Horse Blog
There is a new Extension Horse Blog that started in July. Agents from across the state will have articles on management, nutrition and forages, health care and diseases, reproduction/breeding/foaling, and other topics every week. There is also a links page with resources. The blog can be found at http://nchorse.blogspot.com/.

Clinton Feeder Calf Sale
The sale will be on September 13th at 7 pm at the Sampson County Livestock Facility. Cattle should be brought to the facility for grading, penning, etc. on September 13th between 7:30 am and 4 pm. For more information or to request a consignment form, call Paul Gonzalez at Sampson County Cooperative Extension at 910-592-7161.

Wildlife & Water Quality Tour
The tour will be held at the Murphy-Brown Holmes Complex in Ammon on September 20th starting at 4 pm. The topics include beaver management, native warm season grasses, animal waste best management practices and long leaf pine. An hour of OIC credit will be given. To register, contact Benjy Strope at 866-4636.

Mosquito-Borne Diseases
Given recent diagnoses of mosquito-borne diseases in a child and a horse in North Carolina, people should take precautions when outdoors. Dr. Mike Waldvogel, an Extension Associate Professor and Urban Entomology Specialist at North Carolina State University, noted that standing water can become breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and when people spend time outdoors, they are more likely to get bitten. Heavy rains will inevitably lead to increased mosquito activity and it can make working outdoors unpleasant. The best thing to do is to eliminate pockets of standing water as soon as possible. When outdoors use insect repellent on exposed skin, reappllying as needed. Products containing permethrin, for example, Permanone, can be applied to clothing. A four-year-old horse in Halifax county was euthanized after contracting Eastern Equine Encephalitis, which can effect humans. Last month, a Macon County child was diagnosed with the first case of La-Crosse Encephalitis in North Carolina this year. Children under 16 and the elderly are the most susceptible to LCE, which is also rare and occurs more frequently in the Western part of the state than the Eastern. There are no human vaccines for either LCE or EEE, but there is an EEE vaccine available for horses. Owners should contact their veterinarian for the vaccine. Despite its name, EEE isn’t spread by horses. It can be spread when mosquitoes bite infected birds, then bite people or other animals. For information about mosquitoes and other pests following storms visit http://insects.ncsu.edu/Urban/storm.
Animal Waste Management
By: Becky Spearman, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Bladen County

Initial Animal Waste Certification Training
There will be a 10 hour initial training class for type A license on September 22nd and 23rd from 9 am - 4 pm at the Duplin County Extension Center in Kenansville. The class will prepare you for the exam -- the next exam is scheduled for November 10th. There is a cost for the class and manual. To register, contact Amanda Hatcher or Wanda Hargrove at 910-296-2143.

Calibration and Sludge Surveys
All farms are required to calibrate their irrigation equipment and perform a sludge survey. General Permit Farms are required to calibrate at least once every two years and perform a sludge survey every year (unless an extension from DWQ was granted). NPDES farms must complete both every year. Call your Extension Agent for more information.

Storm Warning Permit Information
On October 1, 2009, your general permit changed and some of the permit conditions changed too. Below is the new land application rule in regards to a Hurricane Warning, Tropical Storm Warning or a Flood Watch. If you have any questions, call your Livestock Agent or NRCS/SWC office.

Section II 22. Land application of waste is prohibited during precipitation events. The Permittee shall consider pending weather conditions in making the decision to land apply waste and shall document the weather conditions at the time of land application on forms supplied or approved by the Division.

Land application of waste shall cease within four (4) hours of the time that the National Weather Service issues a Hurricane Warning, Tropical Storm Warning, or a Flood Watch associated with a tropical system including a hurricane, tropical storm or tropical depression for the county in which the permitted facility is located. Watches and warnings are posted on the National Weather Service’s website located at www.weather.gov or by calling your area National Weather Service office.

Hay Directories are below for people selling hay or looking for hay to buy. It is free to list your hay for sale.
1. North Carolina Department of Agriculture’s Hay Alert is at http://www.agr.state.nc.us/hayalert/. Producers can call the Hay Alert at 1-866-506-6222. You can sign up to list your hay on-line.
2. The Southeastern NC Hay Directory is available at http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu/files/library/67/HayDirectory.pdf. Call your Extension Agent to learn how to include your farm on the list.

