

# Agricultural REVIEW

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Raleigh, N.C.

## On the Horizon

The seventh annual Commissioner's Food Safety Forum will be held Monday, Aug. 22, at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Convention Center in Research Triangle Park.

The event will run from 8:30 a.m. to noon in conjunction with the N.C. Agribusiness Council's Ag Leaders Conference. Admission to the forum is free.

"The forum offers a unique opportunity for those interested in food safety to network and learn more about current issues," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler.

On the agenda will be updates on the ongoing implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act, the continuing refinement of public and private food-related disaster recovery efforts, and the latest industry efforts targeting food safety risks.

(See Food safety, pg. 2)

## Mountain State Fair set for Sept. 9-18 in Fletcher

New things are in store for the 2011 Mountain State Fair, which runs Sept. 9-18 at the Western N.C. Ag Center in Fletcher.

The Mountain State Fair will serve as the official grand opening of the newly renovated Davis Event Center. This 75,000-square-foot multipurpose building will hold commercial and community exhibits during the fair and will house additional restroom facilities for fairgoers. The main arena is paved for easier walking, and new landscaping and sidewalks were installed between the Davis, Virginia Boone and Expo buildings.

Fairgoers will find exciting new grounds entertainment to go with plenty of their fair favorites. The Zerbini Family Circus offers up family-friendly fun under the big top with an array of acrobats, trapeze artists, daredevils, circus clowns, dancers, jugglers and animals. The Kenya Safari Acrobats will amaze with their high-energy show. End-over-end flips, spectacular displays of balance and strength, and choreographed jump roping are all signatures of this troupe, whose members serve as artistic ambassadors for Kenya. Fairgoers will want

(See Mountain fair, pg. 3)

## Growers can manage tobacco leaf quality with tissue analysis

To achieve high-quality, cured leaf, tobacco producers must intensively manage nutrient inputs. The best way to do this is with a test known as plant tissue analysis. This quick and inexpensive test, which is available from the Agronomic Services Division of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, gives growers a way to monitor nutrient needs throughout the season

and also schedule harvest to coincide with optimal ripeness.

As a monitoring tool, tissue testing is especially useful when deciding whether to replace nitrogen, potassium or sulfur after leaching rains. For this purpose, a good tissue sample consists of the most recent mature leaves (MRMLs) taken from eight to 12 representative areas throughout the field. The

## Agronomic lab now offering rush soil testing service in busy season

Growers seeking quicker turnaround on soil testing results during the busy fall/winter testing season will have a new option.

As a result of legislation that went into effect June 12, the department can now offer priority sample processing for a minimal fee of \$100 for 36 samples. This is a voluntary option for clients, who can expect a turnaround time of about two weeks.

This option is expected to benefit agricultural consultants and large farming operations that submit hundreds of samples and have narrow windows of opportunity for applications of lime and fertilizer.

The Agronomic Services Division will work out the logistics of the new service during the 2012 fiscal year (July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012).

For a limited time, the division is selling specially marked shipping boxes for soil samples requiring priority attention. Only 500 shippers will be sold; each one can hold 36 samples.

(See Rush soil testing, pg. 2)

MRML is usually the third to fifth leaf from the growing point.

Brenda Cleveland, chief of the division's Plant/Waste/Solution/Media Section, encourages growers to pay particular attention to nitrogen fertilization.

"Nitrogen affects leaf quality in many ways," Cleveland said. "Excess nitrogen fosters insect problems, increases sucker

growth and extends curing time. Also, when tobacco receives more than the recommended maximum of 80 pounds nitrogen per acre, maturity can be significantly delayed. When this happens, crops may still be in the field, and at risk, during the September hurricane season. Monitoring nitrogen

(See Leaf quality, pg. 3)

## From the tractor

by Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler



Commissioner Troxler

When North Carolina legislators approved the 2011-2012 budget, the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services inherited four programs from other state agencies. They are the N.C. Forest Service, Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Grade A Milk and Sleep Products.

These were not changes we sought, but clearly were changes the legislators

thought made sense, and I don't disagree. At the federal level, similar programs fall under the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

We welcome these new programs to the department and to the ag family in the broader context. I have already learned a lot about these new programs, and know I will learn even more as time goes on.

The N.C. Forest Service wasted no time in helping bring me up to speed as crews have been engaged in fighting multiple fires in eastern North Carolina before, during and after the agency's transition from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

I was able to visit the sites of two major wildfires in eastern North Carolina -

one in Pender County and the other in Bladen and Cumberland counties.

