

# Livestock 360°

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## Hiring Youth on the Livestock Farm

From Penn State Publication Children and Safety on the Farm <http://extension.psu.edu/business/ag-safety/youth-safety/children-and-safety-on-the-farm>.

Farming offers a unique opportunity for children and adolescents to learn the value of hard work, how to handle responsibilities, and how to set priorities. Traditionally, farming has been a family affair in which parents, grandparents, and older siblings help children to develop a sense of pride, a feeling of belonging, and the satisfaction of a job well done. But there are risks involved in farm labor.



Children and adolescents account for about 20 percent of all farm fatalities, comprising a higher proportion of the total number of nonfatal farm injuries (National Committee for Childhood Injury Prevention, 1996). It is estimated that 27,000 children under the age of 20 who live on farms and ranches are seriously injured each year. When children who visit or work on non-family farms are included, the total annual injury toll is estimated to be 100,000. (About 800,000 children live in the households of hired farm workers and may work on farms with parents.)

Unfortunately, there is little scientific evidence available to show what is an acceptable level of hazardous exposure for children and adolescents. Although discussions concerning the issues of farm safety and children are often controversial and emotionally charged, one point can be agreed upon—one death is too many if it is your child, or a child that is working for you, that is killed.

Injuries often occur when children are doing something beyond their mental, physical, or emotional ability. As children grow and develop, their play and work habits change dramatically. As a result, they are susceptible to certain types of accidents and injury. Understanding the developmental stages of children is a crucial factor in implementing appropriate safety procedures to prevent serious injuries and death.

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**Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities**

## 2 Of Local Interest

### Naked Beasts are Roaming the Countryside

Jennifer Fimbel, Senior Resource Educator, CCE Dutchess County

Spring is a time of new growth and that includes body armor of our livestock. Out with the old and in with the new...meaning fur, feathers and fiber. As the weather pattern warms up, stimulation of a different protective layer of coat is begun. For livestock that may mean removing the winter coat manually rather than waiting for it to be shed off. Some species don't shed (sheep, llamas and alpacas for instance) and the coat just gets longer or gets rubbed off in patches.

The reason livestock and horse owners may clip, shear or cut the coat in spring varies. For sheep, llama and alpaca owners the fiber may have value in an entire fleece form, where it will have little or no value when rubbed off by the animal. Beef cattle producers may clip their females to ease in future reproductive cycles, horse owners clip their horses to speed up the fitness ability without excessive sweating (and cooling out) of their charges. Poultry will molt (change their feather base) at varying times throughout the year depending on their age and the cycle of egg laying that they may be in.

For production animals, the end product will be achieved far more quickly if the winter coat is removed before the animal becomes stressed from heat. Meat producing animals will consume more feed (therefore produce more meat) when their coat is removed, horses will perform more efficiently without the heavy winter coat and fiber animals will present a better fleece when the old fleece is removed.

So how do our producers remove the winter coats from their livestock? There is no quick easy method to clipping or shearing, it must be done to each individual animal, one at a time. For instance, shearing lambs will take far less time than shearing a group of adult sheep weighing over 250 pounds, but all of them must be brought into a containment area, kept totally dry (free of rain and early morning dew), preferably have an empty gut (more comfortable for the sheep, who will then cooperate more fully with the shearer) and then are brought out one at a time, turned on their haunches to rest comfortably while the shearer works their magic. It's not an easy job and most our local shearers perform this service as a supplemental income rather than full time employment. At shearing time is when many shepherds will also deworm, give vaccines, trim feet and eartag, saving time, energy and stress (for the sheep and the shepherd). Although hair sheep (yes, there are several breeds of hair sheep) tend to shed their coats because they don't grow wool, will still have to have their feet trimmed, be eartagged, and receive vaccines and possibly be shorn as well to insure even growth of the coat.

Many of our cattle farms will also hire a professional to clip their cattle. Just because there are professionals doing the actual clipping doesn't mean the farm help gets off scot-free, they do the dirty work of getting the cattle to and from the chute and any paperwork, vaccines, medical attention, etc. gets done at the same time. Again, this type of treatment gets all the work done on one trip through the chute, thus reducing the stress on the animal.

Llamas and alpacas may be shorn in a similar manner as sheep are except they are not turned on their backside, they just stand (if cooperative) or are restrained by laying them on their side. Similarly these animals will also have toes trimmed, vaccine, and dewormer administered to reduce the stress levels.

Some horses are blanketed throughout the winter months, preventing a heavy coat from growing or are partially clipped to keep the large muscle groups from getting too wet during a ride, but rub marks from blankets and uneven coat lengths are usually clipped off during the spring months as riding sessions become more intense.