Forage Management Tips From Production and Utilization of Pastures and Forages in North Carolina

SEPTEMBER
• Fertilize and lime cool-season grasses.
• Keep pressure on summer grasses and completely use them before grazing cool-season forages.
• Watch for fall insects (armyworms, grasshoppers, crickets).
• Overseed or no-till winter annuals into summer perennial grass.

OCTOBER
• Finish using summer grasses before grazing the cool-season ones.
• Watch for prussic acid poisoning when grazing sudan and sorghum-sudans after the first frost.
• Overseed warm-season grasses with winter annuals.
When’s the best time to plant my winter rye?
I have gotten this question many times in my career. If someone would invent an accurate 60 day forecast it would be a little easier to advise people on the most opportune time for planting their winter rye. The truth is, each year is different, each farm is different, and there are many variables on selecting the best date to get your seed out.

Are you overseeding or planting in a prepared (disked) field?
In my mind, this is one of the biggest variables to contend with. Overseeding rye into an established bermuda field creates an obstacle that the new rye seeds must overcome. Namely, fighting the existing root system of the bermudagrass for water and nutrients as the rye seed struggles to germinate and emerge. The more active the bermuda roots are (namely if the bermuda is still growing) the greater the competition. Once the bermuda goes dormant its root system stops in taking nutrients, thus giving the rye roots a little breathing room. It is not as bad as it sounds. Every year this little battle for space at the dinner table takes place and they always seem to work it out in the end. Unfortunately, rarely does this underground struggle allow for any grazing in the fall, regardless of when you plant. Planting into a prepared or disked field avoids this conflict and allows for the rye seeds to get going that much quicker. Normally, with a little moisture in the ground, rye planted in a disked field will be up within a few days. With any luck at all, you can normally get a little grazing out of this rye in the fall. In a disked field dedicated to annuals, it may be worth the gamble to seeding earlier (the first/second week in September) if you need some Fall grazing out of your rye.

So exactly when is the best time to plant my rye?
The major factors that will affect your success or failure with fall planting are temperature and rainfall. Abnormally dry falls are not that abnormal over the last few years. While planting seeds in dry weather is not that big a gamble when compared to other issues we face with farming, it is not without some risk. Eventually it will rain, and the seeds will germinate. The danger is that we only receive enough rain to germinate the seeds and not enough to sustain the plants once they emerge. In this situation, complete die offs are not that uncommon.

The other factor to consider is temperature. Winter rye gets its name because it lives in the winter. Rye planted very early is susceptible to damage if temperatures get too high after it emerges in the fall. Also, in a warmer fall, bermuda will still be actively growing well into October, which only makes it that much harder for early planted rye to emerge.

For rye planted into an annual field that is disked, the weather issues are the same except that you need to decide how early you want to gamble planting. Winter rye grows best when the temperatures are in the mid 60’s to lower 80’s. If we have a cool September (I’ve personally never seen one but I think they used to exist) than these temperatures will be well within rye’s preferred range. However, I have seen a bunch of Septembers and even Octobers where we will string together several days of mid-90’s temperatures. Young tender rye plants cannot take this type of weather, and rye is not above dying if this occurs.

For overseeded rye, it is a matter of when you anticipate your bermuda going dormant or at least being in a much slower growth pattern. Often what we look for in our bermuda is not complete dormancy caused by a killing frost (usually well into November) but much slower growth that will occur as much as a month before we see a freeze. This “slow-down” usually occurs in late September/early October and is caused by cooler nighttime temperatures and shorter day lengths. It is during this transition period where the last cutting of hay has been removed or the final grazing is over that most farmers will try to get their winter pastures drilled. Sometimes this occurs as early as the middle of September and results in getting some grazing out of your rye around November/early December. More often, we have very warm temperatures through most of September and bermuda does not see this slow down until into October. It is for this reason that you do not see much overseeding occur until late September and through October. Many times I have seen rye pastures in December/January that were overseeded in the middle of November look almost the exact same as a rye field that was planted in September.

As stated many times in this article, there is not a simple “plant on this date for best results” answer to this annual dilemma. In addition to the issues discussed above, many times it comes down to when do you have time to run a planter, as well as when do you have access to one, that makes the decision for a lot of farms.
Whole Cottonseed a Potential Feed For Beef Cattle
By: Dan Wells, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Johnston County. Adapted from a publication by R.O. Myer, Florida Cooperative Extension Service

With higher cotton acreages in the southeast due to higher prices and demand for cotton, local gins should see a brisk business this fall and winter despite poor growing conditions in many areas. With this increased potential for cottonseed availability it is possible to consider whole cottonseed as a supplement for beef cattle this winter.

