet to any flowing stream or public body of water. It shall be unlawful for any person to remove the carcasses of dead domesticated animals from his premises to the premises of any other person without the written permission of the person having charge of such premises and without burying said carcasses as above provided.
The governing body of each municipality shall designate some appropriate person whose duty it shall be to provide for the removal and disposal, according to the provisions of this section, of any dead domesticated animals located within the limits of the county, but without the limits of any municipality, when the owner or owners of said animals cannot be determined. All costs incurred by a municipality or county in the removal of a dead domesticated animal shall be recoverable from the owner of such animal upon admission of ownership or conviction. "Domesticated animal" as used herein shall include poultry.

In summary, it is always best to manage our cattle closely to reduce on farm mortalities of beef cattle but invariably death comes with the territory on occasion. Three options include on farm burial, B&B Animal Service, and the Anson County Landfill.

*All regular feeder cattle sales now require the use of a respiratory vaccine, Triangle 9 (Fort Dodge Animal Health), Three (3)-Five (5) weeks prior to the sale date. A second dose of respiratory vaccine will be administered at the Stanly County Livestock Market facility upon arrival on sale day. This was discussed and approved by producer vote at the Feeder Cattle Meeting in order to maintain the integrity of our feeder calf program, improve the health of our cattle, and enhance the overall marketability of our feeder calves.

Questions? Call your local Extension Agent.