



Northwest Alabama Small Ruminant Newsletter Spring 2011

Greetings Everyone,

As you are well aware much of Alabama and most of its neighboring states have recently been impacted by countless numbers of tornados. Homes destroyed, families displaced, people injured, lives lost, farms and business damaged or destroyed, and we have no idea how many millions of dollars in damage and recovery all this will entail. In consideration of all the people who are trying to put their lives and farms back together this issue will try and serve or at least inform those who may need some kind of technical or financial resources which may be of help relevant to their farm.

Already USDA agencies such as Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service have “stepped up to the plate” by recognizing the dire situation and identifying programs that may be of relevant assistance. Keep in mind your farm must be registered with these agencies, they will need some form of proof that property damage or livestock mortality has occurred, which is likely to require pictures at a minimum. While some of this information might not be of immediate help, it may provide a service in the future. Contact your local USDA office for more details.

In this issue you will find the following: (1) USDA disaster relief announcements. (2) Contact information for local USDA Offices.(3) Livestock welfare considerations following natural disasters. (4) An update on USDA settlement. (5) Positive additions to our pre-existing programs taking place. (6) Points to Ponder: planning ahead for next year’s markets.

As always I appreciate your interest and support regarding my outreach efforts with Alabama Cooperative Extension System/Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs. If you feel this information is relevant please share this information with other producers. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Spencer".

Robert Spencer
Urban Regional Extension Specialist

USDA ANNOUNCEMENTS

USDA-FSA State Executive Director Reminds Affected Farmers and Ranchers of FSA Disaster Assistance Programs

MONTGOMERY, May 2, 2011 — USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Daniel Robinson reminds crop and livestock producers throughout Alabama that have recently experienced severe damage from tornadoes that FSA programs may be available to assist with recovery.

"Severe weather this spring is making things very difficult for many ranchers and farmers. Learning about our FSA disaster assistance programs is an important first step for producers in the recovery process," said Robinson.

FSA administers several important programs that help producers recover from disaster damage and livestock deaths. Among the key programs available to address impacts from disasters are:

- **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)**—provides funding for farmers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by a natural disaster (**check with local FSA Office for sign-up periods, which are set by county FSA committees**)
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)**—provides assistance to livestock producers for livestock deaths from a natural disaster event (**must file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of the loss event or of when the loss of livestock was apparent to the participant**)
- **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)**—provides emergency relief to producers of livestock, honey bees, and farm-raised fish, and covers losses not adequately covered by any other disaster program (**must file notice of loss within the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to the participant, or 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the loss occurred**)

- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)**—provides assistance to orchardists and nursery tree growers for losses due to a natural disaster (**must file notice of loss within 90 calendar days from the date of the disaster event or the date when the loss of trees, bushes or vines is apparent**)
- **Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP)**—provides assistance to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest land in order to carry out emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster (**check with local FSA Office for sign-up periods, which are set by county FSA committees**)
- **Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)**—provides assistance to eligible producers affected by a natural disaster, covering noninsurable crop losses and prevented planting (**must file notice of loss within 15 calendar days of date of loss or of the date damage to the crop or loss of production becomes apparent to the participant**)
- **Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program**—provides assistance for crop production and/or quality losses due to a natural disaster

Fact sheets for all of these programs can be found online at www.fsa.usda.gov; click on Newsroom, then Fact Sheets. You may also visit your local Farm Service Agency Office for more information regarding these programs. "We encourage all who have suffered a disaster due to the recent severe weather conditions to read the fact sheets and visit their local FSA county office so they can get a quick start in the recovery process," added Robinson.

NRCS Announces: Southeast states included in USDA recovery aid due to storms, floods, and etc.
May 1, 2011

In partnership and through local government sponsors, the EWP Program provides assistance to areas that have been damaged by natural disasters, such as floods, windstorms, drought, and wildfires.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has made immediately available \$6 million in Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program aid for disaster recovery projects in 10 states affected this month by storms and floods. States include Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee.

“Our thoughts are with the families and communities across many parts of the country that have been affected by this severe weather,” said Vilsack. “USDA personnel in our state and local offices are coordinating with their state and local government counterparts in order to provide much-needed assistance as quickly as possible to communities that have been hard hit by this string of terrible tragedies.”

In partnership and through local government sponsors, the EWP Program provides assistance to areas that have been damaged by natural disasters, such as floods, windstorms, drought, and wildfires. The EWP Program safeguards lives and property by installing conservation measures to reduce storm water runoff and prevent soil erosion, as well as remove watershed impairments such as debris caught in culverts and under bridges.

