

JULY MANAGEMENT TIPS

As I predicted in my late May/June Newsletter, those hot humid dry days of summer are upon us and will probably remain with us through mid-September. No one knows exactly what the remainder of the summer will be but right now (June 25, 2015), it is hot and dry. With that in mind here are a few tips and suggestions:

1. As I drive throughout Alamance and surrounding counties delivering feed, tractors, and equipment, I pass numerous pastures that are grazed out and the cows in those pastures are losing weight. **Remember, if grass is one inch or less in height, cattle cannot graze enough to meet their nutrient requirements.** Therefore, they must be supplemented with hay. We had a good hay crop this year so hay is available. Unfortunately, if we don't get some timely rains, we are going to end up feeding any surplus hay we made this summer.

2. With that in mind, if you purchase hay like most of our horse customers do, you might want to secure your winter hay supply now.

3. Flies are always a problem in the summer time so we need to be diligent with our fly control methods. Here at Mebane Tractor, we have numerous fly/insect control products and we are happy to discuss what will work best for your situation. For horses, we have several spray-on products that include Endur, Tri-tec, Pyranha, Zonk It, 4 varieties of Ultra Shield, Fly-rid, Swat, fly masks, permectrin concentrates, and metered sprays for whole stable/barn control.

Tip: Fly-rid or Swat (insecticidal salves) can be rubbed on the face below the eyes and on the legs where flies are particularly bothersome. This, being a salve, will often last longer than sprays since the tearing of the eyes wash the sprays off and the grass rubs the sprays off of the legs.

4. I have had several questions as to whether to plant summer annuals or the summer "crazy mixes" at this late date. These grasses will germinate and grow **if** we get enough moisture. They like hot weather as long as there is adequate moisture. Generally, these summer grasses/mixes are ready to graze or cut for hay within six weeks of planting. Therefore, you may be able to get one grazing or one cutting of hay before their growth starts slowing down as the weather begins to cool in mid-September. So, if you have already purchased the seed, it certainly will not grow in the bag, and it can be planted---just be aware that the yield will be significantly reduced compared to a May planting.

5. It is hard to believe but July has one of the higher average monthly precipitation rates. However, these rains come as spotty thunder storms that can dump several inches of rain in a

matter of minutes causing flooding, downed trees, etc. While one area might get several inches of rain, another nearby area can remain in a drought.

6. Speaking of downed trees, be aware that **wilted Wild Cherry Tree Leaves** are highly poisonous to all classes of livestock (cattle, horses, sheep, goats) and **wilted Red Maple Tree Leaves** are highly poisonous to horses. Red maples are not real common in this area but they do exist. The sugar maple is much more common but apparently is not a problem with horses. These two trees can be distinguished from each other by their leaves. Red Maple trees have red leaves in the fall and sugar maples have yellow leaves. Red Maple trees have leaves that look like the maple leaf found on the Canadian Flag. Wild Cherry Trees are most often found in fence rows or along the edges of forests and will often have small purplish/black cherries on them at this time of year.

7. Be on the lookout for internal parasite problems in lambs and kids. We often get reports of lambs and kids dying from internal parasites at this time of year. Signs of internal parasite problems are diarrhea/messy hindquarters, bottle jaw, lethargic, poor doing, loss of weight, rough hair coats, and death. If you see any of these symptoms, don't wait to administer proper treatment. Work with your veterinarian in setting up a good parasite control program and getting the correct diagnosis. Coccidia, a protozoan internal parasite, exhibits these same symptoms, occurs at this time of year, but the treatment drug is totally different than for common internal parasites.

8. Speaking of lambs and kids, many of them are getting ready for market. The highest demand for lambs and kids occurs at the end of the Muslim Holiday, Ramadan. This year, that time is July 10. Therefore, pay close attention to the local lamb/kid prices and market accordingly.

9. **Special precautions should be taken in transporting livestock during the summer.** A lot of cattle are marketed during the hot summer months of June, July, and August. When shipping cattle or other livestock during these months, it is best to do it at night or very early morning. Once the livestock are loaded, they should be kept moving so that air can move throughout the trailer which will help dissipate the heat generated by the animals being close together. In addition, they should not be loaded until they have had a chance to dissipate the heat accumulated during the day---usually several hours after sundown. If livestock are loaded when they are hot, it greatly increases the chance of death due to heat stress especially if they are large animals and have extra body condition.

When transporting horses, be aware that temperatures inside the horse trailer can rise rapidly when stopped, especially if it is in the direct sun. If it is hot inside the horse trailer for you, it is doubly hot for the horse.

Take precautions when riding/training horses so they don't become overheated. Be aware that if a sweating horse suddenly stops sweating, you have entered the danger zone for heat stress and appropriate measures to cool the horse need to be taken immediately. Discuss with your veterinarian the best ways to cool an overheated horse. Improperly cooling the horse can lead to founder.

10. **Check water sources every day.** In the hot summer, livestock will die within 3 days if deprived of water. Check the water not only to be sure it is available, but to be sure it is of adequate drinking

quality. Ponds and streams become stagnant during dry weather which concentrates bacteria and other contaminants, and containerized water produces algae if not protected from sunlight. Algae cause off-flavors in the water which reduces consumption and some algae are poisonous.

11. Now is the time to start planning for fall pasture renovation and establishment. Soil tests should be taken now so the results are back by the first of September, the recommended time for planting cool season pastures such as fescue, orchard grass, or winter grazing pastures such as ryegrass. Some specific varieties of orchard grass or the newer varieties of fescue may need to be ordered now to be sure they are available at planting time.

If you have questions concerning livestock management, tractors, tractor equipment, fencing, or lawnmowers, contact us here at Mebane Tractor and we will be glad to answer your questions **without** a high pressure sales pitch.

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