

# Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University



Animal & Poultry Sciences (0306)

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## Livestock Update

***Beef - Horse - Poultry - Sheep - Swine***

**June / July 2011**

This LIVESTOCK UPDATE contains timely subject matter on beef cattle, horses, poultry, sheep, swine, and related junior work. Use this material as you see fit for local newspapers, radio programs, newsletters, and for the formulation of recommendations.

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[www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu)

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## **Dates to Remember**

### **BEEF**

#### **AUGUST**

15-16 Tri-State Beef Conference. Johnson City, TN. **Contact:** Scott Greiner, 540-231-9159, email: [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu)

### **HORSE**

#### **SEPTEMBER**

15-18 State 4-H Championship Horse & Pony Show. Virginia Horse Center, Lexington. **Contact:** Celeste Crisman, 540-231-9162, email: [ccrisman@vt.edu](mailto:ccrisman@vt.edu) or Joi Saville, 540-231-2257, email: [joi.saville@vt.edu](mailto:joi.saville@vt.edu)

#### **OCTOBER**

8-9 Virginia 4-H State Fair Horse Show. The Meadow Event Park. Doswell.  
**Contact:** Eleszabeth McNeel, email: [e7aquila@aol.com](mailto:e7aquila@aol.com)

### **SHEEP**

#### **AUGUST**

27 Sheep Field Day and Ewe Lamb Sale. Shenandoah Valley AREC. Steeles Tavern.  
**Contact:** Scott Greiner, 540-231-9159, email: [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu)

27 Virginia Performance Tested Ram Lamb Sale. Shenandoah Valley AREC. Steeles Tavern.  
**Contact:** Scott Greiner, 540-231-9159, email: [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu)

#### **SEPTEMBER**

3 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Virginia Tech Sheep Center Production Sale. Alphin-Stuart Arena. **Contact:** Scott Greiner, 540-231-9159, email: [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu)

### **SWINE**

#### **JUNE**

15 Workshop - Breeding Swine for Small-Scale and Niche-Market Pork Production. Suffolk.  
**Contact:** Mark Estienne, e-mail: [mestienn@vt.edu](mailto:mestienn@vt.edu)

# June-July Beef Management Calendar

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

## JUNE

### **Spring Calving Herds**

- Finish AI; turn out clean-up bulls
- Check bulls regularly for performance and injury
- Manage first-calf heifers separately; give them best forage and supplement
- Use 48 hour calf removal for thin cows and first-calf heifers at beginning of breeding season
- Continue feeding high magnesium minerals to prevent grass tetany; may be able to switch to high Se
- Administer mid-summer deworming and implant calves late in month or early next month
- Complete harvest of first cutting hay early in month
- Start grazing warm season grasses

### **Fall Calving Herds**

- Body condition score cows; plan nutrition and grazing program based on BCS
- Administer mid-summer deworming on replacement heifers and pregnant heifers
- Plan marketing program for calves
- Finalize calf crop marketing program
- Vaccinate, wean, and certify calves to be marketed in late summer
- Switch to high selenium trace mineral salt
- Start grazing warm season grasses

## JULY

### **Spring Calving Herds**

- Check bulls regularly for performance and injury
- End breeding season; pull bulls
- Feed 1st calf heifers separately; provide highest quality forage and supplement
- Continue fly control program
- Continue feeding high Se trace salt
- Continue creep grazing
- Do mid-summer deworming and implanting early in month
- Start grazing warm season grasses

### **Fall Calving Herds**

- Continue fly control program
- Do mid-summer deworming on replacement heifers, preg heifers (2 yr olds) and 3 yr-old cows
- Continue high Se trace mineral salt
- Vaccinate and certify calves for value-added feeder calf sales
- Wean calves if selling in weaned program (wean minimum of 45 days)

## **Phosphorus Supplementation of Beef Cows**

Dr. Mark A. McCann

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Phosphorus in Virginia continues to be an important topic among crop, poultry and livestock production systems. The draft TMDL proposal for the Chesapeake Bay provides aggressive reduction targets for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment. Virginia beef cow/calf production systems have an opportunity to limit phosphorus inputs and thus increase economic benefits while minimizing environmental impacts. In the past, phosphorus has often been over-supplemented due to its once cheap cost and at the advice of many nutritionists and veterinarians. However, as more emphasis is being placed on meeting, not exceeding, mineral requirements to be both economically and environmentally responsible, things are changing.