In response to the recent storms and floods, NRCS provided \$600,000 in EWP Program financial and technical assistance to each of its 10 NRCS state offices so that field personnel can swiftly begin work on projects that reduce or remove dangerous threats to public safety and infrastructure.

To the extent possible, NRCS state and field personnel are surveying damaged areas and working with their local partners to identify the full scope of the damage and prepare disaster recovery projects. NRCS will evaluate the need on a continuous basis for additional assistance to the impacted communities.

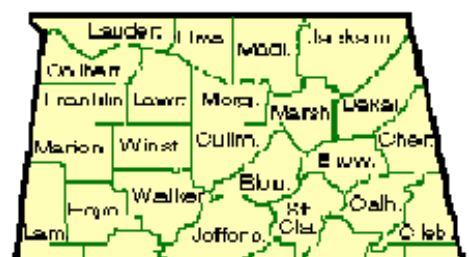
More information about EWP is available on www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ewp/.



LOCATIONS FOR USDA SERVICE CENTERS

The list below primarily addresses Northwest AL, almost every county has an USDA Service Center, or at least one in a neighboring county

- Blount** – 5545 US Hwy 231 N
Oneonta, AL 35121
205-274-2361
- Colbert** – 1700 Neil Morris Road
Tuscumbia, AL 35674-8515
256-383-4323
- Cullman** – 205 4th Avenue NE
Cullman, AL 35055-1966
256-734-6471
- Franklin** – (same as Colbert Co.)
1700 Neil Morris Road
Tuscumbia, AL 35674-8515
256-383-4323
- Lawrence** – 13075 Hwy 157
Moulton, AL 35650
256-974-1174
- Lauderdale** – 2431 Darby Drive
Florence, AL 35630-1560
256-764-5833
- Limestone** – 1795 US Hwy 72 E
Athens, AL 35611-4413
256-232-4025
- Madison** – Charles Stone Ag.
819 Cook Avenue NW
Huntsville, AL 35801-5983
256-532-1677
- Marion** – 285 Laurel Lane
Hamilton, AL 35570-4703
205-921-3103
- Morgan** – 3120 Hwy 36 W
Hartselle, AL 35640
256-773-6541
- Winston** – 285 Laurel Lane
Hamilton, AL 35570-4703
205-921-3103



LIVESTOCK WELFARE FOLLOWING NATURAL DISASTERS



The following are some general guidelines to follow to insure the welfare of your goats, sheep or other stray livestock post natural disaster.

- Stressed or injured animals are likely to behave erratically and prone to injuring themselves or people.
- In the case of stray notify local law enforcement prior to any interaction with the animals.
- Closely observe livestock to verify any injuries or stressful situations.
- Be prepared to contact a veterinarian if necessary.
- Signs of stressed livestock include heavy panting, slobbering, lack of coordination and trembling.
- Provide access to clean cool drinking water and hay. When they begin to relax they will consume both.
- Ensure animals have access to shade and utilize temporary structures if necessary. If kept in confinement, make sure there is good ventilation and adequate space per animal. Crowded conditions increase stress and infighting. Use fans if necessary to keep air circulating and animals comfortable.
- Avoid sudden movements, loud noises, and do not yell at animals, this can add to a stressful situation.
- Movement of animals is facilitated by remaining behind the herd or individual animal.

EXPANSION ON PREEXISTING PROGRAMS

As you are well aware Extension's Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs has done an outstanding job of serving goat, sheep, and rabbit clientele. Beginning in 2012 we are expanding out outreach efforts to serve producers with an interest in pastured poultry and grass fed beef.

We realize the importance of farm diversification and the growing interest in all-natural livestock production. In order to better serve the needs of potential clientele we are expanding our programmatic efforts.

You can look forward to seeing an expansion of our quality educational programs and materials! Please help us get the word out to interested parties.

Important Announcement!
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Claims Process for Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers

Secretary Vilsack has made civil rights one of his top priorities at USDA. As part of this effort the USDA and the Department of Justice (DOJ) have been working on a unified claims process for Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who were discriminated against. On Friday, February 25, USDA announced a process that allows the Department to provide significant relief to Hispanic and women farmers who were unjustifiably denied farm loan program benefits between 1981 and 2000 because of their ethnic background or gender.

This process will include extensive outreach and notice efforts to Hispanic and women farmer communities so that all eligible farmers will be given an opportunity to participate. We need your help to inform as many potential claimants as possible.

