

Agricultural REVIEW

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Raleigh, N.C.

Almost time to renew your Ag Review

The renewal period for the *Agricultural Review* is coming up next month.

The process is simple. Subscribers, clip the card that includes your mailing address off the front page of the newspaper and mail it back to the Public Affairs office to renew your subscription for another year. The address to mail it to is on the back side of the card.

There is also an online renewal process, which requires subscribers to enter the number above their name into the online renewal form.

By law, the newspaper is required to update its mailing database each year, which is why subscribers are asked to renew.

Make sure you keep your newspaper coming, by sending in your card or renewing online.

Got to Be NC Festival runs May 19-21

The Got to Be NC Festival returns to the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh May 19-21 with free entertainment and activities for the whole family.

New additions to the festival for 2017 include the Great Pig Patch Birthing Center, where visitors may have the chance to see a litter of piglets being born; a large-scale sand sculpture by SandyFeat; daily rock and country music in Dorton Arena put on by Outlaw Nation; a bulldozer sandbox exhibit where festival goers can watch big kids play around with really big earth-moving equipment; a giant mural where visitors can color to their heart's content; and a presentation on unmanned aerial vehicle uses in agriculture.

Visitors can also take a ride on the State Fair Flyer, the only permanent ride on the fairgrounds. The Flyer debuted at the 2016 N.C. State Fair, and this is the first year it will operate during the festival.

Popular attractions returning are the Paul Bunyan (See Got to Be NC Festival, pg. 2)



The Got to Be NC Festival features loads of family-friendly activities while highlighting North Carolina's No. 1 industry -- agriculture. Visitors will find carnival rides, antique tractors and a daily tractor parade, the Got to Be NC Homegrown Fare presented by Lowes Food, the Carolina Masonic Pig Jig, agricultural exhibits, music and more. The festival runs May 19-21 at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh.

From the tractor

by Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler



Commissioner Troxler

Spring is one super busy time of the year, especially on the farm. The sounds and bustle of tractors in motion, the smell of the dirt being turned and the warmth of the sun provide farming with the best office in my opinion.

I love being in the field, but I love my "day job" as Commissioner, too, even though it mostly keeps me off the tractor. So, I know it is sometimes very hard to talk farmers into leaving the farm for other work-related activities,

but I am going to try anyway.

In this month's column, I wanted to mention some of the upcoming field days that will be taking place at research stations across the state.

Field days offer a chance for farmers to talk with researchers one-on-one and learn more about the latest research findings and production methods. You can also see firsthand the research in the field, compare test plot to test plot or technique to technique.

As a grower, it is important to stay up on the latest production practices, the advancement of new varieties and just the overall direction of research efforts. Studies are generally looking at ways to help farmers do their jobs better, be more efficient and improve the bottom line. As a small business owner, I know those sound good AND smart to me.

Our Research Stations Divi-

sion has a field days Web page (<http://www.ncagr.gov/Research/FieldDays.htm>) that lists upcoming events that are happening throughout the year. They cover everything from small grains, safety, turfgrass and small farms to dairy production, organic grains, apples, tomatoes and peanuts.

The page is updated periodically with new events, and I would encourage you to bookmark it and check back for updates.

Upcoming events include:

-- N.C. Angus Association Spring Fever Sale, May 6 at the Upper Piedmont Research Station in Reidsville.

-- Small Grains Field Day in Rowan County, May 11 at the Piedmont Research Station in Salisbury.

-- Farm Safety Day, May 11 at the Upper Mountain Research Station in Laurel Springs.

-- Sandhills Turfgrass Field Day and Conference, June 14 at the Sandhills Research Station in Jackson Springs.

-- N.C. A&T Small Farm Field Day, June 15 at the N.C. A&T University Farm in Greensboro.

-- Dairy Research and Extension Workgroup, July 12 at the Piedmont Research Station in Salisbury.

-- Mountain Research Station Field Day, July 18 at the Mountain Research Station in Waynesville.

-- Organic Grain Crops Field Day, July 20 at the Upper Coastal Plain Research Station in Rocky Mount.

I hope you will consider attending a field day in 2017. In the meantime, I hope you are enjoying your farm office views.

Agricultural Review

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Soil tests can help improve lawns and manage fertility in warm-season grasses

Knowing what type of grass is in your yard, coupled with the scientific results of a soil test, can help homeowners know when the best time to fertilize is and what products are best to use. While fertilizer will be needed, potassium and phosphorous may not be.