Recently, dietary Calcium (Ca): Phosphorus (P) ratios of between 1:1 to 7:1 have been shown to result in similar animal performance provided the phosphorus adequately meets requirements of the production system. For the past several years, Virginia Tech Dairy Scientists have demonstrated that P levels in dairy rations can be decreased with no negative impact on milk production or reproduction. The fundamental information needed to be precise in meeting a beef cow's P requirement is her stage of production and an estimate of the P content of what she is consuming. Early, more digestible, forage growth of spring and summer pastures are typically higher in phosphorus than the mature forage found in late summer and fall forage. Forage analysis of Virginia grass hays has indicated as much as 10 fold difference in P content (.05-.60 %). Forage maturity, fertilization and soil type would contribute to this variation. According to NRC (1996), the P requirement for a 1200 lb mature cow during pregnancy is .15% P, and during lactation when she is producing 20 lbs of milk, the requirement is .19% P. Feeding P above cattle requirements will not substantially increase retention; the excess P is excreted primarily in the manure.

In an effort to more accurately and efficiently supplement phosphorus, the Virginia Agricultural Council, Virginia NRCS and Virginia Cooperative Extension are cooperating on a project which is collecting information and samples from beef cattle farms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed counties. Samples collected from participating farms will include soil, forage and fecal as well as a questionnaire regarding fertilization and supplementation practices. Results returned to the cattleman will reflect P status and supplementation recommendations for their cattle. Results will also be summarized by region, area and management practices to allow broader and general recommendations for P supplementation.

More efficient P supplementation of beef cows will have both economic and environmental benefits. If you are located in the Chesapeake Bay watershed counties and want to participate in the project, you can contact the following for more information:

- local Extension office
- local NRCS office
- Virginia Tech Beef Extension ([mark.mccann@vt.edu](mailto:mark.mccann@vt.edu) or 540-231-5253)

## **Tri-State Beef Conference To Be Hosted August 15-16**

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

A Tri-State Cow-Calf Conference will be held in Johnson City, TN on August 15-16. The two-day program will include a tour of local beef operations on the afternoon of Monday, August 15. An evening meal and educational program featuring Kristina Butts from NCBA will immediately follow the tour. The main educational program will be on Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> with sessions on Forage Management for Cow-Calf Producers, New Tools for Selection, Managing the Calving Season, Controlling Feed Costs, and Market Outlook. As part of the program, a panel of producers will share information about the marketing opportunities and experiences. A trade show will accompany the conference and include representatives from agribusiness firms supporting the beef business including animal health and equipment companies, feed suppliers, marketing agencies, lending institutions and related businesses. The meeting is being sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension, University of Tennessee Extension and North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Registration information and complete details will be available through local County Extension Offices after July 1. Additional information can be obtained from Dr. Scott Greiner, Extension Beef Specialist, Virginia Tech, phone 540-231-9159 or email [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu) .

**Details Announced for 2011-12  
Virginia BCIA Central Bull Test Station Program**

Joi D. Saville  
Beef Extension Associate, VA Tech

The Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association will begin its 54<sup>th</sup> year of sponsoring the Virginia's Central Bull Test Station Program. Rules and regulations for the 2011-12 test and sale season are now available through Virginia BCIA ([www.bcia.apsc.vt.edu](http://www.bcia.apsc.vt.edu)). A total of three test groups of bulls will be developed and sold from the two stations located at Culpeper and in Southwest Virginia.

