

JUNE 7, 2021



# TRI-COUNTY LIVESTOCK NEWSLETTER

Serving residents of Anson, Stanly and Union County

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## Upcoming Events

Title: Pesticide Update

Description: Earn 2 hours of A,B,D,G,H,I,K,L,M,N,O,T, or X credits online! Contact Katelyn Stegall for registration information and Zoom link.

Date: 6/22/21 2:00pm-4:15pm

Title: Stanly County 4-H Livestock Show

Description: For more info contact Katelyn Stegall or the Stanly County Extension office.

Date: 8/21/21

Title: Anson County 4-H Heifer Show

Description: For more info contact Kinsey Everhart or the Anson County Extension office.

Date: 8/28/21

Title: Union County 4-H Livestock Show

Description: For more info contact Rachel Owens or the Union County Extension office.

Date: 9/18/21

For any meeting or program listed, persons with disabilities may request accommodations to participate by contacting the Extension Office where the meeting will be held by phone, email, or in person at least 7 days prior to the event.

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## Fly Control For Grazing Cattle

by Katelyn Stegall

We are approaching the time of year when flies become an issue for your grazing cattle. Horn flies, stable flies, and face flies are certainly a menace to cattle, but can also have underlying economic impacts if not controlled.

There are two types of flies that are most prevalent on cattle farms: horn flies and face flies.



Horn flies are around half the size of the average house fly. They have an average life cycle of 10-14 days from egg to adult. These flies suck blood, which can cause irritation and reduce weight gain. Horn flies can also spread infections that can damage udder tissues, affecting milking ability in cows. Roughly 200 flies per animal is when these flies start to cause economic issues. They are usually found around the back, sides, and poll area of cattle.

Face flies are slightly bigger than average house flies, and have a 21 day life cycle. They do not bite, but feed on animal secretions so they are typically found in clusters around the eyes, nose, and mouth. The main issue with face flies is damage to these areas, making them more susceptible to diseases such as pink eye. Face flies are the most difficult to control, because of they are not on the animal very long, and because of the location that they land on the animal.

Another fly found on cattle farms, though slightly less prevalent than those mentioned earlier is the stable fly. These flies are most common on feedlots and dairy farms, as they develop in decaying organic matter like wet hay. These flies may be found in pastures around winter hay feeding sights. These flies are often found around the legs, so they can be harder to control. The best method of control for stable flies is to remove the sources of the decaying organic matter, so the larva has nowhere to develop.

Once the flies are identified, they can be controlled in numerous ways.

Back rubbers and dust bags can be used. These can be purchased ready to use, or can be made for materials you likely already have on the farm. Cattle can “self-apply” with these back rubbers and dust bags, but attention must be paid by the producer to ensure that they have adequate amounts of insecticide to maintain control. These should also be used in conjunction with other fly control methods.

Insecticide ear tags are another effective option for fly control. These are tags similar to identification ear tags, but have been drenched in insecticides. It is important that these tags not be placed too early, as they may be less effective when flies are most active, in mid to late summer. These tags should also be taken out when flies are less active so a resistance to the insecticide is not built up by the flies. It is also important to rotate to tags with differing insecticide classes from year to year. This is another method of decreasing resistance to the insecticide.

Insecticide sprays and pour ons are another method of control. These are a little more difficult, as they last around 21 days and will need to be reapplied throughout the season. This will include bringing cattle to a central location at least once a month to apply the insecticide.

It is important to remember that most of these methods will need to be used in conjunction with other methods to get effective control over all three types of flies mentioned. Once again, the classes of these insecticides need to be varied from year to year to ensure that they remain effective at controlling the flies. A little effort can go a long way when controlling these flies for both the well-being of your animals, and your bottom line!

# Managing Summer Annual Pastures

by Rachel Owens

Summer annual forages, like sorghum, sudan-grass, and millets, are becoming an increasingly common method of providing additional forage during the hot summer months when our cool-season forages hit their summer slump. These summer annuals produce a large amount of biomass over a very short time. Many species can be ready for harvest in as little as 45-60 days after planting. It is important to know how to manage these forages in order to maximize productivity.