Warm-season grasses, such as Bermuda, centipede, St. Augustine and Zoysia, grow most actively during late spring to summer and are dormant in the winter. These can benefit from fertilizer nitrogen application during the active growth period.

Cool-season grasses, such as fescue and bluegrass, grow actively during the cooler time of the year and have passed the window of time to fertilize. "Fertilizing cool season grasses with nitrogen outside of the optimum time period will create stress and likely reduce stands," said Jagathi Kamalakanthan, an agronomist with the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Kamalakanthan recommends starting with a soil test. The soil test will provide lime and fertilizer recommendations. Lime adjusts the pH level, which is critical for optimum nutrient availability. In other words, it will help fertilizer do its best work, if fertilizer is a necessary addition.

A soil pH of 6.0 is targeted for most grasses except centipede. For centipede, the soil pH should be around 5.5. If your soil pH is too low, lime can be applied to elevate it. Lime can be applied at any time. Once you make any

corrections recommended by the soil test results, you do not need to apply lime for another two or three years. "You should follow a yearly fertilizer routine until you get another soil test to determine lime needs," Kamalakanthan said.

Phosphorus and potassium levels are determined with soil testing to provide the fertilizer recommendation and a rate to best match the needs of a specific grass type. The recommended fertilizer and the rate will supply nitrogen, which stimulates growth, along with any phosphorus and potassium needed. The timing of a nitrogen application is critical for best success, Kamalakanthan said.

Nitrogen-containing fertilizer is best applied to Bermuda grass in May, July and September. Applications to St. Augustine are best targeted for May and August. When fertilizing Zoysia, May and July applications are optimum. Slow-growing centipede has much lower fertility requirements compared to all the other warm-season grasses and should receive only one nitrogen fertilizer application, either at the end of May or early June. Best success with a centipede lawn occurs when over-fertilization with nitrogen and phosphorus is avoided.

Warm-season grasses fertilized too early in the spring or too late into the fall are more susceptible to cold damage and pest issues.

"Fertilizing with the right amount of fertilizer at the right time is key to the success of your lawn," Kamalakanthan said.

As to weed and feed fertilizers, they are abundantly available to homeowners; however, caution should be used before selecting and using them. The timing of fertilizer needs may not match best the time for herbicide application. Also, some grasses such as centipede are very susceptible to herbicide injury.

As warn-season grasses prepare for winter, it is critical to make sure that potassium is in adequate supply, especially on sandy soils. Added potassium will lessen the chance of winter kill and also help prevent some diseases. About six weeks prior to frost, consider an application of 1.5 pounds 0-0-60 per 1,000 square feet or 2 pounds 0-0-50 per 1,000 square feet. Do not apply any potassium using a fertilizer also containing nitrogen.

Soil testing is free from April 1 until about mid-November, with expected results back in about seven to 10 working days from spring through early fall.

"Now is a great time to test your soil for getting lime and fertilizer recommendations before warm-season grass begins to actively grow," Kamalakanthan said.

Information on collecting and sampling for home gardens is available at www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pdf/files/HomeApr2014.pdf. Contact the Agronomic Services Division office at 919-733-2655 for questions regarding soil testing.

Stores pay fines for price-scanning errors

The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Standards Division collected fines from stores in Brunswick, Durham, Forsyth and Mecklenburg counties because of excessive price-scanner errors.

"We want consumers to be confident the price on the shelf matches the price that's scanned at the register," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "Consumers can call the Standards Division at 919-707-3225 to report an issue."

The department conducts periodic, unannounced inspections of a business' price-scanner system to check for accuracy between the prices advertised and the prices that ring up at the register. If a store has more than a 2-percent error rate on overcharges, inspectors discuss the findings with the store manager and conduct a more intensive follow-up inspection at a later date. Undercharges are also reported, but do not count against a store.

Penalties are assessed if a store fails a follow-up inspection. The store will be subject to re-inspection every 60 days from the last inspection until it meets the 2-percent-or-less error rate. Additional penalties may be assessed if the store fails a re-inspection. Following are stores that paid civil penalties in the first quarter of 2017:

Walgreens #2530 at 5098 Southport Supply Road, Southport, paid \$660 in penalties. An initial inspection in November found an error rate of 10 percent, based on five overcharges in a 50-item lot. A second inspection in January found an error rate of 3.33 percent, based on 10 overcharges in a 300-item lot. The store passed inspection in March.

