



Yancey County Center

## January 2021

### Greetings from the CED!

January is now in full swing as we have officially reached 2021. This is usually a time of planning for many agronomic and horticultural crop producers. I am happy to announce that our new Agent, Sara Runkel started her position as of December 7, and is now in full swing. We have a feature this month to help you get to know a little about her. Sara will especially be focusing on nursery/ornamental production, and will be working with Adam on developing programming related to vegetable production. In particular, Sara has some practical organic farming production experience which will be a great benefit for many Yancey County producers. Make sure you take advantage of her expertise and ability to assist you throughout your winter planning. At the N.C. Cooperative Extension Yancey County Center, we have now moved into our winter meeting season. However, due to Covid-19, we are still somewhat limited in that these meetings will be offered virtually this year instead of in person. I hope you will plan to participate! As always, remember that our doors are open. Feel free to give us a call, email. You can visit us in person, but calling ahead is preferred to make sure we comply with indoor gathering restrictions due to the Covid-19 precautions we are implementing in our office.

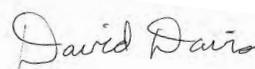
### Dealing With Muddy Feeding Conditions!

This is the time of the year that we start to see very muddy feeding conditions. Muddy feeding conditions are rough on farmers, equipment, and animals.

- Accidents and injuries are more likely to occur to farmers as they feed livestock in muddy conditions.
- Muddy conditions can result in damage to tractors, hay feeders, and other farm equipment
- The costs to livestock production include less than desirable animal performance and growth.
- Livestock will have higher energy needs which may mean feeding both more feed, and higher quality feed. Ultimately this can impact the bottom line in a less than desirable manner.

Find out more about management practices to deal with muddy feeding conditions on page 2!

Sincerely,



David Davis  
County Extension Director  
N.C. Cooperative Extension  
Yancey County Center

#### Contact Us:

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[yancey.ces.ncsu.edu](http://yancey.ces.ncsu.edu)



YANCEY COUNTY CENTER

**N.C. Cooperative Extension  
Yancey County Center  
To Present**

# Winter School 2021

We are very excited to introduce Winter School. The program will be conducted each January annually and will be focused on different timely ongoing agricultural topics in Yancey County. Due to Covid-19, the first annual Winter School will be conducted virtually. There are three nights, each night focused on a different topic. This year we are focusing on ornamentals, vegetable production, and beef cattle production. Learn more about what will be offered each night below.

**January 26**

## Ornamentals Night

- **Managing Boxwood Blight**
- **Beginning Christmas Tree Production**
- **Christmas Tree Integrated Pest Management Update**

**February 2**

## Beef Night

- **Forage/Pasture Management Options**
- **Vaccination and Herd Health Issues Update**

**February 9**

## Vegetable Production Night

- **Evaluating and Implementing Soil Test Reports**
- **IPM and Vegetable Disease Update**
- **TRACTOR Farms and Food Update**

- Program will begin each night at 5:30 PM
- Must Pre-register to receive a link to attend

# Join Us!

- Attend Virtually from Home to Minimize the Impact of Covid-19
- Free Program- No Registration Fee

For more information, or to register contact the Yancey County Extension Service by calling (828) 682-6186, register online ([yancey.ces.ncsu.edu](http://yancey.ces.ncsu.edu)), or send an email to Christina Robinson ([christina\\_robinson@ncsu.edu](mailto:christina_robinson@ncsu.edu)) to request a registration link.

## Meet the Yancey County Agriculture Agent- Sara Runkel!



Meet Sara Runkel,  
Yancey County  
Agriculture Extension Agent

Sara Runkel is excited to be joining NC Cooperative Extension as the Horticulture Agent for Yancey County. Sara recently moved from SW Oregon where she worked for Oregon State University Extension Service as a Horticulturalist in Josephine County. Her prior Extension programs focused on commercial small farm viability, FSMA Produce Safety Rule preparedness, and supporting sustainable gardening and local food production through the Master Gardener Program, farm to school programs, and community horticulture education. Sara has over 20 years of commercial farming and landscaping experience with a focus on diversified vegetables, specialty cut flowers, and greenhouse production.