Fertilization is incredibly important with these plants. You will want to spread out nitrogen fertilization over the summer, ideally applying at planting and after every harvest. The goal is to avoid applying too much at any one time. Too much nitrogen can lead to issues with nitrate accumulation, especially when it rains after a period of drought. The plant takes up water along with excess nitrogen and it can't convert all the nitrogen into protein right away, leading to an accumulation of nitrates. These nitrates are very toxic to livestock, particularly ruminants. The ensiling process does not reduce the nitrates, so be careful if harvesting for haylage. Wait for about a week after the rain to give the nitrates time to dissipate. It is a good practice to test these forages before feeding to livestock. The NCDA Forage Lab tests for nitrates for free.

Since these forages grow so quickly, it is important to manage their harvest to prevent the plants from becoming too mature and losing quality. If grazing, use a rotational grazing strategy to keep plants grazed uniformly throughout the summer. Just be aware that when you start your rotations, the sections at the end of the rotation schedule will have had more time to become mature. Plan your schedule accordingly. If harvesting for hay, harvest fairly early, prior to or just at the boot stage. Number of harvests depends on the forage species. Some summer annuals are only good for one harvest, while others are able to be harvested multiple times due to regrowth ability.

If your variety is a multi-cut variety, pay attention to residual height. These forages need plenty of residual to provide adequate regrowth after harvest, since their growing point is higher than most cool season grasses. This will allow the regrowth to come from the stalk instead of solely from tillers. If rotational grazing, you will need to monitor the height of the forages carefully to avoid grazing too low. Proper residual height will depend on forage species as well as if it is a dwarf or non-dwarf variety.

Diversifying your operation with these forages offers many benefits for summer grazing. But with these benefits come their own challenges and considerations. Like with any new product or management style there will be a learning curve when it comes to incorporating summer annuals in your forage program. But with some time and experience, you can learn to manage these forages to best fit your operation.

## Managing Internal Parasites in Sheep and Goats

by Kinsey

Anthelmintic resistance is becoming a large issue in small ruminant herds. This is when deworming fails to achieve expected results such as prevention of death, production loss, or reduction of a fecal egg count by 95% or more. Anthelmintic resistance is wide spread and varies by species, geographic location, and individual farm.

Management can accelerate drug resistance. Some practices include frequent deworming, under dosing, deworming when infection levels are low, putting treated animals on clean pasture, improper use and storage of dewormers, etc. Targeted Selective Treatment is a method used to slow anthelmintic resistance. It involves only deworming animals that require deworming or would benefit from deworming.

There are a couple tools producers can use to make deworming decisions. One is the FAMACHA© system and the other is The Five Point Check©. The FAMACHA© system is based on the level of anemia for an animal. This can be estimated by assessing the color of the mucous membranes of the eye. Anemic animals will have a pale color while healthy animals will have a red color. The Five Point Check© is an extension of FAMACHA© and addresses its limitations. It looks at the animal's eyes, back, tail, jaw, and nose for sheep. Since this method was developed for sheep, we look at coat condition in goats instead of the nose.



**Eyes:** Anemia is caused by blood-feeding parasites, such as *Haemonchus*, hookworms, and liver flukes. Coccidiosis can also cause anemia. Anemia is estimated by evaluating the color of the lower eyelid and comparing it to the colors on the FAMACHA© guide.

**Back:** A Body Condition Score (BCS) is taken to determine how fat or thin an animal is. By handling the animal, the amount of fat and muscle over the back, ribs, and loin can be determined. Internal parasites can cause a loss of body condition. However, poor or declining body condition can also be a sign of age, poor nutrition, or other diseases. Also, animals vary in their ability to carry and hold body condition. Scoring is based on a 1-5 scale with 1 being very thin and 5 being obese.

**Tail:** A dag score is taken to determine what degree of fecal soiling has occurred on the hindquarters. Dags are dried feces left on the rear end of an animal. Many worms can cause diarrhea, but stress and diet are other causes of diarrhea. Dag scoring is based on a 0-5 scale, 0 being none and 5 being severe diarrhea extending to the hocks.

**Jaw:** Bottle jaw is an accumulation of fluid under the lower jaw of a sheep, goat, or calf. It is usually a result of anemia and occurs primarily due to the infestation of barber pole worms (*Haemonchus contortus*) or other blood feeding parasites.

**Coat:** The condition of a goat's hair coat can be indicative of its overall health and thriftiness.

FAMACHA© and the Five Point Check© are used together when determining when to deworm and can be a useful tool when culling animals. Other factors to consider when determining whether or not to deworm are the scores of other animals in the herd, fecal consistency, weight gain, fecal egg count, and past FAMACHA© and Five Point Check© scores on the individual animals. For more information on managing internal parasites in sheep and goats contact your local Cooperative Extension Office.