Office Depot #2687 at 5600 South Miami Blvd., Durham, paid a total of \$3,320 in penalties. An initial inspection in October found an error rate of 16 percent, based on eight overcharges in a 50-item lot. A second inspection in November found at er-

ror rate of 7.33 percent, based on 22 overcharges in a 300-item lot. The store paid \$1,710 in penalties. A third inspection in January found an error rate of 5.33 percent, based on 16 overcharges in a 300-item lot. The store paid \$1,610 in penalties. The store was inspected in March and had an error rate of 3 percent, based on nine overcharges in a 300-item lot. The store has been assessed a \$1,915 penalty and will be re-inspected.

Staples #1135 at 430 Hanes Mill Road, Winston-Salem, paid a total of \$4,280 in penalties. An initial inspection in September found an error rate of 20 percent, based on 10 overcharges in a 50-item lot. A second inspection in November found an error rate of 7.67 percent, based on 23 overcharges in a 300-item lot. The store paid \$2,760 in penalties. A third inspection in February found an error rate of 3 percent, based on nine overcharges on a 300-item lot. The store paid \$1,520 in penalties. The store will be re-inspected.

CVS #3896 at 9308 Kendall Drive, Charlotte, paid a total of \$2,810 in penalties. An initial inspection in October found an error rate of 10 percent, based on five overcharges in a 50-item lot. A second inspection in November found an error rate of 7 percent, based on 21 overcharges in a 300-item lot. The store paid \$1,605 in penalties. A third inspection in January found an error rate of 2.67 percent based on eight overcharges in a 300-item lot. The store paid \$1,205 in penalties. The store passed inspection in March.

CVS #6518 at 11430 North Tryon St., Charlotte paid \$1,425 in penalties. An initial inspection in December found an error rate of 8 percent, based on four overcharges in a 50-item lot. A second inspection in January found an error rate of 7.33 percent, based on 22 overcharges in a 300-item lot. The store passed inspection in March.

Got to Be NC Festival

(Continued from pg. 1)

Lumberjack Show and the Prehistoric Adventure, which is an interactive show where kids can see roaming dinosaurs and animated displays, and the Got to Be NC Homegrown Fare presented by Lowes Foods, where visitors can sample North Carolina products and beverages.

Forty chapters of Masons will compete for bragging rights in the Carolina Masonic Pig Jig BBQ Cook-Off and fundraiser on Saturday, May 20. Beginning at 11 a.m. after the final official judging takes place, festival goers will have the opportunity to feast on the barbecue prepared by the teams. Cost is \$15 for ages 12 and up, \$5 for ages 7 to 11, and free for kids 6 and under.

Be sure to check out the tractor power showcased in the Sam Rand Grandstand at the Kids' Pedal Tractor Pull, Friday, May 19, at 12:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 20, at 11 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.; the Antique Tractor Pull Saturday, May 20, from 2 to 8 p.m.; the Garden Tractor and Lawnmower Pull Sunday, May 21, from 2 to 8 p.m.

Those seeking the thrills and squeals of the midway rides will find special deals on Friday and Sunday, when wrist bands can be purchased from noon to 9 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday for \$20 per day for unlimited rides.

Festival gates open from noon to 10 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday. Buildings open at 10 a.m. Saturday and Sunday and close two hours earlier on each day. Fireworks are provided Friday and Saturday at 9:15 p.m.


Admission to the festival is free, but there is a \$3 charge for the Homegrown Fare. Children 12 and under are admitted for free. Lowes Foods loyalty card holders can get two free admissions to the Homegrown Fare by showing their card.

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Troxler names three new division directors

■ Promotions follow May 1 retirements of two directors

Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler recently announced three new appointments at the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to replace two division directors who retired.

"I am pleased to have well-qualified and dedicated staff members who will be stepping into new leadership roles at the department," Troxler said. "I am confident they will do an outstanding job based on their years of experience in their respective fields."

John Howard, Emergency Programs director

John Howard of Efland has worked 18 years with the N.C. Forest Service, most recently as a district forester with supervisory responsibilities for 27 employees. He is an incident commander on the N.C. Forest Service Incident Management Team. Howard has been dispatched on numerous disasters around the United States, in-



John Howard

cluding wildfires, hurricanes and floods. In those responses, he has worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other state and federal organizations, giving him a strong background in emergency response protocols and order. Howard earned a Bachelor of Science degree in forestry from N.C. State University. He replaced Sharron Stewart, who retired.



