

# Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University



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## Livestock Update

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

**April 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

### 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)

### 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)

# **April Beef Management Calendar**

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

## **Spring Calving Herds**

- Finish calving
- Check cows 3 to 4 times per day, heifers more often to assist early if needed
- Keep calving area clean and well drained, move healthy pairs out to large pastures 3 days after calving
- Ear tag all calves at birth; castrate and implant male calves in commercial herds
- Give selenium and vitamin A & D injections to newborn calves
- Feed cows supplemental energy after calving; some protein may be needed also
- Keep high quality, high magnesium, high selenium minerals available
- All bulls need a breeding soundness exam at least 30 days before start of breeding season
- Fertilize pastures and hay fields according to soil tests

## **Fall Calving Herds**

- Creep graze calves while on cows
- Give pre-weaning respiratory vaccinations IBR, PI3, BVD, BRSV, pasteurella
- Collect weaning weights on calves; weigh and body condition score cows
- Wean commercial calves based on marketing plan for calves
- Re-implant commercial calves (do not implant replacement heifers)
- Pregnancy check cows 60 days after bulls were removed
- Continue feeding high magnesium minerals to prevent grass tetany

## **2011 Virginia BCIA Southwest Bull Test & BCIA-Influenced Virginia Premium Assured Plus Bred Heifer Sale Report**

Dr. Scott P. Greiner  
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Southwest Virginia Performance Tested Bull Sale sponsored by the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association was held Saturday, March 26, 2011 at Wytheville. The 123 bulls offered commanded an average price of \$2693 per head. Breed averages were as follows: 70 Angus averaged \$2671, 13 purebred Simmental averaged \$2623, 20 Simmental Hybrids \$2635, 3 Charolais \$2533, 3 Gelbvieh Balancers \$4467, 4 purebred Gelbvieh \$2350, and 10 Polled Hereford at \$2700. The BCIA-influenced Virginia Premium Assured plus Bred Heifer Sale held in conjunction with the bull sale sold 33 heifers for an average price of \$1370 per head.

The top selling Angus bull went to Kenny Compton of North Tazewell, VA for \$4600. Angus lot 30 is an October 2009 son of SAV Bismarck 5682 and was bred by Legacy at Pine Hill Farm of Forest, VA. He had a test YW of 1233, ratio 108, and test ADG of 4.29, ratio 115, along with +58 WW EPD, +98 YW EPD, +0.47 RE EPD, ratio 115 REA, and a +29.16 \$W. Legacy at Pine Hill also consigned the high-indexing senior Angus bull, Lot 28. This October 2009 son of SAV Net Work 4200 sold to Martin Farrier of Newport, VA for \$4000. He posted a test record ADG of 5.63, ratio 144, as well as a ratio of 122 for test YW, along with +99 YW EPD, +1.54 SC, and a +31 Milk EPD.

The second-high selling Angus bull was Lot 50, consigned by Brilee Farm, Robert Bahr of Timberville, VA and also sold to Martin Farrier of Newport, VA for \$4300. This calving ease son of GAR New Design 5050 had CED EPD +8, YW EPD +114, in addition to ADG ratio of 119 and IMF ratio 143. Another calving ease son of GAR New Design 5050, Lot 57 bred by J & M Windy Acres of Maryville, TN brought \$4000 and sold to Jason Semones of Hillsville, VA. This bull posted EPDs of +10 CED, -.2 BW, +95 YW, +.58 MB and +.56 RE.

J & M Windy Acres, Mike Connatser and family, of Maryville, TN was recognized with the Breeder Group Award for their consignment of Angus bulls in the Senior Test. Their Lot 5 led this consignment group, selling for \$3100 to Vass Farms of Hillsville, VA. This son of ALC Big Eye D09N posted a test YW ratio of 116, as well as +9 CED EPD, +31 Milk EPD, MB EPD +0.52, RE EPD +0.65 and \$B +65. Little Windy Hills, Doug Hughes of Max Meadows, VA received the Junior test Breeder Group Award. His high-indexing junior Angus bull, Lot 66, sired by Rito 7079 of Rita 5M46 OBJ, sold for \$3700 to Tom Covey of Radford, VA. This calving ease, high growth bull had a +12 CED, +0.3 BW EPD, +59 WW EPD, and a +102 YW EPD. In addition, this bull posted a test YW ratio of 108, along with a WW ratio of 110, and a +64 \$B value.