According to National Research Council’s Feed Tables, whole cottonseed averages 90% TDN and 28% Crude Protein. This is a significant amount of energy and protein available for supplementing the herd. Care must be taken, however in using this supplement wisely. Your first step should be careful sampling of hay to see if and when supplementing is necessary. A 1200 pound dry cow needs about 50-60% TDN and 7-9% Crude Protein in her diet (increasing as her stage of gestation increases) whereas a cow nursing a calf can require as much as 62% TDN and 12% Crude Protein. So dry cows may be carried over winter quite nicely on medium to low quality hay, whereas lactating cattle need a more nutrient rich diet to maintain body condition and produce milk for her calf.

It is necessary to keep in mind how much cottonseed is enough, or even too much. Because most cotton grown in our area has high gossypol content, a mature cow should not consume more than half of one percent of her body weight per day in whole cottonseed. Weaned calves should not eat more than one third of one percent of body weight in cottonseed daily. For a 1200 pound cow this equates to 6 pounds maximum of whole cottonseed daily and 2 pounds per day for a 600 pound calf. Gossypol is a natural phenol in cotton that blocks certain enzymes in cattle. Death due to heart failure has been reported in cattle that consumed a lot of cottonseed over an extended period of time, so observing the limitation on how much to feed and making sure that all animals eat at one time are critical.

The gossypol in cottonseed can also cause infertility in bulls. It is best not to feed whole cottonseed to bulls from 60-90 days prior to and throughout the breeding season. It is also not recommended to feed cottonseed to young growing bulls that will be used or sold for breeding.

Another precaution is that cottonseed can spontaneously combust similarly to hay if it is stored too wet. 14% moisture is the recommended safe level for storage. Whole cottonseed can be difficult to handle; it does not flow in an auger and is usually scooped by hand or with equipment. It is best stored in a covered shed or bay with a hard floor, preferably concrete. The typical method of feeding whole cottonseed to cattle is to top dress it on clean sod or over hay. Care must be taken that it is distributed well enough that all animals can eat at once so that individual animals are not allowed to eat too much. It may also take some training for cattle to recognize whole cottonseed as a foodstuff. Mixing with molasses or grain for the first several feedings usually teaches the cattle that this is something they can eat. Once cattle become accustomed to eating whole cottonseed they usually take to it very well.

With fall just around the corner, I encourage you to be making a plan for getting your herd through the winter. Your Extension Agent can assist you with sampling your hay, determining when supplementation is needed, balancing rations and contacting local gins for purchasing whole cottonseed. Your Agent can also help you analyze your particular situation to determine if using whole cottonseed or some other form of supplement is right for you. Remember that body condition scoring your herd is one of the most important means of monitoring the nutritional status of your cattle. If you are unsure of how to do this, visit with your Agent and get him or her to work with you to make sure you are meeting your herd’s needs.

For more information about feeding whole cottonseed, visit http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/an134 from the University of Florida and http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/animal/nutr/mhp95-1.htm from NC State University.
Controlling Winter Hair Growth

By: Elena Eller, Livestock Extension Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Moore County

From Controlling Hair Length in Horses Using Extended Day Length Regimes by Doug Householder and Pete G. Gibbs

Horse owners or trainers who show, fit and/or sell horses on a year round basis are concerned with controlling hair length without having a sheared or clipped appearance to the horse. Old traditional procedures for maintaining short hair or shedding hair off horses have involved keeping horses hooded and blanketed in heated barns. Heating barns is very expensive. Keeping horses in warm barns, then taking them outside in cold temperatures for exercise, may cause health problems. To minimize these problems, consideration should be given to utilizing extended day length regimens to control hair length in horses.

Research by J. Burkhardt in 1947 first demonstrated that ovarian activity in mares was influenced by photoperiod, and with the hastening of estrus came the early shedding of hair. Photoperiod (day length) is a major factor governing hair growth in horses. June 21 (summer solstice) is the longest day (16 hours day length) of the year; December 21 (winter solstice) is the shortest day (10 hours day length) of the year. The theory is simple:...mechanically provide horses 16 hours of day length during the fall and winter to mimic the natural spring and summer hours of day length. This procedure will retard fall hair growth and will cause premature shedding if a horse has started growing the winter coat.