Restraining livestock, whether by turning them on their backsides, laying them on their sides, running them through a cattle chute, putting them on a fitting stand or administering calming medications is necessary for the safety of the animal, handler and the person doing the cut work. Reducing the amount of stress to the animal is of great concern to our producers as it can devalue the intended end product.

A few hours of containment will result in healthier, more productive herds, flocks, groups and individual animals roaming the landscape in shorter versions of their birthday suits!



# 3 Dairy and Beef

## The Cattle Thermal Heat Index

Jason Detzel, Livestock Educator, CCE Ulster County

The heat is on and that means that it's time to talk about thermal loads and their effects on your livestock. Being that we are located in the Northeast United States we have the pleasure of missing the brutal heat waves that are common in the South and West. As most of you have suspected, cattle are more comfortable in cooler weather than humans. Through research it has been calculated that the ideal temperature for cattle is between 41 and 77 degrees Fahrenheit. When temperatures exceed this, cattle are at risk of heat stress. There is also a cumulative effect of heat stress on cattle. This comes into effect when nighttime temperatures stay above 70 degrees Fahrenheit. The increased nighttime temperature does not allow the animal to shed the heat from the day before and this can add up. Three days in a row of high temperatures can be dangerous for ruminants.

They often say that it's not the heat that gets you but the humidity and this is true in animals as well. Another indicator of impending heat stress in cattle is known as the temperature humidity index (THI). This value accounts for the combined effects of environmental temperature and relative humidity. This value is calculated using the formula (sorry it's in Celsius only so if you do the calculation you just convert F to C)\*

$$THI = (\text{Dry bulb temperature } ^\circ\text{C}) + (0.36 \times \text{dew point temperature } ^\circ\text{C}) + 41.2$$

Once you have your calculated value for the day you can compare it to the heat risk scale below

When the THI exceeds 72, cows are likely to begin experiencing heat stress

When the THI exceeds 78, cows milk production is seriously affected.

When the THI rises above 82, cows show signs of severe stress and may ultimately die.

That covers the meteorological factors that affect the cattle but there are a number of other environmental factors that can impact heat load. Wind speed is a factor in the animal's ability to dissipate heat from their body. Keep this in mind when considering the tradeoff between shade and air movement. It may seem like a good idea to bring the cattle into the barn on hot days, but in reality, the herd being grouped together under shade may be more detrimental than them being out in the open where there is air moving around them.

One of the easiest strategies to combat heat stress is to ensure that your animals have unlimited access to cool, clean drinking water. It is obvious that water intake increases in higher temperature but is important to monitor the actual stock tanks themselves to make sure that they are not getting hot in the sun. This is also the time of year that algae begins to grow in tanks and ponds. Aerating or chemically amending will improve the palatability and intake of the water.

Ground cover is another factor that is often overlooked. Pasture is able to absorb more radiant heat than dirt or gravel. This means that there is less heat for your animals to deal with in the long run. Another excellent strategy to keeping the animals cool is to provide them with shade. When you make your grazing plan over the winter keep in mind where you expect to have the animals come July and August when the heat and humidity are usually highest. If you can design your rotation in a way that takes advantage of the shade from trees in the afternoon this will go a long way in keeping your animals more productive. Running animals in this manner can cause issues with over usage under the trees but if you are keeping up with your grass rotating frequently and allowing the pasture to rest, these areas will bounce back.

The recent explosion in smartphone application has delivered all sorts of new portable programming. There are some programs that can calculate the heat index and provide warnings depending on the upcoming weather predictions. With all of their evolutionary adaptations animals are incredibly efficient at regulating their own temperature, just make sure that you have given them the proper tools to do so when the mercury climbs. Clean, cool, fresh water, shade, and access to cooling breezes will allow animals to do their job the best way they can.

\*most weather programs have a settings feature where you can manually adjust the reading from Fahrenheit to Celsius making your calculations much easier.





## Don't Forget the Minerals

Adapted by Michelle Lipari, Livestock Educator, CCE  
Sullivan County

Originally published by W.F. "Frank" Owsley Extension  
Animal Scientist / Associate Professor Auburn University

Minerals of importance in swine diets are classified as macro- or micro-minerals. Calcium, phosphorus and salt (sodium and chlorine) are considered macro-minerals because of the fairly high levels required by swine. Iron, zinc, copper, manganese, iodine and selenium are micro-minerals. Other minerals are required, but are normally found in high enough levels in typical feed ingredients.