Demand was very strong for the Gelbvieh Balancer bulls, which included the two high-selling bulls of the sale. The sale topper was Lot 606 consigned by Handfula Gelbviehs of Bland, VA. This September 2009 homozygous black, homozygous polled son of Woodhill Foresight brought \$5200 and sold to Kenny Compton of North Tazewell, VA. He posted at test ADG of 4.06, ratio 112, along with YW EPD of +82, Milk EPD of +21 and RE EPD of +0.21. Little Windy Hill Farms consigned a homozygous black, homozygous polled son of DCSF Post Rock Granite 200P2 which commanded \$5000 and was sold to Gale Rippey of Galax, VA. This January-born bull had a test YW of 1255, ADG of 3.75, and a test RE of 14.5. In addition, this bull had a WW EPD of +44 and YW EPD of +86.

The strong Polled Hereford sale was led by Lot 211, the high-indexing junior bull consigned by Virginia Tech of Blacksburg, VA. This February-born son of SHF Rib Eye M326 R117 brought \$4000 and sold to Milton Humberd of Cleveland, TN. He posted a test ADG ratio of 124, test YW ratio of 109, along with EPDs of +4.0 CED, +58 WW, +88 YW, +25 Milk, +0.28 MB, BMI of +\$28 and CHB +\$31. This bull also had an individual

%IMF of 4.11 and RE of 12.8 with ratios of 116 and 112, respectively. Ken Worley of Abingdon, VA consigned the second highest selling Hereford, Lot 214. This January 2010 son of KT John Wayne, also went to Mr. Humberd of Cleveland, TN for \$3000. This bull posted the highest EPD's of +60 WW, +99 YW and +0.64 RE.

The Simmental and SimmAngus bulls generated interest with a pair of bulls consigned by J & M Windy Acres of Maryville, TN. Lot 428, the high-indexing senior Simmental Hybrid bull, commanded \$4600 and was sold to Logan Bunn of Dublin, VA. This homozygous-black SimmAngus was sired by SS Ebonys Grandmaster and posted a test YW ratio of 110 and ADG ratio of 108. Lot 401, a purebred homozygous black/polled son of SS Ebonys Grandmaster sold to Bar X Farm and Bill Little of Fall Branch, TN. This calving ease bull had EPDs of +12.0 CED, -2.9 BW, along with ratios of 112 and 121 for test YW and test ADG, respectively.

The Junior high-indexing purebred Simmental bull was consigned by Trio Farms of Luray, VA. Lot 413 was sold to J. S. Staley of Marion, VA for \$2700. This high performance bull had a test YW of 1385, ratio 112 and a test ADG of 5.04, ratio of 132, in addition to EPD's of +41.1 WW, +72.9 YW and +6.2 CEM. Sunny Heights Simmental, Dr. Jessee Webster of Vinton, VA consigned the high-indexing junior SimmAngus bull, Lot 455, which sold to Paul McGhee of Marion, VA for \$3100. This March born son of JMWA 215S0F215 Rito 2V1 posted test ratios of 112 YW and 123 ADG, in addition to his +37.9 WW EPD, +77.5 YW EPD, and +0.74 MB EPD.

The BCIA-Influenced Bred Heifer Sale consisted of 33 fall-calving commercial bred heifers. All heifers were designated as Virginia Premium Assured Plus females. Demand was strong and prices steady, as the heifers averaged \$1370 per head. Hillwinds Farm of Dublin, VA consigned Lot 17 to top the sale at \$1600 selling to William Stephens of Sparta, NC. This SimmAngus heifer is due to calve in October and was bred to Echo Ridge Objective 979. Lot 12 from Hillwinds Farm sold for \$1550 per head and also went to William Stephens of Sparta, NC. This pair of heifers was bred to Edgewood Focus 862 and due to calve in September. Among several heifers selling for \$1500 was Lot 5, consigned by Slusher Valley Farms of Floyd, VA which sold to Gale Rippey of Galax, VA. This trio of heifers were sired by GAR Predestined were bred to Rito 9I6 of Rita 6F94 6I6 and are expected to calve in September.

All bulls and heifers were consigned by members of the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association. Bulls were developed at Hillwinds Farm at Dublin, VA owned and operated by Tim Sutphin. The sale was managed by Virginia BCIA and the Virginia Cattlemen's Association, and the auctioneer was Mike Jones.

