Cattle Newsletter

Ashe County Center February 2020

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Marketing Plan

How will you sell your calves this year? It is important to know how much it costs to maintain your cattle and your breakeven cost.

Now is a good time to start on your financial goals for the year. As the day gets dark early and calving may not have begun, take time for this important step in your operation. As you gather information for tax preparation, determine how much feed you are providing for your livestock and break it down per animal and per weight of each animal.

How much per pound do you need to receive? Did you sell for that last year? How can you meet that goal this year or in upcoming years? You are focused on providing for your livestock, so take time to focus on your financial goals.

How much does it cost you to keep your herd? Here are some factors to consider:

- Hay
- Feed
- Mineral
- Vaccines
- De-wormer
- Fertilizer
- Herbicide
- Fence
- Insurance
- Land (Taxes/Rent)
- Labor

Take time to determine your costs and locate markets/buyers that will allow you to become more profitable. Contact the NC Cooperative Extension, Ashe County Center at (336) 846-5850 for more information or if you need assistance.

Farm Stress

Farm stress on top of family, health, work, and other life stresses is very exhausting and unhealthy. Help relieve stress by taking control of your farming operation. You can do that by planning ahead for the year, setting a budget, prioritizing each day, and taking time to enjoy your farm. If there are aspects of farming that you don't enjoy, see what you can do different. Farm stress is real and the information below is to help you if you need it.

Tools for Your Wellness Toolbox in Times of Farm Stress

- ✓ Exercise 20 minutes per day
- ✓ Get a medical checkup
- ✓ Spend 10 minutes per day to plan your day
- ✓ Take regular 5 to 10 minute breaks to recharge
- ✓ Write down 3 things you are grateful for
- ✓ Share concerns with someone
- ✓ Take 15 minutes each day for uninterrupted conversations
- ✓ Get involved
- ✓ Discuss farm needs, but don't let them occupy all other aspects of life
- ✓ Seek constructive feedback on your farm operation for ways to improve or grow
- ✓ Create a family budget and live within that budget
- ✓ Select 3 healthy habits you will try to practice daily

Sean Brotherson, Ph.D., Family Science Specialist

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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ESTIMATED RETURNS AND EXPENSES FORM FOR BEEF COW/CALF OPERATION

Item	Unit	Quantity	Price	$/Cow	$/Herd
Revenue					
Cull Cows	lb	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Heifer Calves	lb	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Steer Calves	lb	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
			Total Revenue	**$_____**	**$_____**
Variable Expenses					
Pasture Production	acre	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Hay Production	acre	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Purchased Hay per Cow	ton	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Bull (Pasture and Hay)[1]	$	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Supplemental Feed	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Salt and Mineral	lb	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Vet & Med	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Reproduction (Artificial Insemination)[2]	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Other Expenses	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Labor	hours	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
			Production Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**
Interest	$	$_____	%_____	$_____	$_____
Marketing	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Land Rent	acre	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
			Total Variable Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**
			Returns to Variable Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**
Fixed Expenses					
Livestock Facilities & Equipment	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Pasture and Hay Machinery/Equipment	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Purchased Breeding Stock	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Purchased Heifers, (not bred)	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
Miscellaneous Overhead[3]	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____
			Total Fixed Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**
			Total Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**
			Net Return to Land and Management	**$_____**	**$_____**

ESTIMATED RETURNS AND EXPENSES FORM FOR STOCKER/BACKGROUNDING OPERATION

Item	Unit	Quantity	Price	$/Head	$/Group Total	Your Farm
Revenue						
Feeder Cattle	lb	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
			Total Revenue	**$_____**	**$_____**	_____
Variable Expenses						
Calf Purchase	lb	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Pasture Production	acre	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Hay Production	acre	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Purchased Hay	ton	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Supplemental Feed	lb	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Salt and Mineral	lb	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Vet & Med	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Death Loss	%	$_____	%_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Other Expenses	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Labor	hours	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
			Production Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**	_____
Interest on Calf Purchase	$	$_____	%_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Interest on Other Variable Expenses		$_____	%_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Marketing	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Land Rent	acre	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
			Total Variable Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**	_____
			Returns to Variable Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**	_____
Fixed Expenses						
Livestock Facilities & Equipment	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Pasture and Hay Machinery/Equipment	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
Miscellaneous Overhead	head	_____	$_____	$_____	$_____	_____
			Total Fixed Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**	_____
						_____
			Total Expenses	**$_____**	**$_____**	_____
			Net Return to Land and Management	**$_____**	**$_____**	_____

Soil Fertility

Soil fertility is an essential part in milk production and growth of livestock. Proper soil fertility maximizes growth potential of forages, which in turn maximizes growth potential of livestock.