Photo Credit: Jason Detzel

### Calcium and phosphorus

Roughly 99 percent of the calcium and 80 percent of the phosphorus in the body are found in bones and teeth. Calcium is also required for blood clotting and for muscle function. Phosphorus plays an important role in energy use by cells. Feeding swine diets low in calcium and phosphorus will result in poor growth and weakened bones. Excess calcium is common and can produce symptoms of phosphorus and zinc deficiency. It is important to meet the requirement of both calcium and phosphorus. It is also important to maintain a calcium-phosphorus ratio of 1:1 to 1.5:1.

### Salt

Sodium and chlorine are the two elements that make up salt. The minimum salt requirement for growing pigs is 0.25 percent. Most recommendations are in the range of 0.25 to 0.50, depending on the weight/class of the pig and the salt content of water. Sodium is required for normal nerve function. Chlorine forms part of hydrochloric acid, required for digestion in the stomach. Feeding salt deficient diets results in poor performance and loss of appetite. Pigs can stand high levels of salt if adequate water is available. If adequate water is not present, high levels of salt can result in death. Iron. Iron is needed for supplying oxygen to cells. It allows oxygen to be carried in the blood. It is also a part of several enzyme systems. Iron deficiency results in weak, poor growing pigs. High levels of iron in the diet can damage nerves and intestinal lining. Deficiency symptoms of other minerals are also seen.

### Zinc

Zinc plays a role in the function of several enzymes. Zinc deficiency results in reduced feed intake, poor growth, parakeratosis (a skin disorder) and affects sexual development in boars. High levels of calcium in the diet can produce zinc deficiency. High levels of zinc may produce deficiencies of iron, phosphorus and other minerals.

### Copper

The pigs' requirement for copper is low compared to most other minerals. Copper increases the pigs ability to use iron, and like other trace minerals, is important in several enzyme systems. Feeding inadequate copper produces symptoms similar to iron, zinc and phosphorus deficiency. High levels (125 to 250 ppm) have been shown to improve performance in young pigs. This is thought to be an antibiotic effect in the gut of the pig. The benefit of feeding these levels decreases as the age of the pig increases. Manganese. Manganese is important for normal bone development, reproduction and energy use. Feeding high levels of manganese reduces feed intake and gains.

## Fecal Sampling at Cornell Cooperative

Jason Detzel, Livestock Educator, CCE Ulster County

The summer months bring more than warm weather and easy living for our small ruminant population. This is the time of year that we see a significant increase in parasitic worm loads. Cornell is working with local producers to both count and identify the parasites in their flocks by offering fecal sampling workshops in their Kingston office. To be eligible to utilize the materials you must have enrolled in the fecal sampling course. In this course we review the life cycles and treatment options for parasites including conventional dewormers, the use of pasture rotation, and alternative and emerging treatments. Once you have completed the course, you may sign up for our once a month workshops. In the first workshop you will be supported by our staff in order to complete your samples. After the first workshop each individual have an opportunity to complete as many counts as they can in their one hour time allotment. Each workshop costs \$5 but this is a nominal fee as most veterinarians charge up to \$30 per animal to complete the same test. If you are interested in this program please contact the Ulster [County Livestock Educator Jason Detzel](#). If there is enough interest we schedule another course this summer so that more of the counties livestock owners can take advantage of this unique opportunity.



(Don't' forget the Minerals continued from page 4)

### Iodine

Iodine forms part of thyroid hormones, which control the rate of many body functions. The requirement is even lower than copper, but sows eating iodine deficient diets produce weak, hairless and dead pigs. High levels of iodine reduce the pig's ability to use iron.

### Selenium

The amount of selenium that can be added to swine diets is limited by the Food and Drug Administration. Up to 0.3 ppm can be added to swine diets. Selenium is required for maintaining cell membranes. Deficiency of this mineral results in poor reproduction, white muscle disease and possibly death. As little as 5 ppm selenium can be toxic, affecting gain and reproduction.

Adapted from Swine Dietetics: Basic Swine Nutrition. (W.F. "Frank" Owsley 2012) <http://www.aces.edu/agriculture/livestock-poultry/swine/documents/Swinedietetics2.pdf>



## 6 Crops and Feed

### Weeds as Indicators of Soil Conditions

Adapted by Rachel Moody, Livestock Educator, CCE  
Orange County

Originally published by Stuart B. Hill and Jennifer Ramsay

Confronted with a weedy field or garden, one's instinctive reaction is to rush out and destroy the weeds before they take over. Perhaps we imagine them choking out our plants, or, at least, stealing the fertilizer applied for our crop. This attitude towards weeds has predominated throughout history. In 110 AD Plutarch wrote "The richest soil if uncultivated produces the rankest weeds" (Lives: Coriolanus); and more recently Oscar Wilde wrote "The vilest deeds like poison weeds Bloom well in poison air" (The Ballad of Reading Gaol).