Vernon Cox

Vernon Cox, Soil and Water Conservation director

Vernon Cox of Raleigh leaves his post as head of the Plant Industry Division to serve as director of Soil and Water Conservation. The move marks the Columbus County native's return to the agency where he served for 15 years when it was part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Cox first



Phillip Wilson

joined Soil and Water Conservation in 1995 as an economist working on the Small Watershed Grant Program. He was promoted to chief of the division's Technical Services Section in 2005, before becoming an NCDA&CS environmental policy specialist in 2010. He was promoted to director of the Plant Industry Division in 2013. Cox earned undergraduate degrees in agricultural busi-

ness management and agricultural engineering technology from NCSU. He also earned a master's degree from NCSU in agricultural economics. Cox replaced Pat Harris, who retired.

Phillip Wilson, Plant Industry Division director

Phillip Wilson of Pikeville has worked for 32 years with the Plant Industry Division, most recently as plant pest administrator overseeing the division's Plant Protection Section, with responsibilities for regulatory survey and control activities of harmful insects, pathogens and weeds. Wilson began his career as a research technician, before serving for 25 years as a plant pest specialist and field certification specialist. He is a member of the Southern and National Plant boards, and is the vice president/treasurer of the Gypsy Moth Slow the Spread Foundation. Wilson earned a Bachelor of Science degree in botany from NCSU.

Drought in Western N.C. leaves pine trees more susceptible to attacks

People often expect insects to be most active in the warm days of summer, but pine bark beetles can be active any time of year.

Kelly Oten, forest health monitoring coordinator with the N.C. Forest Service, tells landowners with pine on their property what they should look for so pine bark beetles don't leave them pining for healthy trees.

"One of the first symptoms noticed is needle discoloration in the canopy," Oten said. "The green needles fade to light green, then yellow, then eventually red. Upon closer inspection, you may see dried pine resin on the bark of the tree. These are called pitch tubes and are the tree's defense to a bark beetle attempting to bore through the bark."

Adult and immature beetles feed beneath the bark, creating winding tunnels that can be seen if the bark is peeled off, Oten said. These galleries prevent nutrients and water from traveling within the tree, effectively choking it.

Most bark-beetle activity occurs in pines that are stressed or weakened by another factor. The current drought in Western North Carolina leaves many pines susceptible to beetle attack. Other factors that may increase susceptibility to attack are nutrient deficiencies, mechanical damage and lightning strikes.

There are a few types of bark beetles that attack pine trees in North Carolina. The Ips engraver beetles are likely the most common. They rarely attack healthy

trees and generally infest small groups or scattered pines. They can cause branches or the entire tree to die.

Generally, the southern pine beetle also attacks weakened trees. However, it can reach outbreak levels and become extremely destructive, Oten said. When this happens, healthy trees are also attacked and a quick response is necessary. This response typically involves cutting down the infested pine trees and surrounding trees to create a buffer.

Landowners suspecting bark-beetle activity should contact their N.C. Forest Service county ranger, who can assist with identification and offer forest management advice. To find your county ranger, visit <http://ncforestservice.gov> and click on "Contact Us."

Bucolic briefs

The Carolina Feather Club will host a swap meet for poultry and small animals May 13 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Everett Farm, 305 Macedonia Church Road in Monroe. For more information, contact Les Everett at 704-577-3905.

The Lincoln County Apple Festival is seeking sponsors for this year's event. The festival is held Sept. 16 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Lincolnton and draws an estimated 80,000 visitors. For more information about sponsorship opportunities, contact Carole Howell, 2017 festival coordinator, at 704-530-4636.

As a way to help farmers and agricultural workers stay safe at work, the N.C. Department of Labor offers safety videos on a variety of topics through its YouTube channel. Video topics include: preventing green tobacco sickness, hazard communication, tobacco harvester safety, heat stress, migrant housing requirements, forklift safety, and information about the NCDOL's Gold Star Growers program. The videos are in English and Spanish. To learn more about the NCDOL and the Agricultural Safety and Health Bureau, go to www.nclabor.com or call 1-800-NC-LABOR (800-625-2267). NCDOL is also on Facebook and Twitter (@NCDOL).

Beekeepers with bees for rent and growers interested in bee pollination services can post their information on the BeeLinked website at www.ncagr.com/beelinked. Anyone interested in listing information should fill out an online Submit Your Ad form on the BeeLinked page or contact NCDA&CS at 919-233-8214 or by email at NCHoneybee@ncagr.gov or call NCSU at 919-515-1660. The NCDA&CS Plant Industry Division regulates the movement of agricultural or related items capable of spreading harmful insects, diseases and other pests. Beekeepers participating in this program must comply with all honey and bee industry regulations.

