

Agriculture Newsletter

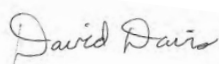
January 2023

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As we have now entered into a new year, there's a lot of decisions to be made on the farm. Whether you produce vegetables or livestock, now is the time to prepare and plan for the upcoming year. Hopefully we can help you with this process. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Adam or myself as you come up with questions. We will be glad to help you. We are also very excited about many winter program opportunities that are being planned over the next couple of months. We hope you will join us!

Sincerely,



David Davis
Agriculture Extension Agent/CED
NC Cooperative Extension
Yancey County Center

Contact Us:

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Checkout our website:

yancey.ces.ncsu.edu

Spring Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification

Thursday, February 9, 2023
Yancey County Extension Center
30 E Hwy 19E Bypass
Burnsville NC

The spring Private Applicator Pesticide "V Safety" Recertification class has been scheduled. Any Yancey County private pesticide applicator with a license expiring as of December 31, 2023 that has not obtained 2.0 "V" credits in the previous 3 years should plan to attend. For more information, please email David Davis (david_davis@ncsu.edu) or call the Yancey County Center at (828) 682-6186.

Meal
Provided!

NC Cooperative Extension
of Yancey County Presents:

No Cost
to Attend!

The 3rd Annual Winter School

Session 1

Planning for the Next Generation on the Farm

Thursday, January 26, 2023

Starting @ 6:00 PM

Yancey County Senior Center

503 Medical Campus Dr.

Burnsville NC

Topics Include:

1. Farm Succession: Planning for the Next Generation
2. Benefits of Enrolling a Farm Into a Voluntary Agricultural District

Session 2

Considerations for a Successful Hay Harvest in 2023



Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Starting @ 6:00 PM

Yancey County Senior Center

503 Medical Campus Dr.

Burnsville NC



For more information or to register for any session of the "3rd Annual Winter School" send an email to David Davis (david_davis@ncsu.edu) or call 828-682-6186



Have You Checked Up on Vegetable Production Costs This Year?

One of my favorite activities in the month of January, especially on the coldest days, is usually to check out the newest vegetable seed catalogs from my favorite companies. I like to look at all the new cultivars, check out new attributes such as disease resistance, and usually I get very excited thinking of the planting season. However, this year is a little different. Probably like many other vegetable producers, those catalogs are not quite as fun to look at this year. Most seed prices have increased considerably. Before you plan out your varieties of choice, or before you make the seed order, you may just want to pencil out the costs ahead of time this year.

I am also concerned that seed costs are not the only costs to be thinking about. Looking at the increased costs of many traditional inputs, it will be more important than ever to budget and plan for the upcoming vegetable production season. It may just be the difference between having a success or failure on the farm! Knowing what each specific vegetable crop will cost and weighing that against practical experience of what it will bring in may help you in deciding what to plant. It may be a good year to leave out some of the less profitable crops and consider planting alternatives.

If you would like assistance in making planting decisions, or planning for profitability in your vegetable production farming enterprise, I would like to remind you that we are here to help! Please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or Adam McCurry (adam_mccurry@ncsu.edu) our NC A&T Ag Technician. You can reach me by sending an email to david_davis@ncsu.edu, or by calling the Yancey County Center at (828) 682-6186.

2023 Plant Sale Beginning Soon!

Wouldn't it be nice to grow your own apples, strawberries, grapes or blackberries?

We can help you gain that experience by giving you access to a variety of different heirloom apples trees, garden strawberry bare root plants, grape vines and much more. We will have many different types of plants available for purchase as part of this year's plant sale. We will soon be taking orders and we will be taking payments for our 2023 plant sale.

If you would like to be added to the NC Cooperative Extension of Yancey County plant sale mailing list or if you would like to receive an order form, send an email to Christina Robinson (christina_robinson@ncsu.edu). Alternatively you can call the Yancey County Center at (828) 682-6186. We will also be posting updates about the plant sale on the "Horticulture" page that can be accessed on our website (<https://yancey.ces.ncsu.edu/yancey-county-agriculture-horticulture/>).



NC Tomato Growers Association's 55th Annual Meeting, Winter Vegetable Conference, & Trade Show



February 22-23, 2023
Crown Plaza Resort
Asheville NC



If you would like to find out more, or to register visit the NC Tomato Growers Association Website: <https://www.ncagr.gov/markets/commodit/horticul/tomatoes/>.

Gearing Up for the Vegetable Production Season

It will be time to plant those early season vegetables before you know it so make sure that you are ready for the upcoming growing season. Here are a few tips of what commercial vegetable producers can do now to prepare for the upcoming growing season:

1. **Soil Test-** If you haven't completed soil testing already, now is the time to do it. Soil testing will help you best estimate soil fertility needs specific to the crops that you are going to plant. Soil testing now will make sure that you will have results back in time prior to fertilize application. A soil test may also be very beneficial in deciding where to plant specific vegetable crops. Remember that soil test do cost \$4 per sample between Thanksgiving and April.
2. **Plow in and/or spray down cover crop.** If you get the right field conditions, go ahead and plow especially if you have cover crop. We still have some freezing and thawing temperature swings coming our way. Turning the soil now will take advantage of the freezing and thawing of the soil and will make the soil easier to prepare. Additionally, harmful pathogens or insects that are overwintering in the top few inches can be reduced if they are exposed to the temperatures. Turning soil now will allow ample time for cover crops to decay, and to reach their maximum benefit.
3. **Now is the time to really consider your markets for the upcoming year and plan accordingly.** Now is the time to have conversations with potential buyers. If you can get contracts, or written commitments, great! Knowing where you are marketing your crops, and having an idea of what they might bring will be very helpful for budgeting.