I was impressed with the dedication and professionalism of the fire crews. They had been working long hours in hot weather to try to protect homes and land from being scorched. They understand there is a lot at stake with wildfires, and they work very hard to try to get them under control.

What has been challenging about some of these wildfires is the organic nature of the soil where these fires are burning. The organic soil can reach depths of 8 feet or more. The wildfire can creep underground, drying out vegetation until it reaches a point of combustion, and fire can smolder in the ground for months until there is a

soaking rain.

We can certainly use the rain, as many parts of the state are very dry. I hope our forestry staff can soon get a helping hand from Mother Nature.

The N.C. Forest Service not only fights fires, it also has a number of other responsibilities tied to developing, managing and caring for our state's forest resources. This includes reforestation services, forest fire prevention and suppression, and insect and disease control. The division is involved in the operation of tree seedling nurseries, long-range forestry planning and technical development, water quality controls, urban forestry assistance, training

(See Changes, pg. 2)

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## Fire safety tips to help prevent wildfires

With the state still experiencing dry conditions and with wildfires continuing to burn across the state, the N.C. Forest Service urges North Carolinians to be especially careful with fire and pay attention to any burn bans in place.



The state Forest Service urges people to follow these tips to protect property and prevent wildfires:

- Make sure you have a valid permit. Permits can be obtained at any Forest Service office or authorized permitting agent or online at [www.ncforestservice.gov](http://www.ncforestservice.gov)
- Keep an eye on the weather. Don't burn on dry, windy days.
- Local fire officials can recommend a safe way to burn debris. Don't pile vegetation on the ground. Instead, it should be placed in a cleared area and contained in a screened receptacle, away from overhead branches and wires.
- Check local laws on burning debris. Some communities allow burning only during specified hours. Others forbid it entirely.
- Consider the alternatives to burning. Some types of debris, such as leaves, grass and stubble may be of more value if they are not burned, but used for mulch instead.
- Household trash should be hauled away to a recycling station. It is illegal to burn anything other than yard debris.
- Be sure you are fully prepared before burning. To control the fire, you will need a hose, bucket and a shovel for tossing dirt on the fire.

- Never use kerosene, gasoline, diesel fuel or other flammable liquids to speed debris burning.
- Stay with your fire until it is completely out.

Studies have shown that adhering to these and other measures can reduce the possibility for wildfires.



## Changes (Cont'd from pg. 1)

and support to volunteer fire departments and forestry education.

Our forest resources provide great benefits to us, including clean water and air, timber for wood products, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitats, stable soil and beautiful scenery.

Don't expect any big changes to state-owned lands and recreational areas that are managed by the N.C. Forest Service.

Here are some highlights of our other additions.

The Division of Soil and Water Conservation fosters voluntary, incentive-driven management of soil, water and related natural resources. This group is recognized as having one of the nation's top soil and water conservation programs for

private lands, something I am very proud of. Soil and Water staff partner with local conservation districts and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service, as well as private and nonprofit organizations. This strong local district infrastructure has led to the success in putting conservation measures on the ground across the state.

Soil and water are essential foundations of agricultural production, and they are finite resources. It is in everyone's best interest to use them conservatively and not be wasteful.

The Grade A Milk program inspects dairy farmers and processors to ensure safety and wholesomeness of milk products. It has joined our Food and Drug Protection Division, which already regulates the making of butter, cheese and frozen desserts.

## Bucolic briefs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency reminds North Carolina livestock producers of the availability of Livestock Gross Margin insurance for dairy cattle. LGM Dairy protects against loss of gross margin (market value of milk minus feed costs) on milk produced from dairy cows. The indemnity at the end of the 11-month insurance period is the difference between the gross margin guarantee and the actual gross margin (if positive).

The policy uses futures prices for corn, soybean meal and milk to determine expected and actual gross margin, and may be tailored to any size farming operation. LGM Dairy is different from traditional options in that it is a bundled option covering the price of both milk and feed costs. Producers can sign up 12 times per year and insure up to 240,000 hundredweight per year. Insurance purchases must be executed through insurance agents, but producers may access all policy materials, including Premium Calculation Instructions, on the RMA website at [www.rma.usda.gov/livestock/](http://www.rma.usda.gov/livestock/). LGM-Dairy sales will resume with the beginning of the 2012 fiscal year.

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The Carolina Mane Event Show Circuit will host a show Aug. 6 & 7 at the Hunt Horse Complex in Raleigh. For more on the shows, contact Michele McLaughlin at (919) 934-1344, e-mail at [sileeno@ipass.net](mailto:sileeno@ipass.net) or go to [www.ipass.net/cmesc](http://www.ipass.net/cmesc).