The Culpeper Senior test is conducted at Glenmary Farm in Rapidan, VA owned and operated by Tom and Kim Nixon. The Southwest Bull Test Station is located at Hillwinds Farm owned by Tim Sutphin of Dublin, Virginia. At the Culpeper station, a set of fall-born Senior bulls will be developed. The Southwest Test Station will develop both a set of fall-born Senior bulls, as well as spring-born Junior bulls. In addition to the traditional tests, the opportunity exists for breeders to custom feed bulls through the BCIA program so that contemporary groups may be maintained. Additionally, provisions to the program allow breeders flexibility in developing both sale-eligible and custom tests bulls. The following table provides details of age requirements, entry deadlines, and the test and sale schedule for each group of bulls.

<b>CULPEPER SENIOR BULLS</b>	
Birth Dates	August 15 – November 30, 2010
Entry Deadline	June 3, 2011
Delivery of Bulls	June 28, 2011
Start Test	July 12, 2011
Finish Test	November 1, 2011 (112 days)
Sale	Saturday, December 10, 2011 <b>(Public Auction)</b>

	<b>SOUTHWEST SENIOR BULLS</b>	<b>SOUTHWEST JUNIOR BULLS</b>
Birth Dates	September 15 – December 31, 2010	January 1 – March 31, 2011
Entry Deadline	September 9, 2011	September 9, 2011
Delivery of Bulls	October 4, 2011	October 4, 2011
Start Test	October 18, 2011	October 18, 2011
Finish Test	February 7, 2012 (112 days)	February 7, 2012 (112 days)
Sale	Saturday, March 24, 2012 <b>(Public Auction)</b>	Saturday, March 24, 2012 <b>(Public Auction)</b>

Again this year, we will feature the enhanced bull guarantee which covers fertility, structural soundness problems (including foot soundness), and other issues on all bulls sold through the program. To compliment this good-faith guarantee, fall-born senior bulls will be subject to a semen evaluation as part of breeding soundness exam required for sale eligibility. Volume discounts will be available to bull buyers purchasing three or more bulls at a BCIA bull sale.

Registered bulls of any recognized beef breed, or recorded percentage bulls of breeds which have an open herd book are eligible for the central tests. All bulls must be recorded in their respective breed association, and have a complete performance record (including EPDs). Bulls must also meet breed-specific minimum YW EPD requirements, individual performance specifications, as well as pre-delivery health and management protocol to be eligible for the tests.

Breeders in Virginia and bordering states who are members of Virginia BCIA are eligible to consign bulls. For details and copies of the rules and regulations as well as entry information regarding the central bull tests, contact the Virginia BCIA office at 540-231-2257 or visit <http://www.bcia.apsc.vt.edu>.

## 2011 State Fair of Virginia Youth Market Lamb, Commercial Ewe Lamb, Youth Market Goat and Market Beef Nomination Schedule

Joi D. Saville  
Beef Extension Associate, VA Tech

Locations for identification of lambs, goats, and market beef animals for the 2011 State Fair of Virginia Youth Shows have been set. Nominations will take place at various locations around the state in late June. All youth who plan to exhibit market lambs, commercial ewe lambs, market goats and/or market steers or market heifers at the 2011 State Fair of Virginia are required to bring their animals to one of the following sites for identification:

