Goats require many minerals for basic body function and optimum production. Providing free choice a complete goat mineral or a 50:50 mix of trace mineralized salt and dicalcium phosphate is advisable under most situations. Major minerals likely to be deficient in the diet are salt (sodium chloride), calcium, phosphorous and magnesium. Most forages are high in calcium, so calcium is low only if high grain diets are fed, which would be unusual for goats. Low quality, weathered forages will be deficient in phosphorous, especially for high and average lactating does. The ratio of calcium to phosphorous in the diet is important and should be kept about 2:1. Grass tetany can occur when goats in early lactation are grazing lush, leafy small grain, annual ryegrass of grass/legume pastures. Under those conditions, it is advisable to provide a mineral mix that contains 5 to 10% magnesium.

Trace minerals likely to be low in diets are copper, zinc and selenium. Selenium should be provided to the goat herd at all times. Producers should make sure that the trace mineralized salts they buy contain selenium. In case selenium is absent, they should encourage their local feed store to include it in the mix or to order trace mineralized salts that contain selenium.

Copper content. Goats are much more tolerant of copper than sheep. Sheep are very susceptible to excess dietary copper. Most sheep diets are formulated to contain less than 20 ppm copper. Consequently, many commercially prepared goat feeds are formulated to contain 25-30+ ppm copper. Do not offer goat feeds to lambs unless the copper content is well understood.
If you have not had much damage to your pasture, you are lucky. However, regrowth will still depend on rain. Plan for the worst—make sure you have enough hay. If you wait on spring to come, and there still is no grass, you will have a very hard time finding hay. There are a lot of advertisements for hay on the NCDA Hay Alert website. There is also a lot of alternative forages available now that can be used with supplements to get livestock through the winter. Visit www.ncagr.com/HayAlert for more information on sources of hay and forages, or call your Extension office.

Hope for the best—hope for rain to jump start your pastures in the spring. If you have had to feed a lot of hay from various sources this year, you may find that you have a weed problem next year. Seeds from hay can invade pastures and spread rapidly. The good news is there is a new herbicide which many of you have heard about that can help. In the fall of 2007, Panoramic 2SL was approved for grass weeds in bermudagrass pastures. This herbicide is very similar to the old Plateau. If you are interested in seeing the label, contact your county Extension office. Make sure your seed and fertilizer dealer knows you are interested in purchasing this for the spring.

We hope that you have had more rain by the time you read this newsletter!
There are a number of positive provisions for pork producers in the Farm Bill approved Friday by the Senate, but the measure also includes some that could have a negative impact on the competitiveness and profitability of the U.S. pork industry, said the National Pork Producers Council.

The bill includes fixes to the Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling law, funds for pseudorabies and swine genome research and authorization for a national trichinae certification program, all of which NPPC supports and all of which it will urge be included in a final Farm Bill. NPPC also will recommend that a final bill include increases in investments in renewable energy, nutrition and conservation programs, which along with changes to the MCOOL law, were included in the House Farm Bill.

Members of the Senate and House agriculture committees are expected to meet in mid-January to reconcile differences in their chambers' respective Farm Bills.

Among the detrimental provisions included in the Senate Farm Bill are ones that would ban packer ownership of hogs, restrict marketing contracts and establish an Office of Special Counsel to investigate and prosecute livestock competition issues.

"The Senate Farm Bill is kind of a mixed bag for the U.S. pork industry," said NPPC President Jill Appell, a pork producer from Altona, Ill. "When Senate and House lawmakers meet to craft a final Farm Bill, NPPC will work for a measure that doesn't include restrictions on producers and that protects the pork industry's competitiveness."

NPPC kept out of the Senate bill amendments that would have:

- Required the Department of Justice - under guidelines developed by the competition task force - to challenge livestock mergers and acquisitions under a standard much more restrictive than antitrust reviews conducted of transactions involving any other industry.

- Allowed a plaintiff to file a lawsuit alleging "unfair" competition without offering evidence that he or she suffered a competitive injury.

- Prohibited packers from paying premiums for value-added livestock, such as "antibiotic-free," by eliminating "business justification" as a defense against lawsuits alleging unfair competition. The amendment was defeated on a 40-55 vote.

