TWINNING IN CATTLE

Emily A. Walton – Livestock Agent, Onslow County

If you raise cattle, chances are a set of twins will come along sooner or later. Most beef producers say breeding for twins is just asking for trouble. Many times, a cow with twins will reject one of the calves and leave the other as an orphan. In addition, cows that give birth to twins are pulled down and will rebreed later than the other cows in the herd.

The USDA Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Nebraska has been managing a twinning herd for the past 24 years. Researchers have found that as long as there is good nutrition, there is only a 10% difference between the weights of twin calves and single calves when weaned. The twins can, in most cases, almost double the income from a single cow. Certain breeds, such as Simmental, Charolais, and Holstein, and also large heifers are more likely to produce twins. On the downside, cows that deliver twins have twice as many problems as cows who only deliver a single calf. Cows that deliver twins also have a much larger feed requirement. The research herd has about a 50-60% rate of twins within the herd of 250 cows but it only has an 80% herd calving rate. With the high twin rate, the herd still manages a 120% calf crop.

Cows can be placed in stalls with the twins for the first 24 hours after birth to increase bonding. Many times if a calf is rejected, the producer will switch that calf to a cow that has lost her calf. The cow can be encouraged to accept the orphan as her own by rubbing the scent of the cow’s dead calf on the orphaned twin calf and then putting the two in a pen so the calf can nurse.

Researchers say that there is a good deal of interest in twinning from producers who have 100 or fewer cows. Smaller herds allow producers to observe cows closer and provide more assistance if cows should have trouble giving birth. When the herd is much larger, close observation and added assistance usually requires too much labor and is not worth the trouble to producers.

In case you should encounter twins within your own herd, here are some tips for how to deal with them:

- Be there to help the cow deliver.
- Keep the cow and twins in a small pen for at least 24 hours to encourage bonding.
• Give the twins extra colostrum to be sure that both of them get off to a good start.
• Wean the twins around 6 months of age.
• Feed the cow well in her last trimester of pregnancy and while she is nursing the twins.
• Don’t save a twin heifer as a replacement if she is born with a bull brother. She will probably be sterile (a freemartin).

A few other key points from the label:
• Apply only to established bermuda (planted in the fall or spring and gone through first mowing/cutting) when in winter dormancy
• Rate range: 1.1 to 4.2 qt/A per season
• Dense grass infestations: apply at least 3 lb ai/A (3.2 qt/A)
• Split application timings: ½ rate at onset of dormancy followed by ½ rate prior to spring greenup

RESTRICTIONS*
Do not apply in standing water
Do not exceed 4.2 qt/A/year
60 day hay restriction
45 day forage harvest or grazing restriction

*Always read and follow label directions.

The use of brand names in this publication does not imply endorsement of the products or services named or criticism of similar ones not mentioned.

A NEW PRODUCT FOR WEED CONTROL IN BERMUDAGRASS!

Eve H. Honeycutt, Livestock Agent, Lenoir and Greene Counties.

There is great news this spring for bermudagrass pastures. Prowl H2O (pendimethalin) is now labeled for established bermudagrass pastures and hay fields for pre-emergent control of annual grasses.

This product has been in the works for many years. This application will provide excellent control of crabgrass and goosegrass and fair to good control of sandbur. If applied correctly, this treatment will provide season-long control of crabgrass and goosegrass, even with heavy populations. As you know, there are no registered or effective post-emergent options for both of these grasses. But this treatment will prevent the need for any post-emergent treatment for crabgrass and goosegrass.

There are two main points that need to be stressed to obtain season-long control. They are:

• Prowl H2O needs to be applied at 3 lbs active ingredient/acre and activated by water (rainfall or irrigation).

• Prowl H2O needs to be applied by early March at the latest. Crabgrass germinates when soil temperatures average about 55 degrees. This typically occurs by mid-March in sandy soils, particularly east of Raleigh. Also, the label states that it needs to be applied to dormant bermuda.

STRATEGIC ANTIBIOTIC USE REMAINS PRIORITY, RESPONSIBILITY

Emily Herring, Livestock Agent, Pender County
Article is excerpted from pork.org

With the recent Katie Couric, CBS interview about antibiotics and animal agriculture, now is a good time for pork producers along with other livestock producers to utilize certifications such as PQA Plus and BQA to reassure consumers ‘We Care’. As farmers, you do care about your animals, your environment and your family’s health. The following article is from pork.org outline the four most important messages for your consumers need to know about antibiotic usage in the animal industry.

Although recent stories in the media have triggered more interest in the topic, the responsible use of antibiotics has always been a top priority for America’s pork producers.

“We welcome a fact-based discussion about this issue, because we know that science tells us we’re doing the right thing for animal health and
What is coccidiosis?