Feel free to contact NC Cooperative Extension of Yancey County if you would like additional tips or assistance in planning for the upcoming production season on your farm!

Hay Testing Can Make Livestock Producers Money!



If you have had to purchase feed lately, you know that prices have gone up over the last two years. Feed prices have stabilized somewhat recently, but for awhile it seemed that prices increased with every load. With prices so high, it makes sense to minimize supplemental hay feeding as much as possible. But this is harder to accomplish than it sounds! Hay testing can make this process much easier.

Although many think they are a good judge of hay quality, hay is probably most often not as good as perceived. Many will judge hay quality by how it looks, how it smells, or how it feels in their hand. Looks, smell, and texture can be deceiving. The best way to judge hay quality is to test it. The numbers do not lie! Even though we are well into January, and hope to put grazing animals on green growing grass in the next 2-3 months, it is not too late to test hay. In fact, it can still be very beneficial to do so.

By testing hay, we can best estimate its quality parameters. We can collect a little bit of information related to your production goals and circumstances (finishing weight, anticipated calving/kidding, current body condition, anticipated herd/flock breeding dates, etc.), get an idea of what feed you want to supplement with, and then use the hay test results to assist in formulating feeding plans. We can help you identify if you are wasting feed or see if you are not feeding enough to reach your production goals. In other words, hay testing can make you money!

If you would like assistance testing your hay, and formulating feeding plans for the spring, please contact me here at the Yancey County Extension Center.

5 Timely Tips for Beef Cattle Producers

1. Be prepared for the spring calving season. Put together a calving box that contains calving supplies such as calf tags, a calving record book, gloves, lube, banding tool, bands, syringes, needles, any necessary injections, and have your veterinarian's contact information close by.
2. Order Hi-Mag mineral and have it on hand for the spring. Loose mineral is better for the herd than mineral blocks. Transition cattle to hi-mag mineral when the grass shows signs of spring growth.
3. Gather up temporary fencing materials, and plan to rotate cattle through pastures more frequently in the early grazing season. Decrease paddock size with temporary fencing and make sure to allow enough time for pastures to rest and regrow.
4. Monitor cattle body condition of cows and adjust feeding plans as needed to reach/maintain the desired body condition. Take into consideration nutritional needs of the herd. Cows with new calves will need better nutrition. If still in breeding season for fall calving herds, make sure cows and bulls are in good body condition.
5. Consider administering pregnancy check by blood test for the fall calving herd within 30-60 days of the breeding season. Consider culling or next steps for cows that have not conceived.

Understanding Livestock Feed Types

Not every livestock feed is the same. Have you considered if you are feeding the most appropriate supplement to your livestock? Let's take a look at a few things to consider when you pick out your next feed supplement.

"All Stock" feed- Most companies have a version of all stock feed. These feeds are formulated so that they can be fed to multiple livestock species. These formulations are also usually some of the cheapest formulations. However, keep in mind that they may be missing key nutrients, and vitamins that your species of livestock need. It is usually best to feed the supplement that will best meet your intended feeding and production goals and feed a ration specific to your species of livestock.

What Percent Protein is best?- Many feeds for each species of livestock may vary by protein percentage. Some common feeds would be 12%, 14%, 16% or even 18% Protein. These feeds will differ in their crude protein (CP) measurement. Keep in mind that crude protein is just based on the estimated nitrogen content. It is an important consideration for feeding non-ruminant livestock, especially swine. CP is also an important consideration for formulating rations for non-matured growing animals which typically need feed higher in protein to support continued growth and development. However, feeds higher in CP content are not necessarily a better quality or best fit in every circumstance. To make matters more complicated, not all feeds of the same %CP are of equal quality. They can differ in many other areas such as energy or fiber content. Typically, those feeds that are higher in fiber and lower in energy will be priced cheaper than a feed with the same CP but lower fiber/higher energy.

Pelletized, Cracked/Crumble, or Fines/scratch ?- Livestock feedstuffs come in many different forms. Some feeds are ground fine then compressed with heat and pressure into a pellet. Other feeds are ground through larger screens and come as cracked (for ruminants) or crumble (for poultry) products. Other feeds are ground very fine and labeled as fine ground as meal, sometimes referred to as "fines" for many livestock or as "scratch" for poultry. Many farmers also will consider feeding whole grains such as shell corn or whole soybeans. For the most part, swine feed should be fed as finely ground meal or as pellets. Mature chickens should be fed pellets or crumbles to minimize feed waste. Scratch or starter is required when feeding immature baby chickens and pullets. Coarsely ground or cracked feeds are best for goats and cattle. Sheep will produce better and have better feed efficiency and less waste when feed ground feed or pellets. In recent years, research has shown very little difference in feed efficiency or performance when comparing those fed cracked or whole kernel corn. Cattle may have more feed waste when fed finely ground feed instead of pelletized feed.

Specialty Feeds- Some feed are formulated as medicated for specific purposes. These feeds will have very specific labels. Remember that this label is the law regarding restrictions and use instructions. Make sure to be aware of, fully understand, and follow all restrictions when feeding medicated feeds.

If you would like assistance making your livestock feeding plan and choosing the right feed, contact us at the Yancey County Center.