Only Lowell and Emerson have injected a ray of hope for the weed. Lowell suggested that "A weed is no more than a flower in disguise" (A Fable for Critics); and Emerson asked, "What is a weed? A Plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered" (Fortunes of the Republic). Could weeds really have some virtues, a beneficial side to their character? It seems unlikely. Well, yes, actually weeds do have some points, in their favour. For example:

- 1) Many weeds protect our topsoil from the eroding forces of rain, wind, and sun, especially when the crop cover is poor.
- 2) By providing a cover vegetation, weeds enable beneficial soil animals to be active at the surface, depositing their nutrient-rich faeces and/or acting as biological control agents against various insect pests.
- 3) Many weeds, particularly perennials, possess extensive root systems that penetrate deep into the subsoil, breaking it up and enabling the less vigorous roots of some of our crop plants to penetrate further into the soil. Some roots, such as the leafy spurge, grow to depths of four to eight feet, whereas Canada thistle roots may penetrate to depths of 20 feet.
- 4) Breaking up the subsoil also improves drainage and aeration.
- 5) Deep penetration by their roots often enables weeds to accumulate various elements from the subsoil, particularly trace elements, and transport them to the soil surface. Through the weed's subsequent death and decomposition, these elements become available to crop plants with less extensive root systems. Different "accumulator" plants concentrate different elements. Interestingly, the accumulated elements are often those in which the particular soil is deficient. Some farmers have utilized this property of certain weeds by employing them as green manure. For example, Rogers et al. (1939) found that a local case of Floridian disease in corn, called white bud, was associated with zinc deficiency and could be prevented by allowing zinc accumulator weeds to develop during fallow years.
- 6) Weeds that accumulate different elements have also been used by prospectors. By analyzing different parts of the plants for high concentration of certain minerals, they have been able to determine the location of mineral deposits such as copper and selenium (Brooks, 1972).
- 7) Weeds have also been used as indicators of the presence and quality of ground water (Chikishev, 1965).
- 8) In the past, weeds have often been used both as food and as pharmaceutical products. Interest in these uses



Photo Credit: On Pasture Magazine

*(Continued on page 7)*



and in their development as resources for various industrial products is currently growing in the "developed world".

9) However, the primary value of weeds under consideration in this article is their ability to reveal information about the properties of our soils, particularly their nutritional status, pH, and presence of a hardpan. Frederick Clements (1920), the eminent U.S. botanist explained this property when he stated: "Each plant is an indicator. This is an inevitable conclusion from the fact that each plant is the product of the conditions under which it grows, and is thereby a measure of these conditions. As a consequence, any response made by a plant furnishes a clue to the factors at work upon it".

Since many weeds are "specialists" they are likely to be particularly useful as indicators. Different weeds are adapted to different ranges of environmental variables and are able to grow only where their particular needs are met. For example, certain species, such as knawel, are confined to acid soils, while others are limited to basic soils.

The use of weeds as soil indicators is not a new concept. In 50 AD, the great Roman scholar, Pliny the Elder observed that land supporting wild plum, elder, oak, and thimbleberry was also favourable for wheat production. Many North American immigrants chose land for their farms according to the vegetation it supported. They quickly recognized that white pine–Norway pine–jack pine communities were characteristic of sandy soils of little agricultural value, whereas forests of birch, beech, maple, or hemlock indicated more fertile soils.

It has been shown that the tall-grass prairies are suitable for orchards, cereals, hay, and fodder crops, while bunch grass regions are more suitable for wheat and grass production (Shantz 1911, Sampson 1939). Wire grass areas are less productive and short grass communities least productive. Highly alkaline soils are unsuitable for arable use and are characterized by tussock grass, salt grass, and greasewood (Hilgard 1906).

The information on weed indicator species is poorly documented, much of it residing only in the minds of observant farmers and gardeners. In preparing the list of weeds in Table 1, numerous sources, some reliable and some undoubtedly less reliable, were consulted. Consequently, the information contained in it should be used as a basis for further observation and research rather than as a guarantee of what to expect from a soil. Before using such a table, there are several things to consider:

#### 11) Some weeds have "ecotypes"

Populations of a particular weed growing in different locations may differ slightly from each other in their appearance and requirements; they are referred to as "ecotypes". Thus, the ecotype of a particular weed in one area may be more tolerant of acid soil conditions than the ecotype of the same species in another area.