Date & Time	Location (for directions please call site contact person)
<b><u>Shenandoah Valley</u> - Contact Person: Jason Carter, (540) 245-5750, <a href="mailto:jhcarter@vt.edu">jhcarter@vt.edu</a></b>	
Saturday, June 18 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Rockingham Livestock Market Harrisonburg, VA
<b><u>Northern Virginia</u> - Contact Person: Corey Childs, (703) 777-0373, <a href="mailto:cchilds@vt.edu">cchilds@vt.edu</a></b>	
Monday, June 13 (MKT BEEF CALL AHEAD) 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.	Shenandoah County Fairgrounds Woodstock, VA
Monday, June 27 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Clarke County Fairgrounds Berryville, VA
<b><u>Central Virginia</u> - Contact Person: Kaci Daniel, (540) 672-1361, <a href="mailto:kcoppedg@vt.edu">kcoppedg@vt.edu</a> Steve Hopkins, (540) 672-1361, <a href="mailto:hopyy@vt.edu">hopyy@vt.edu</a></b>	
Monday, June 20 (MKT BEEF CALL AHEAD) 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Glenmary Farms Rapidan, VA
<b><u>Southside Virginia</u> - Contact Person: Todd Scott, (434) 332-9538, <a href="mailto:todds08@vt.edu">todds08@vt.edu</a></b>	
Friday, June 24 (MKT BEEF CALL AHEAD) 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Appomattox High School Appomattox, VA
<b><u>Southwest Virginia</u> - Contact Person: Matthew Miller, (276) 783-5175, <a href="mailto:mamille6@vt.edu">mamille6@vt.edu</a> Jason Pratt, (540) 980-7761, <a href="mailto:cjpratt@vt.edu">cjpratt@vt.edu</a></b>	
Thursday, June 16 (MKT BEEF CALL AHEAD) 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Southwest Virginia 4-H Center Abingdon, VA
Thursday, June 23 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Virginia Tech Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena Blacksburg, VA
Monday, June 27 (LAMBS/GOATS ONLY)	In conjunction with Southwest VA Lamb Symposium New River Valley Fairgrounds, Dublin, VA
<b><u>Tidewater Region</u> - Contact Person: Cynthia Gregg, (434) 848-2151, <a href="mailto:clgregg@vt.edu">clgregg@vt.edu</a></b>	
Wednesday, June 15 (LAMBS/GOATS ONLY) 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.	Virginia Tech Tidewater Center Research Farm near Holland, VA
Thursday, June 30 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.	Southside Livestock Market Blackstone, VA
<b><u>Northern Neck Region</u> – Contact Person: Kelly Liddington, (804) 333-3420, <a href="mailto:klidding@vt.edu">klidding@vt.edu</a></b>	
Tuesday, June 28 ( <i>PLEASE CALL AHEAD</i> ) 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon	Richmond County Extension Office Warsaw, VA

Nomination procedures:

- 1) Lambs/goats will be ear tagged and weighed, cattle will be ear tagged (weighing is optional for cattle only). Nomination forms will be completed by exhibitors.
- 2) Exhibitors may take lambs, goats and/or cattle to any nomination location. Exhibitors must take all of their animals of the same species to the same nomination location.
- 3) A maximum of 12 lambs may be nominated per exhibitor (wethers or ewes, to be shown as either market lambs or commercial ewe lambs- no designation required at time of nomination). A maximum of 8 goats may be nominated per exhibitor (wethers or does, to be shown as market goats). No maximum for number of market steers or market heifers nominated per exhibitor.
- 4) Lambs, goats and cattle must also be properly entered for the State Fair. Entries are due August 15. State Fair entry and competition guides may be accessed on-line at [www.statefair.com](http://www.statefair.com). **All State Fair entries must be completed on-line.** Weighing and identification at these locations does not constitute final entry for State Fair.

For further information:

Youth Sheep Show contacts: Dr. Scott Greiner, Virginia Tech, phone 540-231-9159,  
e-mail [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu)

Dr. Mark McCann, Virginia Tech, phone 540-231-9153,  
e-mail [mmccnn@vt.edu](mailto:mmccnn@vt.edu)

Youth Beef Show contact Paige Johnson, Virginia Tech, e-mail [pjpratt@vt.edu](mailto:pjpratt@vt.edu)

Youth Goat Show contact Mike Holland, Youth Goat Superintendent, phone 757-373-3348 (d);  
434-348-7891 (e)

## **Sheep Update**

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

### **Virginia Ram Lamb Performance Test Underway**

A total of 70 rams were delivered May 3 to the Virginia Sheep Evaluation Station located at the Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research and Extension Center near Steeles Tavern, VA.