Last Chance for “Last Chance Class”

For those of you who STILL have not completed your 6 hours of continuing education credits, what are you waiting for?? Lucky for you, there is one more "Last Chance" class being held on January 18, 2008 from 9am-5pm.

The training will be held at the Duplin County Extension office in Kenansville. There will be a $5 registration fee.

To register or get additional information, please contact Wanda Hargrove at 910/296-2143.

For those producers who do not get their 6 hours in by the end of the grace period, the next 10-hour recertification class will be January 29-30 in Greene County.
**January**

- If winter pasture is limited, feed hay in the pasture or allow cows to graze every other day. The priority for limiting pasture is (1) calves by creep grazing, (2) stockers, (3) nursing cows, and (4) dry cows.
- Keep animals off newly planted winter annuals during wet periods to prevent damage. Allow calves first priority to graze.
- Sample hay bales which are stored outside that will be fed during the next four to eight weeks.
- Decide which fields will be re-seeded or overseeded during late winter and early spring; obtain soil test and supplies for planting.
- Lime may be applied during this off-season.
- Keep a record of winter weed problems so that control measures can be taken next fall. This is the latest month that some herbicides may be used on legumes.
- Determine animal feed requirements for the year (about 6 tons of hay equivalent/cow-calf pair) and outline a 12-month forage production and use plan to meet the needs.

**February**

- Apply nitrogen to cool-season grasses to stimulate early spring growth.
- Overseed legumes, such as ladino clover, into well-grazed (2 inches or less) grass pastures.
- Lime fields for spring plantings.
- Divide pastures to improve the quality and persistence of pasture plants.
- Locate sources of hybrid Bermudagrass sprigs for planting.
- Burn warm-season grass residues in late February.
- Get herbicide sprayers ready to control weeds in dormant Bermudagrass fields.

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**Forage Management Tips**

**Upcoming Events**

**JANUARY**

- **January 23:** NC Forage & Grasslands Council Forage Conference – Granville County.
- **January 29-30:** Initial Certification Training for Animal Waste Operators – Greene County.

**FEBRUARY**

- **February 4 & 5:** Youth & Adult PQA training 4:00 – 5:00 pm. Lenoir County Office.
- **February 22-23:** NC Cattlemen's Association Conference and Trade Show.
- **February 28:** Beef Field Day – Jones Co.

This site contains the same information found in the guide and has been produced to offer assistance in dealing with natural disasters. If you would like a printed copy of the guide, contact your local North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service Center.

Sincerely,

Emily M. Adams
Agricultural Extension Agent

“HELPING PEOPLE PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK”
Onslow County Master Gardener Volunteer Program

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a joint endeavor of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and volunteers who wish to learn how to be better gardeners and help other gardeners by sharing their knowledge. The program is designed to recruit and train volunteers to help meet the educational needs of the citizens of Onslow County.

The term ‘gardening’ is used in a broad sense. It includes, vegetables, fruits, lawn grasses, shrubs, flowers and trees. The training focuses on developing diagnostic skills for insects and diseases of plants. Classes are also given on landscaping for water quality, soils, composting, propagation, wildlife control and much, much more!

As a Master Gardener, you will receive 40 hours of intensive horticultural training.

After graduation you will be expected to provide an equivalent amount of volunteer work in the community. Examples of the types of activities that you can choose to perform are: answering homeowner inquiries at the Extension Office; mailing out information bulletins to homeowners, conducting plant clinics, working with elementary school children on special horticultural projects, talking to Garden Clubs, advising on community beautification projects and writing newsletter articles.

The volunteer work is fun and interesting, and you will not be required to do anything with which you are not comfortable. Master Gardeners make ‘friends for life’ and enjoy working and learning together.

The 2008 Master Gardener course will begin February 12th and end April 10th. Classes normally will be taught Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 – Noon. Cost for the course is $75.00 which includes a comprehensive Master Gardener Manual that you keep.

If you would be interested in receiving an application for the 2008 course, please call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension – Onslow County Center at (910) 455-5873, and leave your name, address and phone number. Enrollment will be limited, so inquire early.