If you are a women or Hispanic farmer and believe you were improperly denied farm loan benefits by USDA between 1981 and 2000. You may be eligible for compensation. To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: <https://farmerclaims.gov>.



POINTS TO PONDER

Prices

By the time you see this report it will be two weeks old, but still worth taking note. Similar market reports can be found by visiting market reports for Hershey, PA and San Angelo, TX. Numbers and prices are down from two weeks prior to Easter, but as we have seen for the past year, prices remain well above average.

Tennessee Livestock Producers Graded Goat and Sheep Sale.
Columbia TN, April 22, 2011

Receipts: 643(516 Goats; 143 Sheep)
Last Sale 2218
Next Sale May 13, 2011.(second and fourth Friday each month)

Goats sold per hundred weight (cwt) unless otherwise noted, weights, actual or estimated.

Slaughter Classes: Kids
Selection 1
15-24 lbs 174.00
25-35 lbs 185.00-201.00
36-50 lbs 166.00-172.00
51-65 lbs 170.00-188.00
66-80 lbs 160.00-174.00
81-100 lbs 120.00

Selection 2
15-24 lbs 157.00-179.00
25-35 lbs 160.00-163.00
36-50 lbs 154.00-187.00
51-65 lbs 141.00-164.00
66-80 lbs 114.00-125.00
81-100 lbs 114.00-117.00

Selection 3
25-35 lbs 157.00-173.00
36-50 lbs 152.00-179.00
51-65 lbs 125.00-160.00
66-80 lbs 115.00-128.00

Yearlings Selection 2-3
63-68 lbs 119.00-131.00
89-115 lbs 104.00-112.00

Slaughter Bucks/Billies
All Wgts 85.00-95.00

Slaughter Nannies/Does
All wgts 63.00-102.00, mostly 79.00-93.50

Kids; Feeders Selection 3
26-33 lbs Not well tested
41-61 lbs 113.00-121.00

SHEEP

Slaughter Lambs-Includes all breeds, sold per hundred weight (cwt).

Choice and Prime 32-33 lbs
Good 154.00-154.00
Choice and Prime 40-60 lbs 140.00-170.00
Good 133.00-141.00
Choice and Prime 61-80 lbs 150.00-155.00
Good 125.00
Choice and Prime 81-100 lbs 111.00-140.00
Good

Slaughter Ewes Utility and Good:
All wgts 66.00-100.00, mostly 81.00-92.00

Tennessee Dept of Ag-USDA Market News, Nashville, TN

There is a lesson to be learned from the above average prices this past spring: planning, planning, and planning. Strategic reproductive planning is the key to being able to market your animals when prices are at a premium. Based on years of market reports many of us know prices tend to reach a premium two weeks prior to Easter. From late winter into spring prices are historically higher than any other time of the year, so as managers we must readjust our small ruminant breeding program to meet these prime market times.

The old-fashioned practice of allowing goats and sheep to breed in the fall, and then kid/lamb in spring, keeps producers from receiving full potential revenues. If you are serious about trying to make money on your farm, then you need to implement long-term planning for reproduction management and marketing.

Allow sufficient time (7-9 months), from conception to ideal market weight (*See market report*), to target ideal market time frames. For example, allow animals kid/lamb in fall, and then add another two to five months to reach ideal market weights of thirty to sixty pounds. You are likely into spring markets when prices are ideal. If you allow your animals to kid/lamb in the spring you still have the expenses associated with getting them to weight (hay, feed, medicines, and etc.) but are accepting a lower price for your animals in the late summer or fall.

Consider adjusting your breeding program to spring/early summer, kid/lamb in late fall/early winter, and have your young animals ready for those ideal market weights and peak seasonal demand. Being able to sell these young animals in spring reduces demands on your pastures, allowing your brood stock to access low cost nutritional inputs. This reduces your reliance upon supplemental grains and hay, thereby reducing input costs.



You'll really appreciate this concept if you take the time to evaluate and compare costly feed costs per head versus premium spring prices! According to long-term forecasts the costs of grain feed will remain high; this is due to increasing global demand. Prices of grains, fertilizer, equipment, and fuel are driven by global demand, and the ever-growing world likes to eat on a regular basis.

Whether you directly market your animals to ethnic and faith-based markets or take them to a sale barn, now is the time to make plans to readjust your reproduction plan for your farm. Put that ram or buck in with your brood stock now! Come next spring your farm revenues will reflect the improvement of your strategic management decision!