The N.C. Ag Finance Authority provides credit to agriculture in areas where financing is not available at reasonable rates and terms. The agency originates, services and finances farm loans, rural business loans, disaster loans and cotton gin loans. It also offers tax-exempt ag development bonds for agribusiness processing, ag-related manufacturing or ag waste disposal. For more about Ag Finance Authority programs or to request a loan application, call 919-790-3949 or email at RequestLoanInfo@ncagr.gov.

Horse Events

Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. Horse Complex, State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, 919-733-4845

- May 3-7 AQHA Novice Championship. Contact Patty Carter, 806-376-4811.
 - May 11-14 Andalusian Breed Show. Contact Kevin Kidder, 949-292-8980.
 - May 20 Wake County 4-H Horse Show. Contact Heather Schaffer, 919-250-1093.
 - May 21 District 4-H Horse Show. Contact Bill Crouse, 919-624-1014.
 - May 24-27 Southern States Regional Morgan Show. Contact Liz Holmes, 919-765-2559.
 - June 2-4 Capital Dressage Classic. Contact Sandy Donovan, 901-218-0613.
 - June 8-17 Tarheel Triple Classic QH Show. Contact Perry Davis, 910-395-4306.
 - June 23-25 NCAHA Open Summer Extravaganza. Contact Rory Meachum, 919-906-3510.
 - June 28-July 2 NCHJA Annual Hunter Show. Contact NCHJA office, 919-538-4781.
 - July 5-9 State 4-H Horse Show. Contact Lori Stroud, 919-515-5788.
 - July 14-16 Trianglewide Horseman's Association. Contact Kim Moser, 919-219-0256.
 - July 15 & 16 NCQHA District IV Novice No Bling Quarter Horse Show. Contact Susan Daniels, 919-894-0600.
 - July 21-23 NCHJA "C" Indoors. Contact Joan Petty, 919-669-9877.
 - July 29 & 30 Raleigh Summer Dressage I & II. Contact Janine Malone, 919-269-7307.
- Sen. Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center, Williamston, 252-792-5111*
- May 6 & 7 NC East Regional Qualifying. Contact Ashley Brooks, 252-633-1477.
 - May 11-14 Carolina Classic Reining Horse Derby. Contact Mike Hancock, 252-937-2800, ext. 1204.
 - May 18-21 NCQHA-D4 Little River Circuit. Contact Susan Daniels, 919-894-0600.
 - May 25-28 Memorial Day Classic Reining Horse Show. Contact Chris Wiley, 804-305-7398.
 - June 3 & 4 EHA & NCHJA "C" Hunter Horse Show. Contact Wendy Willson, 252-916-3685.
 - June 17 & 18 June's JHR Open Horse Show. Contact Beth Tew, 252-753-8069.
 - June 30-July 2 SE Reining Horse Assn. Main Event and Futurity. Contact Danny Blackburn, 919-669-9486.
 - July 7-9 Mounted Shooters Shoot for Hope. Contact Pamela Campbell, 540-570-8785.
 - July 13-16 Color on the Coast Paint Horse Show. Contact David Lands, 804-350-9753.
- Southeastern N.C. Agricultural Events Center, Lumberton, 910-618-5699*
- May 12-14 Roping Show. Contact Brian Barefoot, 919-291-1625.
 - May 19-21 Southern Stockhorse Association/SCHRA Reined Cow Horse/Cutting/Queen Contest. Contact Jason Eason, 252-294-8051.
 - June 5 Horse and Tack Auction. Contact Brad Stephens, 828-390-0878.
 - June 10 Horse Show. Contact Kim Wood, 919-215-3595.
 - June 17 Da Bomb Barrel Racing. Contact Josh Smith, 910-639-6387.
- Western N.C. Ag Center, Fletcher, 828-687-1414*
- May 12 & 13 Asheville Lions Club Spring Classic. Contact Jackie Rice, 828-707-8456.
 - May 17-20 Asheville Lion Club Benefit Horse Show. Contact Lori Nelson, 859-457-0841.
 - June 15-18 Piedmont Paso Fino Horse Show. Contact Ashley Aldred, 704-778-6717.
 - June 23-25 East Coast Miniature Horse Summer Classic. Contact Missy Tansey, 207-331-6787.

*Show dates are subject to change. Call ahead to confirm.