Consignment numbers and breeds of rams consigned include: 32 Winter Suffolk, 1 Fall Suffolk, 6 Fall Dorset, 9 Winter Dorset, 5 Winter Hampshire, 5 North Country Cheviot, 5 NC Cheviot x Suffolk, 2 White Dorper and 5 Winter Katahdin. The rams began the 63-day test period on May 17, which will conclude July 19. At the completion of the test, rams will be evaluated for reproductive and structural soundness. Eligible rams will sell at the station on Saturday, August 27. Complete performance information will be available on all rams, including measures of growth performance, ultrasonic estimates of carcass merit, and scrapie resistance genotypes. For information, please contact Dr. Scott Greiner, phone 540-231-9159 or email [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu).

### **Sheep Field Day and Ewe Lamb Sale to be Hosted at Shenandoah Valley AREC**

An educational field day will be hosted at the Virginia Sheep Evaluation Station located on the Virginia Tech Shenandoah Valley AREC on Saturday, August 27. The field day will accompany the annual performance tested ram lamb sale. In addition, a consignment ewe lamb sale will be held in conjunction with the ram sale. Approximately 50 ewe lambs will be offered along with the performance tested rams. Producers interested in consigning ewe lambs or wanting further information on the field day or ram and ewe sale can contact Dr. Scott Greiner, phone 540-231-9159 or email [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu).

### **2011 Virginia-North Carolina Wool Pool**

Producers in Virginia and North Carolina interested in marketing their wool through local wool pools will have the opportunity to do so through Mid-States Wool Growers Cooperative Association based in Canal Winchester, Ohio. Producers are encouraged to package, handle and store their wool in an appropriate manner in order to maximize the value of their wool clip. Wool should be packaged by type and grade (ewe vs. lamb wool, long staple vs. short wools, fine vs. medium wools) in plastic bags, and be clean, dry, and have foreign material (straw, mud, manure) removed prior to packaging. Following is a list of local pool delivery dates and locations where wool will be picked up:

June 27	Williamston & Albermarle, NC
June 28	Asheville, NC
June 29	Sparta, NC
July 7	Orange, VA
July 7	Rice, VA
July 11	Wytheville, VA
July 12	Christiansburg, VA
July 14	Russell Co., VA
July 15	Tazewell Co., VA
July 21	Clarke Co., VA
July 22	Augusta Co., VA

To confirm the above dates and for more information regarding specific times and locations, contact your local Cooperative Extension Office.

### **Proper Wool Handling**

Proper harvesting, packaging, and storage of the wool is important to realize the full value of the wool clip. Since wool sales represent a very small portion of the gross returns for most sheep enterprise, wholesale changes to the genetics of the flock to improve fiber diameter and fleece weight are likely not justified for most Mid-Atlantic producers. However, there are several important steps that should be considered to maximize the value of the wool clip:

#### **A. Minimize Contamination:**

1. Keep shearing area clean and free of straw/hay and other potential sources of contamination.
2. Avoid use of plastic baler twine in sheep operation that may contaminate fleeces (this contamination occurs throughout the year, not just at shearing time).

#### **B. Use Proper Packaging Material:**

1. Do not use plastic feed sacks to store or package wool.
2. Plastic film bags are available and preferred. Points to consider with plastic film bags:
  - a. Sheep need to be dry when sheared. Plastic bags will not breathe as well as jute bags (more possibility for wool to mold and rot).
  - b. Plastic film bags will tear easier when handled.
  - c. Tie plastic film bags shut in similar manner to jute bags.
3. Store wool in dry place, avoid cement or dirt floors to prevent moisture uptake.

#### **C. Sort Wool at Shearing Time**

1. Shear white-face sheep first, blackface sheep last to avoid contamination of white-faced wool with black fibers.
2. Package lamb and ewe wool separate.
3. Remove tags at shearing and discard.
4. Sort belly wool and bag separately. Also sort wool caps and leg wool out if justified.
5. Off-type fleeces (black, high vegetable matter, etc.) as well as belly wool should be packaged first in a small plastic garbage bag or paper sack. The small bag may then be added to the large polyethylene film bag. The small bag serves to keep these wools separate and prevents them from contaminating other fleeces already packaged, and results in a more uniform lot of wool.
6. Do not tie wool with paper twine.