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There will be an open horse show Aug. 27 at 11 a.m. at Biggerstaff Park in Dallas. Contact Judy Yarborough at (704) 400-1899 or [JudyYar@aol.com](mailto:JudyYar@aol.com) for more.

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The Historic Seventh Avenue District in Hendersonville will host the Organic Market at 7<sup>th</sup> Sept. 4 in conjunction with the N.C. Apple Festival. The market will be held in the historic train depot and will feature area farmers who farm organically or naturally. Products offered include traditional fruits and vegetables, jams, soaps and T-shirts. Vendors are still being accepted. Contact Tara Ledbetter, HSAD executive director, at (828) 674-3067 or go to the HSAD website at [www.7thavehvl.com](http://www.7thavehvl.com).

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The Carolina Paint Horse Club has announced its 2011 show schedule. Following is the schedule: the Fall Fling show, Sept. 17 at Colfax; and the Cardinal Classic, Oct. 15 and 16, at the WNC Agricultural Center, Fletcher. For more information on shows, contact CPHC president Tony Honeycutt, (704) 792-2122 or go to [www.thecarolinapainthorseclub.com](http://www.thecarolinapainthorseclub.com).

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The 2011 Southeast NC Ag show, hosted by the Lumber River Old Iron Tractor Club, will be held Oct. 22 at the Southeastern Agricultural Center and Farmers Market in Lumberton. The event features antique tractor and equipment displays, food, arts and crafts, kids' games and events, tractor games, music, working horses, equipment demonstration and FFA displays. For more, contact Junior Callahan, (910) 840-0291 or Jerry Willoughby, (910) 648-6369.

## 2011 Fall Feeder Calf Schedule

Aug. 10	.....	Carolina Stockyards, Siler City. Sale coordinator Adam Ross, (336) 318-6000, or Sam Groce, (919) 542-8202.
Aug. 18	.....	Stanly County Livestock Market, Norwood. Sale coordinator Steve Lemons, (704) 983-3987.
Sept. 7	.....	WNC Regional Livestock Center, Canton. Sale coordinator John Queen, (828) 421-3446.
Sept. 8	.....	Stanly County Livestock Market, Norwood. Sale coordinator Steve Lemons, (704) 983-3987.
Sept. 13	.....	Sampson County Livestock Arena, Clinton. Sale coordinator Paul Gonzalez, (910) 592-7161.
Sept. 15	.....	Stanly County Livestock Market, Norwood. Sale coordinator Steve Lemons, (704) 983-3987.
Sept. 21	.....	Carolina Stockyards, Siler City. Sale coordinator Adam Ross, (336) 318-6000, or Sam Groce, (919) 542-8202.
Sept. 22	.....	Harward Brothers Livestock Market, Statesville. Sale coordinator will be the county extension agent, (704) 873-0507.
Sept. 29	.....	Wilkes Livestock Exchange, N. Wilkesboro. Sale coordinator will be the county extension agent, (336) 651-7300.

## Food safety (Cont'd from pg. 1)

Keynote speakers are Dr. Steven Solomon, deputy associate commissioner for regulatory affairs with the Food and Drug Administration; Dr. Bob Gravani, director of the National Good Agricultural

Practices Program at Cornell University; and Bonnie Fernandez-Fenaroli, executive director of the Center for Produce Safety at the University of California at Davis.

For more information, go to [www.ncagr.gov/ncfoodsafetyforum](http://www.ncagr.gov/ncfoodsafetyforum).

## Rush soil testing (Cont'd from pg. 1)

The division will attempt to ration the shippers in an equitable manner so that as many interested growers as possible have access.

Because quantities are

limited, expedited shippers may not be available for purchase after September. Call the Agronomic Division office at (919) 733-2655 for details on how to place your

order. Payment by credit card will be accepted for purchases made at the Eaddy Building in Raleigh. Payment via escrow account is also an option.

As regular readers of this column know, food safety is an important priority. The department is already involved in inspecting many sectors of food production, so moving this program to our agency made sense.

The Sleep Products program is responsible for inspecting and licensing all sleep products sold or manufactured in the state. It also regulates the sanitizing process for used bedding products. For that reason, it now falls under our Structural Pest Control and Pesticides Division.

This is one of the oldest programs in state government, dating back to 1937. In today's increasingly global marketplace, it is important to ensure that all new bedding products adhere to rigorous sanitary standards.

You will be hearing more about these and other NCDA&CS programs in the future.