Virginia BCIA and the Southwest Bull and Heifer Sale consignors would like to thank ABS, Accelerated Genetics, Bank of Marion, Farm Credit Country Mortgages, First Bank and Trust, Genex Cooperative Inc., Lucas Farms, Rudolph and Delp Construction, Select Sires, Southern States, Virginia Gelbvieh Association, and the Virginia Simmental Association for their sponsorship.

Special thanks to all the bull and heifer buyers at the 2011 Southwest Virginia BCIA Sale:

Allen Chaney, Sunbright, TN  
Aubra Paul Dean, Jonesville, VA  
Bar X Farm, Fall Branch, TN  
Bar M Farm, Lenoir, NC  
Bar-C Farm, Lebanon, VA  
Bare Creek Land & Cattle, West Jefferson, NC  
Barry M. Stockner, Mount Airy, NC  
Bear Creek Farms, Newton, AL  
Ben F. Fore, Glade Spring, VA  
Bennie R. Quesenberry, Hillsville, VA  
Bill or Gail Hickman, Dandridge, TN  
Billy J. Childress, Thurmond, NC  
Billy J. Lawson, Chilhowie, VA  
Bradley Wayne Shore, Roaring River, NC  
Brandon A. Martin, Mt. Olive, NC  
Bundy Farm, Lebanon, VA  
Chris L. Hill, Indian Valley, VA  
Christopher Morrison, Lebanon, VA  
Clinton Mitchell Munsey, Bland, VA  
Cloverdale Farm, Gainesville, VA  
Darrell W. Shrader, Christiansburg, VA  
Dave Gerrard & Family, Riner, VA  
David E. Scott, Vilas, NC  
Denny Jessee, Castlewood, VA  
Donald Vess, Craigsville, VA  
Douglas Skip Taylor, Elizabethtown, TN  
Ernest Darrel Robertson, Wirtz, VA  
FBG II Farms, Abingdon, VA  
Flat Creek Farms, Princeton, WV  
Frank Gent, Lebanon, VA  
Gale Rippey, Galax, VA  
Garner R. Jarrell, Mt. Airy, NC  
Greg D. McGrady, Dugspur, VA  
Hat Creek, Shelby, NC  
Hillwinds Farm, Dublin, VA  
J. S. Staley, Marion, VA  
Jackie R. Moore, Blackwater, VA  
James Walter Collins, Wytheville, VA  
Jamie L. Dail, Wallace, NC  
Jason Bradley McCoy, Castlewood, VA  
Jason O Bush, Castlewood, VA  
Jason Semones, Hillsville, VA  
Jerry W. Edwards, Ennice, NC  
Joe Henry Hoofnagle, Atkins, VA  
John H. Crowgey, Wytheville, VA  
John Wesley Blankenship, Tazewell, VA  
Joseph W. Melton, Hillsville, VA  
Justin W. McClellan, Marion, VA  
Kenny Lee Compton, N. Tazewell, VA  
Kent & Kent Farms, Altavista, VA  
Kevin A. Shrader, Newport, VA  
Kidd Farms, Ceres, VA  
L & G Circle T Farm, Christiansburg, VA  
L. Jordan Farms, West Jefferson, NC  
Logan Bunn, Dublin, VA  
M. C. Saunders, Tazewell, VA  
Martin P. Farrier, Newport, VA  
Michael S. Blevins, Piney Flats, TN  
Michael S. Cox, Fall Branch, TN  
Milton Humberd, Cleveland, TN  
Norman Semones, Fancy Gap, VA  
Oak Manor Farms, Fairlawn, VA  
Paul Greg McGhee, Marion, VA  
Randy Miller, Huddleston, VA  
Randy Patterson Largen, Hillsville, VA  
Raymond Campbell, Saltville, VA  
Riverview Farms Cattle LLC, Louisa, VA  
RJC Farms, Saltville, VA  
Robert Allen Mustard, Bland, VA  
Robert Smith, Glade Spring, VA  
Rocky Creek Farm, Hillsville, VA  
Roger Meek, Marion, VA  
Ronald S. Lester, Riner, VA  
Ruby Lee Orr, Damascus, VA  
Rusty Belcher, Abingdon, VA  
Sally Run, Wytheville, VA  
Samuel H. Cassell, Wytheville, VA  
Sanderson Brothers, Goode, VA  
Spence Brothers Farm, Saltville, VA  
Ted J. Holyfield, Elkin, NC  
Thomas Aker, Wytheville, VA  
Thomas G. Nelson, Pence Springs, WV  
Thomas J. Ramey, Lowgap, NC  
Tom Covey, Radford, VA  
Tom Mitchell, Union, WV  
Tom Reeves, Crumpler, NC  
Tom W. Jones, Austinville, VA  
Travis Lee Jessee, Castlewood, VA  
Vass Farms, Hillsville, VA  
Venita Johnson, Maryville, TN  
William Baird, Bluff City, TN  
William Richard Stephens, Sparta, NC  
Wilson Cattle Company, Lebanon, VA