Incandescent (clear or frosted) or fluorescent bulbs, and not colored heat lamps, should be used over or close to a horses stall. Research indicates that as little as 3 foot candles of light at the horse's eye height will elicit the response; however, 10 foot candles is the general recommendation. A 200 watt incandescent bulb located approximately 10 feet above the floor, in a 12x12 stall, provides approximately 10 foot candles of light in the stall. Two types of timers are usually utilized. A box timer can be mounted between the power source and the bulb(s). This timer will turn all lights on/off mornings and on/off nights. Alternately, a receptacle timer plugs into a wall outlet and a lamp is then plugged into the unit. The timer turns individual lights on/off in the morning and on/off again at night.

Horses should receive 16 hours of continuous light with 8 hours of darkness each day. Light can be added to either end of the day. Practically, most people will add light both in the morning and evening as this compliments barn work schedules. A gradual buildup of light is not necessary. Twenty-four hours of continuous light each day will not elicit the response as a switch from dark to light to dark is needed each day. Be sure to replace burnt out bulbs and reset timers after power outages to maintain consistency in artificial lighting schedules. A few days out of the above regimen (ie. off at a show) will not cause horses to start growing hair; however, horses removed for longer periods of time (i.e. several days) will get out of "synch" and will start growing hair. Starting an extended lighting regimen in the fall will retard winter hair coat growth. If the horse’s coat has already come in, hair coat should start to slip by about 45 days, with another 60 or more days required for the horse to shed completely. In colder weather (under approximately 55° F) a blanket, and possibly a hood, may be necessary to keep horses comfortable. Field observations show that occasionally, some horses under extended light for 3-4 years will become refractory to light and will "jump out" or start growing a winter coat. Once these horses have grown out a winter coat for one season, an extended lighting regimen can again be used and will control hair length for several years. Remember that mares under lights will cycle through the winter. Exposure of stallions to an artificial photoperiod in the fall, late winter, and early spring will result in peaking of the breeding season earlier in the year. If mares are to be bred between February and June, a lighting program will not interfere with a stallion's reproductive performance. If mares are to be bred in late spring and late summer, an artificial lighting program maybe unsatisfactory as it causes the stallion to peak too early in the year.

The use of an extended lighting program is an important management tool for owners and trainers who need to have horses keep short hair coats throughout the year when a clipped hair coat is not desirable. With limited investment in a timer and proper installation, owners can keep a winter coat away with a minimal amount of labor.
As we all know, hurricane Irene wreaked havoc on parts of the east coast recently, with a major effect on North Carolina agriculture. You may be thinking this article is a little behind, but we are still in the middle of hurricane season; are you and your animals ready for the next one?

It is impossible to prevent devastating losses; however, planning can help minimize the loss of animal lives and the health problems associated with disasters. Although help may be available after a natural disaster, the producers themselves are ultimately responsible for the welfare of their animals and should prepare accordingly.

Before a disaster, a producer should evaluate their herd/flock health program with their veterinarian. Goats and sheep that are evacuated before or after a disaster will be stressed and will probably be commingled with other animals. Therefore, biosecurity is breached, which is why increasing immunity before a disaster strikes is crucial. Pneumonia and abortions are anticipated problems and can be minimized with proper nutrition and vaccination.

Animal identification is also very important. If goats and sheep are evacuated and then commingled, or escape and are found later, it’s imperative to be able to identify the origin of the herd/flock by tags or tattoos. Many of these animals look similar, and plain numbered eartags and tattoos can be duplicated; therefore, producers should identify the farm or ranch name on the tag or tattoo or use electronic identification that is unique to each individual animal. Scrapie tags are probably the best form of identification. The scrapie tag has a unique farm ID that can be traced back to your farm in the event that your animals are evacuated and commingled with other animals. Call the Veterinary Services Area Office (919-855-7700) for North Carolina, located in Raleigh, and request that a premises identification number and Flock ID be assigned to your flock. Pictures of the animals could also be helpful in identifying the animals later.

With hurricanes, advanced warning is given, so health papers should be provided by a veterinarian if the animals are to be evacuated, particularly across state lines. Sometimes, it is not possible to evacuate the whole herd/flock, so producers should prioritize animals so their most valuable stock is evacuated first. Copies of herd/flock records, proof of ownership, and registration papers should be stored in a safe place.

Because sheep and goats are smaller than horses and cattle, mass evacuation is possible if plans are made weeks in advance of a possible disaster. Producers can work with other farms to provide transportation and evacuation space so that public holding areas can be used for rescued animals. Biosecurity issues should be discussed when making arrangements to work with other producers. Producers should have safe, efficient pens and loading facilities ready in advance and livestock trailers should be inspected to make sure they are ready for hauling long distances. If flooding or high winds are expected and animals can not be evacuated, be sure to leave them in a large open pasture and do not put them in barns.