The first step in managing soil fertility is soil sampling. If you have questions or need assistance your local Extension office is a great resource. After you have sampled your soil and mailed it to the agronomics lab at North Carolina Department of Agriculture you will receive a report by e-mail. This report will tell you how many tons per acre of lime that is recommended for your sample. If a report recommends more than 2 tons per acre, the application should be split and applied at two different times. Lime adjusts pH levels in the soil and the pH needs to be 5.8-6.2 for fertilizer to work efficiently. Keep in mind when applying lime it can take 6-12 months for it to work in the soil. Applying lime in the fall allows it to work into the soil during the winter months so the soil can be ready for fertilizer in the spring.

Soil nutrient recommendations are given in units not pounds. Nitrogen moves within the soil and is difficult to test and typical nitrogen recommendations are 120-200 units. This recommendation should be split into two separate applications. Your local Extension Agent can help you in determining the best fertilizer and timing for your operation.

Grasses best utilize fertilizer when they are actively growing. Keep in mind the quick spring growth and make sure that livestock can utilize the fast growing forages of spring before adding fertilize.

Spring Weed Management

Spring weed management should begin with asking these important questions.

1. What is the weed?
2. What is the life cycle?
3. Is it a problem in your pastures or hay field?

Your local Extension office can help you with these questions. If the weed is toxic to your livestock or prohibits their growth then it should be controlled. This can be done with chemicals or mowing. The best time to control any weed is while it is still young and tender. Many weeds once they mature and seed, their life span is complete and they will die. There is no reason to try and control the weed at this stage of its life cycle. Mowing is an option if you want to keep your pastures cleaned up.

Spraying chemicals is a good way to control weeds, however, you want to choose the correct herbicide for the weed. You can do this by identifying the weed and reading the label to ensure it is on the label. The label will tell you the rate of herbicide to mix and spray, as well as the proper protective equipment to wear during mixing/loading and application. You should always calibrate your sprayer prior to spraying to make sure you are applying the correct amount. Skipping this step can cost both time and money.

Sincerely,

Micah Orfield
Extension Agent, Agriculture

Upcoming Events for 2020

January

January 13 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*
January 25 - *Stocker Calf Meeting*
January 25 - *VT Beef Cattle Health Conference*

February

February 10 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*
February 26 - *Pesticide Exam*
February 27 - *Pesticide Credits Recertification*
February 28 - *NC Cattlemen's Conference (Hickory, NC)*

March

March 9 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*
March 12 - *Beekeeper's Association Meeting*
March 17 - *Cow/Calf Meeting (Buffalo Community Center)*
March 26 - *Cow/Calf Meeting (Corner Market & Café, Mouth of Wilson, VA)*
March 31 - *Horse Meeting (Sweet and Savory Bakery & Deli)*

April

April 9 - *Beekeeper's Association Meeting*
April 13 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting (Steak Dinner $10 + $25 Dues)*

May

May 11 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*
May 14 - *Beekeeper's Association Meeting*

June

June - TBA - *Farmer Appreciation Dinner*
June 8 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*
June 11 - *Beekeeper's Association Meeting*
June 26 - *4-H District Activity Day*

July

July 9 - *Beekeeper's Association Meeting*
July 13 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*

August

August 6 - *Tri-State Beef Conference*
August 10 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*
August 13 - *Beekeeper's Association Meeting*

September

September 2 - *Pesticide Credits Recertification*
September 10 - *Beekeeper's Association Meeting*
September 14 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*
September 24 - *Pesticide Credits Recertification*

October

October 8 - *Beekeeper's Association Meeting*
October 12 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*

November

November 5 - *Stocker Calf Meeting*
November 9 - ***NO*** *Cattlemen's Association Meeting*
November 23 - *Beekeeper's Association Meeting*

December

December 14 - *Cattlemen's Association Meeting (Hall of Fame Dinner)*