## **2011 Virginia BCIA Superior Service Award Presented to Pete Henderson**

Joi Saville

Extension Beef Associate, VA Tech

Virginia BCIA is pleased to present the 2011 Superior Service Award to Pete Henderson of Edgewood Angus in Williamsburg, Virginia. BCIA recognizes Henderson for his leadership and commitment to the BCIA bull development and marketing programs at Culpeper and in Southwest Virginia.

Edgewood Angus consists of a 200-cow registered Angus herd which has been developed since the early 1980s from a commercial herd. Pete and his wife Connie, along with their son Peter and in conjunction with their daughters and Peter's wife have managed to make Edgewood a family affair. In 2000, the operation expanded from 75 to roughly 450 acres and moved the primary operation from Williamsburg to King William. Since that time, they have all worked very hard on improving pastures, fencing, and cattle management infrastructure.

Edgewood Angus has been consigning bulls to the BCIA test stations for over 14 years. During that time they have developed a strong reputation for quality genetics and have had several bulls top the BCIA tests and sales. Consistent, predictable genetics has been the focus which has been accomplished through the use of proven sires. Customer service is a high priority for Edgewood Angus, and they work diligently to assess the needs of their commercial bull buyers to design genetics that will do the job for them.

Edgewood has been awarded the Bartenslager Award and Premier Angus Breeder Award on two occasions from BCIA in 2007 and 2009. Additionally, Pete has been active on the BCIA Board of Directors including terms as President and has also chaired the Culpeper Committee. Through his involvement and leadership, BCIA has adopted numerous changes to enhance the value of the program and better meet the needs of commercial bull buyers.

## **Management for Spring Breeding**

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

For a variety of reasons, interest among sheep producers to have fall-born lambs is on the rise. Fall-born lambs typically are well-suited to take advantage of strong early-spring market prices. Additionally, there is strong demand for fall-born lambs to meet the needs of youth which have spring market lamb shows. Favorable weather and forage production associated with fall lambing compliment these marketing opportunities. However, with sheep being very seasonal in their reproduction, fall-lambing is limited by the ability to get ewes pregnant in the spring. There are several options producers have to enhance the opportunity for spring breeding to be successful.

Most successful spring breeding programs utilize genetics that have out-of-season capability. Breeds noted for this ability include Dorset, Polypay, Rambouillet, Finnsheep, potentially hair breeds (Katahdin, St. Croix, Blackbelly), and crosses of these breeds. Considerable variation exists within these breed for fall lambing potential, and selection for this trait needs to be a priority for operations that utilize an extended breeding season.

Genetics, coupled with proper nutrition and management, are key components for spring breeding success. One such management practice- the “ram effect” is commonly utilized to induce ovulation in anestrus ewes that have been previously isolated from rams. The ram effect is an effective, inexpensive, practical means to increase percentage of ewes lambing out of season. Utilization of the ram effect requires ewe isolation from rams for a minimum of one month, and preferably longer. Isolation from rams needs to be complete by avoiding fence-line contact and any association with rams (sight, smell, touch). Upon joining rams with ewes that have been previously isolated, ewes will ovulate with 7 days after introduction of the rams. However, less than 20% of the ewes will be in heat during these first 7 days (silent heat). Active estrus (heat) and ovulation will occur 17 to 24 days after introduction of rams, resulting in pregnancy. Breed of ewe is an important factor in response to the ram effect. Ewes will be more responsive to the ram effect as they reach the end of anestrus (are ready to start cycling), and therefore ewes with the genetic propensity to breed out-of-season respond most favorably to the ram effect in the spring. Vasectomized teaser rams are frequently used during the first two weeks since there is a delay in estrus with the ram effect. Fertile rams need to be placed with the ewes after 14 days. Aggressive rams (both fertile rams and teasers) with high libido are most effective in eliciting a response in the ewe. It is important that rams receive a breeding soundness exam prior to spring breeding to ensure fertility.