Producers should also use agriculture-related groups such as the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Services, Farm Service Agencies, Farm Bureau, local producer associations, etc. to make plans with if a disaster situation occurs. Different tasks such as livestock hauling, feed, fuel and generator acquisition and distribution, and animal evacuation and rescue should be assigned to individuals or groups in advance. Primary and contingent holding areas for evacuated and rescued animals as well as staging areas for feed and fuel distribution should be identified in advance. Special evacuation routes should be considered so that the trucks and trailers can avoid stopping in traffic to reduce heat stress for the animals. Early evacuation is also a good idea, as some roads may close to trucks and trailers as the storm approaches.

Once a disaster hits, providing clean food and water is the first priority. This may be very difficult, but efforts should be made prior to the storm to have an emergency supply of water and feed stored in a safe place. Adult sheep and goats need one to two gallons of water per head per day. Storage tanks previously holding chemicals should not be used. Producers should make their local extension agent aware of the number of animals they have and their locations in advance so that the animals are included in feed distributions if available.

There is no way to prepare for every situation that arises during a disaster; however, by working closely with other producers and agricultural leaders, goat and sheep producers can lessen the losses from a disaster.
Youth Livestock Safety
By: Tyrone Fisher, County Extension Director and Livestock Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Harnett County

Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in the world. Steps must be taken on the farm to make sure the farmer and workers will always be safe, the same goes for our youth.

Livestock are involved in many youth injury incidents every year. Because of their size compared to the size of the youth who own and work with them, showing livestock can be particularly dangerous. We must also keep in mind that regardless of size, all livestock (steers or ewes) are capable of causing injury.

Safe working habits include protecting yourself, your animals, and others. The most common injuries from working with and/or showing livestock are: slips/falls, muscle/back strains, cuts/scrapes, bruises from being kicked or stepped on, and blisters and burns from lead ropes or electrical appliances such as clippers. Less common injuries from working with and/or showing livestock include: breathing problems from inhaling dust, animal dander, or chemicals and serious injuries such as broken bones, amputations, puncture wounds.

Proper clothing or apparel is very important in all fields of agriculture, but especially when handling livestock. Practice personal safety by using personal protection equipment and developing safe working habits by wearing closed-toe shoes or boots, gloves with appropriate, long sleeves/pants and safety glasses.

Frequent hand washing protects your skin whenever you work with your livestock. Animals can easily and unknowingly spread disease to humans. Frequent contact with the animal’s hide, dander, and feces – especially from washing and grooming tasks – creates an opportunity for disease to pass from your livestock to you. An example is ringworm in cattle.

Learn first aid and keep a first aid kit in your show box and in the barn or building where you stall your animal.

Ergonomists (scientists who study human body function) say the three worst problems for agriculture are: full body stoop (bending forward and down from the waist, as when picking up feed bags, buckets, or show boxes); lifting/moving heavy objects (greater than 15% of body weight); and repetitive handwork (as when you are washing and grooming). This sounds like a typical day in the show barn! Using wheels to help carry loads; such as a wheeled dolly, a feed cart, a wheel barrow, or a wheeled utility cart is a great step to working smarter, not harder, and being safe.

To work safely with your livestock, you should have a basic understanding of livestock behavior in general, and the behavior patterns of livestock. Please remember that all livestock have different behaviors, externally and internally. What do I mean by that? Externally, a sheep and a goat and a beef steer may react differently to a car horn. Internally, a Hereford and an Angus and a Brahman may react differently to a dog barking. When you understand how your animal might act in different situations, you can use that understanding to help make livestock shows safer for everyone – exhibitors as well as people who are watching the show. Keeping your animal calm is a good start.

Keeping yourself and your livestock includes making sure buildings, pens/ lots, and equipment are well maintained and in proper working order. The facilities you use to house and work your animal should be well designed, strong, and safe for you and your animals. Keep buildings, alleys, and lots neat and tidy. Make sure you have a place to put all your supplies, equipment, and feed and keep all of those items in their proper place. Clean up spills as soon as they happen. Don’t allow manure or feed to accumulate in alleyways or chutes.