Prior to working for OSU Extension Sara was the Executive Director and Farm Manager of a new farmer training program and farm business incubator in Eastern Pennsylvania. Sara has a MS in Sustainable Systems from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania and a BA in Environmental Studies from Warren Wilson College. She is thrilled to be back in Western North Carolina and is looking forward to working with commercial ornamental growers and supporting home gardeners through community education and growing the Master Gardener Program in Yancey County.

## Dealing With Muddy Feeding Conditions! (Continued)

How do you deal with muddy feeding conditions? One of the best ways is to work with water quality management specialists or consultants to put in heavy use winter feeding pads. These feeding pads are usually constructed out of densely packed gravel pads that will allow for good drainage and easy manure management. There are many designs that would probably work well on most farms in Yancey County. However, much thought needs to be put into deciding the best designs for your purposes and where heavy use feeding pad should be best located after considering drainage patterns, soil types, etc. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and Soil and Water Conservation Office would be a great start to assist by providing expertise needed if putting a heavy use feeding pad is of interest on your farm.



Heavy Use Feeding Pads can be used to alleviate mud issues associated with winter feeding.

Of course, constructing a heavy use feeding area is probably not an immediate possibility as many pastures and feeding areas are already pretty muddy. A few other suggestions of more immediate actions are to reduce stocking rates to avoid over confinement, move livestock more often between different pastures if possible, move hay feeders often throughout pastures, or possibly utilize a "sacrifice pasture" for feeding but don't forget to renovate it in the spring. Another very temporary option is to feed hay by rolling out instead of using feeders on the muddiest days. However, realize that this option may come with some loss of hay due to trampling, soiling, or manuring of the hay. The most important thing to remember is that mud increases the energy requirements of your animals. So during muddy times, make sure that you are monitoring body condition. Feeding higher levels of energy (not necessarily protein) may be required to compensate for muddy conditions.

If you would like to discuss mud issues for your livestock, discuss nutrition plans, request a farm visit, or discuss any other livestock production concerns, I would like to encourage you to contact me. Feel free to call our office at 828-682-6186, or send an email to David Davis ([david\\_davis@ncsu.edu](mailto:david_davis@ncsu.edu)).

## NC Virtual Nursery Conference February 8-11, 2021

Session presentations @ 10 AM each day

Each session will last 1 hour

**Pesticide Credits Available**  
**(D, L, N, O, and X credits)**

**\$25 per company  
Registration**

For more information, or to register visit

<https://yancey.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/12/nc-virtual-nursery-conference-february-8-11-2021/> or call 828-682-6186



## 53rd Annual Winter Vegetable Conference

**February 25-25, 2021**

To Be Held Virtually this Year!

The 53rd Annual Winter Vegetable Conference will look a little different this year. The conference will be held virtually to minimize the spread of Covid-19, and to protect the conference participants. This is still the largest commercial vegetable grower event in the region. This year's conference will include educational sessions focused on many aspects of vegetable production including pest management, tomato breeding, and food safety. It will even feature a virtual trade show. For a full agenda, to print a hard copy registration form to mail in, or to access the online registration link for this year's conference, visit [www.nctomatoes.com](http://www.nctomatoes.com). You can also contact Adam McCurry ([adam\\_mccurry@ncsu.edu](mailto:adam_mccurry@ncsu.edu)) at the N.C. Cooperative Extension Yancey County Center by email or calling 828.682-6186 if you would like more information or need assistance with the registration process..

### Would You Like to Receive This Newsletter by Email Each Month?

The Yancey County Cooperative Extension Service Agriculture Newsletter is an easy way to stay up to date on all the upcoming educational programs, activities, field days, and timely topics. If you would like to receive this newsletter monthly via email at no cost, you simply need to contact the Yancey County Extension Office to be added to our newsletter list. Mailing a hard copy through the USPS is not available at this time due to the cost of mailing. However, you can also access our monthly Ag Newsletter anytime by visiting our website [yancey.ces.ncsu.edu](http://yancey.ces.ncsu.edu).