Hormonal control of the estrous cycle has been used for several years to induce ovulation in ewes. Until recently, however, protocols and products approved specifically for sheep have been a limiting factor for wide-spread application. The sheep EAZI-BREED CIDR is now approved for use in the U.S. and provides sheep producers an additional tool for spring breeding. The CIDR is a vaginal insert which releases progesterone and is labeled to induce estrus in ewes during seasonal anestrus. The CIDR is a simple, easy-to-use device that is inserted into the ewe for five days with ram introduction to immediately follow. Similar to the use of the ram effect, it is important that ewes not be exposed to rams prior to synchronization. Additionally, since a large number of ewes will exhibit estrus simultaneously, the ewe:ram ratio should not exceed 18:1 and may need to be



lower depending on the age and capacity of the ram. Consequently, pre-planning is warranted when using CIDRs to insert and remove the devices on staggered days if a large number of ewes are synchronized.

Finally, similar to fall breeding, basic management practices will enhance the success of spring breeding. Ewes need to be in good body condition and need to be weaned and recovered from the weaning process prior to spring breeding. A solid nutrition and mineral program, along with flock health program are also key. Lastly, remember that libido and fertility of rams is necessary for successful spring breeding. Breeding soundness exams and semen evaluations prior to the spring breeding season are warranted. Also, observe rams closely for activity to insure they are servicing ewes.

## **A Learning Opportunity for Extension and Other Agricultural Educators: Breeding Swine for Small-Scale and Niche-Market Pork Production**

Dr. Mark J. Estienne  
Tidewater AREC, VA Tech

In the past two decades, the Virginia swine industry experienced major changes, including a decrease in the number of farms, an increase in the size of existing operations, and movement toward vertical integration. Although the vast majority of pork consumed in the U.S. will continue to be produced by large entities such as Smithfield Foods, Inc. there is an ever expanding population of consumers that prefer their pork to be from hogs locally-raised in less-intensive systems they perceive to be more animal welfare-friendly. Extension educators can and should support all types of swine producers, large and small, with programs and technical information. It is anticipated, however, that the increasing number of small-scale and niche-market producers entering the swine industry will likely seek information from local, county offices.

One issue impeding small-scale and niche-market pork production is access to, and management of, suitable breeding stock. In Virginia, there no longer exist any seedstock producers. However, by using artificial insemination (AI), small-scale and niche-market pork producers can readily gain access to quality genetics. An educational need exists, however, for producers wishing to use AI. On **June 15, 2011**, a workshop entitled: *Breeding Swine for Small-Scale and Niche-Market Pork Production* will be held at the Tidewater Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Suffolk. The purpose of the workshop is to train Extension Agents and other Agricultural Educators so that they may share with local producers newly acquired knowledge and expertise in the areas of swine AI and breeding herd management. Agents with 4-H livestock responsibilities may also be interested in this opportunity.

The workshop agenda is as follows:

### **Breeding Swine for Small-Scale and Niche-Market Pork Production**

Tidewater Agricultural Research and Extension Center  
Suffolk, VA  
June 15, 2011

- 8:30 a.m. Registration and continental breakfast*
- 9:00 a.m. An introduction to small-scale and niche-market pork production.*  
A.F. Harper, Extension Animal Scientist-Swine, Virginia Tech- Tidewater AREC.
- 9:45 a.m. Keys to successful natural mating systems in pasture-reared swine.*  
M.J. Estienne, Swine Research Physiologist, Virginia Tech- Tidewater AREC.
- 10:30 a.m. Break*
- 10:45 a.m. Choosing breeding stock for small-scale and niche-market pork production.*  
C.M. Wood, Associate Professor, Virginia Tech- Animal and Poultry Sciences Department, Blacksburg.

*11:30 a.m. Keys to successful AI: Detecting estrus and proper insemination technique.*  
M.J Estienne

*12:00 noon Pork Barbeque Lunch*

*1:00 p.m. Hands-on training in artificial insemination in swine.* R.J. Crawford, Agricultural Supervisor, Virginia Tech- Tidewater AREC Swine Research Facility.

*3:00 p.m. Adjourn*

The workshop is being funded by a **Virginia- SARE professional development grant**. Up to twenty agents attending will be reimbursed for travel-related expenses. These “travel scholarships” will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. To reserve a space, Agents wishing to attend should notify Mark Estienne by e-mail ([mestienn@vt.edu](mailto:mestienn@vt.edu)) as soon as possible.