Make sure there is good lighting for indoor and outdoor areas where you will be working with your livestock. Lighting should be bright and not create shadowy areas. Your animal can get scared when it goes from a brightly lit area to a dark shadowy area. Keep fences, gates, doors, etc. repaired. Gates that are hard to open can cause muscle strains or can pinch you if you have to push hard on them and they open or close unexpectedly. Wire ties or nails poking out of fence boards can cause scrapes or puncture wounds.

For first exhibitors as well as for livestock that have never been to a show, set up a practice show to see how your animal behave as well to see how the exhibitor reacts. For more information on youth livestock safety, contact your local county Extension agent, or go to http://ylsp.bae.ksu.edu/ for online lessons and quizzes for youth, parents, and club leaders.
Picking Up After the Storm on Pasture-Based Livestock Farms

By: Michelle M. Shooter, Extension Livestock Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Robeson County, from an article written by Matt Poore, Extension Beef Specialist, NCSU Department of Animal Science

Pasture-based beef, dairy, sheep, and goat farmers need to be diligent in checking livestock, repairing infrastructure, and looking for possible hazards in pastures caused by storm damage. At a time when there is damage to personal property including dwellings, outbuildings, and other non-livestock facilities, sometimes livestock and pastures take a lower priority. The health and well-being of livestock should be the second priority after the health and well-being of farmers and their families.

Immediately after the storm subsides, producers should assess damage to both their infrastructure and their livestock. They should check their pasture infrastructure to make sure that cattle or other livestock are in the pastures they were in before the storm, and that none of the animals are injured. If animals were injured by flying debris, the farmer should contact a veterinarian immediately if the injuries were severe. If conditions are so bad that livestock need to be evacuated, producers should contact their local extension agent, veterinarian, or emergency management officials.

Next, they should check to make sure waterers are operational and that fences are up and intact. If livestock are watered in a pressurized system and power is out, the producer should make haste to use a generator to restore power to the well system, or to provide another source of water (whether that be creating an emergency opening in the fence into a pond or stream, or by hauling water to the animals).

If hauling water, make sure the amount delivered to the animals is adequate. Adult lactating beef cows of average size need to be provided at least 25 gallons per day of fresh water. Mature sheep and goats will need 1-3 gallons per day (depending on their size). If cattle have been deprived of water for 24 hours or more, producers should take great care when filling water tanks or restoring water flow to small tanks. Cows are likely to fight aggressively to get to the water source.

If electric fencing is in use, producers need to check the power level to make sure the system is operational, and if the power is out, they should restore emergency power to the fence energizer. The perimeter fence should be checked to make sure fallen trees or branches have not downed the fence. If fence damage has occurred, farmers should make every effort to get trees or branches off the fence and should make temporary repairs to keep livestock from wandering out of the pasture. Permanent repairs can be made later. If the system is electric, putting up temporary polywire and temporary posts may be the quickest way to restore the perimeter.

After assessing damage to the livestock and infrastructure, producers should assess other potential hazards caused by storm damage. Debris blown into pastures such as insulation and other building materials (common following tornadoes) may be eaten by livestock, leading to digestive upset and possibly death. As producers check pasture infrastructure and scout for debris, they should also look for downed wild cherry tree limbs and remove them from pastures before livestock consume them. PRUSSIC ACID POISONING FROM CONSUMING WILTED CHERRY LEAVES FOLLOWING STORM DAMAGE IS A VERY COMMON CAUSE OF DEATH IN CATTLE, SHEEP, and GOATS.

Another potential poisoning that may result from late summer or fall storm damage is acorn poisoning. If there are oak trees in pastures and storms knock many of the green acorns down at one time, livestock may consume enough to be poisoned. As with cherry tree poisoning, the greatest risk is when livestock are hungry and pastures are grazed short.

Finally, farmers should make sure livestock have adequate forage or feed, and should check mineral feeders to ensure animals have access to dry mineral. Trace minerals (including zinc, copper and selenium) are deficient in many areas of the country and are important for the animal to be able to deal with stress and immune challenge. Sometimes farmers hit by storm damage neglect to follow normal management practices once they see that livestock are not injured and that infrastructure is intact. It is very important for animals to continue to have access to adequate forage and mineral supplement. If there is extensive damage to infrastructure, it may be most convenient to confine livestock to one pasture and feed hay until repairs can be made.

Storms are an inevitable part of life, and managing damage means more than just cutting trees off fences and making sure livestock are not injured. Immediately following the storm the safety and health of you and your family comes first, but remember to continue to protect the safety and health of the animals you care for as part of your livelihood.