Coccidiosis is caused by microscopic protozoan parasites called coccidia. They go through a complex “life cycle” in the intestinal cells of goats. In the process, they produce large numbers of eggs (called oocytes) that are passed in the feces. In the process of growth and multiplication in the goat intestine, the coccidia may destroy many intestinal cells. This may cause diarrhea and other signs of the disease.

Coccidiosis is the most common cause of diarrhea in goats between 3 weeks and 5 months of age. This is especially true when goats are housed in confinement. Coccidiosis commonly strikes young goats shortly after weaning because of the stress of being suddenly separated from their dam. Most all adult goats carry coccidians in their intestines. The very small eggs passed in the feces of adult goats hatch in the environment and got kids pick up the infective stages of the coccidians either directly from the manure or in contaminated feed and water. When present in small numbers, coccidia normally are not a problem. Therefore, the number of coccidia that invade the intestines will determine the severity of the infection. Generally, if the animal does not show clinical signs (diarrhea, etc.), the coccidia level of infection is probably not significant.

In the presence of appropriate temperature, moisture and oxygen, coccidia eggs passed in the feces “hatch” and become infective in two to several days and can readily contaminate feed and water. Upon ingestion by other goats, these infective forms pass through the stomach and into the intestines. Then they invade the intestinal cells and undergo several changes. Sick, young and stressed goats (from weaning) are more susceptible and in these cases the coccidia may proliferate. The increased destruction of the intestinal lining will then cause signs of coccidiosis in the herd.

When a coccidiosis outbreak begins, only good sanitation and isolation of sick animals will prevent its spread through the herd. Coccidian eggs are resistant to many disinfectants and my survive more than a year in the environment. They can stay alive in a pasture as long as they are in a moist and dark environment, but will die when temperatures drop below freezing. Goats that survive coccidiosis develop a degree of immunity to future coccidia problems.

What are the signs of coccidiosis?

The signs of coccidiosis are divided into two
categories: subclinical and clinical. Subclinical cases result in a decrease in feed intake and weight gain, and are difficult to detect because of the absence of diarrhea. Clinical cases can vary from some loss of appetite and decrease in weight gain and slight, short lived diarrhea to severe cases involving great amounts of diarrhea, fluid feces containing mucus and blood, persistent straining in attempt to pass feces, loss of weight, rough hair coat, dehydration, and in some cases death in as short as 24 hours. The primary pathology associated with coccidiosis involves intestinal cell destruction. Scarring and damage to the lining of the intestines following treatment or recovery may result in permanently unthrifty and stunted goats because the ability of these goats to absorb food is impaired.

Diagnosis is based on history/signs, microscopic examination of feces, and post-mortem analysis. Presence of coccidia eggs in the feces of normal goats indicates that the goats are infected, but not necessarily diseased. Coccidia eggs (oocysts) can be found in the feces of most goats, including healthy goats.

**How to minimize the risk and/or to prevent coccidiosis?**

Good husbandry practices are the best preventive measures against coccidiosis. Regular removal of manure and wasted feed, not feeding on the ground, designing feeders and water systems that minimize fecal contamination, providing a clean source of water, cleaning water tanks and feeders regularly, making sure that watering systems do not leak and that sufficient sunlight enters buildings are examples of such husbandry practices. If goats are kept on solid floors during the winter, maintaining clean and dry bedding is important.

**What are the important facts to remember about coccidiosis?**

1. Coccidia are very host specific. Therefore, the species of coccidia that infect goats only affect goats. Coccidia found in birds, cattle, dogs, and rabbits will NOT infect goats. For some coccidia, there may be some cross-infection between sheep and goats.

2. Virtually every goat has some level of infection, but illness occurs only in some animals. Fecal samples from virtually any goat of any age, sex, breed, and physiological stage can contain coccidia eggs.

3. **THE DISEASE IS ALMOST ALWAYS**

**GOING TO OCCUR IN YOUNG ANIMALS. KIDS LESS THAN 5 MONTHS OF AGE ARE ESPECIALLY SUSCEPTIBLE.** Kids will become infected early on from the environment. Adults will have immunity to the parasite that is reasonably effective in preventing disease, but not infection.

4. The primary sign of coccidiosis is diarrhea. Look for the signs of the infection in stressed animals. Happy, well-nourished kids left with their dam may show no diarrhea until they are weaned.

**THE STRESS OF WEANING MAY DEPRESS IMMUNITY ENOUGH FOR THE COCCIDIA TO GET THE UPPER HAND AND CAUSE INFECTION.**

5. Good husbandry practices are the best preventive measures against coccidiosis. These include measures such as removing manure, not feeding off the ground, not letting goats jump into feeders (a real challenge), cleaning feed troughs and water tanks regularly, etc. Drugs used to treat coccidia include amprolium (Corid®), decoquinate (Deccox®), monensin (Rumensin®), lasalocid (Bovatec®) and sulfadimethoxine (Albon®).

**Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact an agent of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension in your county.**

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**Forage Management Tips**

**March**

- Apply nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to cool-season grasses to increase spring production.
-Begin grazing of fall-planted fescue and clovers when growth reaches 6 inches.
- Overseeding ladino clover into grass pastures should be completed early.
- Spread manure accumulated in pastures where
hay was fed or where cattle congregated during the winter.
• Dig weed-free bermudagrass springs and plant them before growth begins; consider using a herbicide.
• Consider controlling winter weeds (ex: henbit, hairy buttercup, etc) with herbicides.
• Grass tetany may be a problem as rapid grass growth and cool, wet weather prevails.

April

• Fertilize cool-season grasses if you have not already done so.
• Watch for symptoms of grass tetany. Winter annual pastures should be completely used before grazing pastures that will be harvested as hay.
• To maintain clover in grass pastures and to maintain quality, develop a rotational grazing system in which cattle can graze forage to a 2-inch height before moving to another pasture.
• Fertilize warm-season grasses as soon as dormancy breaks.

Upcoming Events

APRIL

5th & 6th - Coastal Plains Junior Livestock Show and Sale, Lenoir County Livestock Arena.

SPOTLIGHT

Extension Volunteers Recognized

The annual Onslow County Agricultural Awards Banquet was held on February 9th at the Onslow Multipurpose Complex. Recognition was given to the various groups of volunteers that give of themselves to support and expand the work of the NC Cooperative Extension Service here in Onslow County. During 2009, Onslow County Master Gardeners volunteered over 3,600 hours of service to local citizens.

Special recognition was given to Jim Van Gorder, Marion Goodman and Jean Rebholz for their 500 hours of volunteer time and Leona Lilley and Barbara Walters were also recognized for 1000 hours of volunteer time as Master Gardeners.

Special recognition was also given to Jim and Sally Van Gorder, who were named the 2009 Master Gardener Volunteers of the Year for their devotion to increasing the knowledge level of other master gardeners and the public.

Several local farmers received awards for crop production contests:

Corn Yield Champion (non-irrigated division): Barry Shepard, DeKalb 6971 with 205.60 bushels per acre. Runner-Up: Richlands Farms with, Pioneer 31G71 with 199.06 bushels per acre.

Corn Yield Champion (irrigated division): Donnie & Franklin Riggs, Pioneer 31M57 with 223.16 bushels per acre.

Wheat Yield Champion: Richlands Farms, Inc, USG 3592 with 83.09 bushels per acre. Runner-Up was Winzell Taylor Jr., Coker 9436 with 71.65 bushels per acre.

The Onslow County Agricultural Hall of Fame award was begun in 1984. The nominee can only be inducted to the Agricultural Hall of Fame once, as either a recipient of the Master Farmer Award or the James R. Strickland Service to Agriculture Award. This year’s inductee was for the Master Farmer Award and that inductee was Mr. Ronnie Cox.

On January 19th, 4-H recognized Tina Gill as the 4-H Volunteer Leader of the year. Along with Mrs. Gill all 4-H volunteers were thanked and recognized for the years of service at the annual 4-H Volunteer Leaders Banquet. The theme this year was “4-H..Let it Grow, Let it Grow, Let it Grow”.

The Onslow County Extension and Community Association (ECA) celebrated their 2009 achievements on February 23rd. The speaker for the event was Lisa Whitman Grice, Onslow County Museum Director.

The event started off with a memorial to ECA members that had passed away since the last Achievement Day.
Several members were recognized for special awards. They are as follows:

**Perfect Attendance** - Several members were recognized for attending all of the club's monthly meetings.

**Reading Certificates** – 6 members were recognized for reading and submitting book reports of all books read. 3 members were recognized for their reading reports. 1st Place went to Ruth Clifton turning in 49 book reports, 2nd place, Donna Williams and 3rd place, Barbara Nichols.

**Cofer Leader Program Award** – Nancy Goad from the Sneads Ferry club received this award for a lesson she presented to her club. All clubs voted on a member that had presented information during the year. Judges then picked the overall winner from reports presented to them.

**Most Outstanding Club Member** – The following members were recognized after being voted on by the club members as the club’s outstanding member: Jean Ross – Harmony; Kathy Cook – Jacksonville; Kathy Maready – Meadow View and Nettie King – Sneads Ferry.

**Most Outstanding Club** – This award is voted on by judges after seeing all the work done by a club's members. This year's award was presented to the Meadow View Club.

**Extension and Community Associate of the Year** – This award is given to an outstanding member that goes above and beyond the call of duty. This year's award was presented to Barbara Crossman.

Other awards were given by were not available at the time of this release.

For more information regarding the Extension and Community Association please call Peggie Garner at (910) 455-5873.