#### 12) Limits of tolerance to environmental factors vary

Plants, including weeds, differ enormously in their degree of tolerance to changes in soil pH, moisture content, etc.; and some have a narrow tolerance for one variable but a wide tolerance for others. The best indicators are those with narrow tolerances because they would only be found associated with specific conditions.

#### 13) Plants may be sensitive to several environmental factors

When we look at Table 1 we notice that many of the plants are listed in more than one category of environmental factors. For instance, perennial sow thistle and docks are both indicators of wet areas; however, the thistle has a preference for more acid soils whereas docks are found in soils with a high lime content. Thus, when interpreting the presence of a weed we need to know all the factors to which it is responding.

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# Colic Symptom Checklist for Horses

Is your horse showing signs of colic? Clinical signs of a horse with mild colic include restlessness, sweating, pawing, looking at his sides, and/or lying down and rolling frequently. A horse with more severe colic will roll and may become cast and lie on his back to relieve pressure. Use veterinarian Barb Crabbe's checklist to track your horse's symptoms during the initial stages of colic, or until your vet arrives.

Keep a copy of this chart posted in the barn or laminate it and place it in your colic first-aid kit. Call your veterinarian if your horse exhibits two or more symptoms of moderate or severe colic—or if mild colic symptoms persist for more than 30 minutes.

VITAL SIGNS	<u>MILD</u>	<u>MODERATE</u>	<u>SEVERE</u>
<b>Heart rate</b> (beats per min.)	40 to 60	60 to 80	over 80
<b>Respiratory rate</b> (breaths per min.)	20 to 30	30 to 40	over 40
<b>Temperature</b> (degrees Fahrenheit)	99 to 100.5	99 to 100.5	under 99/over 100.5
<b>Gum color</b>	pale pink	pale pink	bluish or purple
<b>Capillary refill time</b>	1 to 2 seconds	2 to 4 seconds	over 5 seconds
<b>Gut sound</b>	normal or increased	decreased frequency	absent
<b>Feces</b>	normal	small, hard fecal balls	none or profuse diarrhea
<b>Passing gas</b>	yes	no	no
<b>Pain level</b>	sweating, intermittent pawing/looking at belly/lifting hind leg/stretching	same as mild but continuous plus may try to roll	all other signs plus uncontrollable, continuous attempts to roll/thrash

From **Horse&Rider** magazine; PDF version courtesy EquiSearch.com.

For more information on colic, visit [www.EquiSearch.com](http://www.EquiSearch.com)



(Weeds as Indicators of Soil Conditions Continued from page 7)

14) Perennial weeds often make better indicators than annuals

Perennial weeds, having been able to tolerate the conditions in a particular locality for more than one year, are often more reliable indicators than annuals, which may survive only one season.

15) Weed communities are better indicators than single species

The presence of a group of weeds that are associated with one another because of similar requirements for certain soil conditions provides a more reliable indicator in contrast to a single weed species, which may only indicate chance establishment.

16) Growth characteristics of a weed may be as revealing as its presence

The growth characteristics of weeds and the color of their leaves and flowers may be as important as their presence in revealing information about the soil. A vigorous growth of leguminous weeds usually indicates a soil lacking in nitrogen; as does the presence of stunted nonleguminous weeds with pale green leaves. Cornflowers make particularly useful indicators as their flowers are blue when found on soils with a high lime content but are pink when they are growing on acid soils.

The observant farmer and gardener will notice subtle changes in the weed populations on his land in response to his agricultural practices. As his soil improves he may find that chickweed, chickory, common groundsel, common horehound, and lambsquarter become the dominant weeds. However, if he finds that the daisy, wild carrot, mugwort, common mullein, wild parsnip, wild radish, and biennial wormwood become dominant, he should review his practices as these weeds thrive on soils of low fertility. The addition of well-balanced compost, organic manures, and other fertilizers together with certain tillage and drainage practices may be required to bring the soil back into production.

We are not advocating that all weeds be encouraged indiscriminately, for even "beneficial" weeds poorly managed, will reduce yield. What we are suggesting is that by being able to identify the weeds on our land and know what their presence indicates, we will be in a better position to manage our soils wisely.

<http://eap.mcgill.ca/publications/EAP67.htm>

Adapted from Ecological Agriculture Website. *Weeds as Indicators of Soil Conditions* (1977) <http://eap.mcgill.ca/publications/EAP67.htm>

## Getting started with rotational grazing

A 2-day hands-on clinic that will provide you with the practical skills to implement a rotational grazing plan on your property

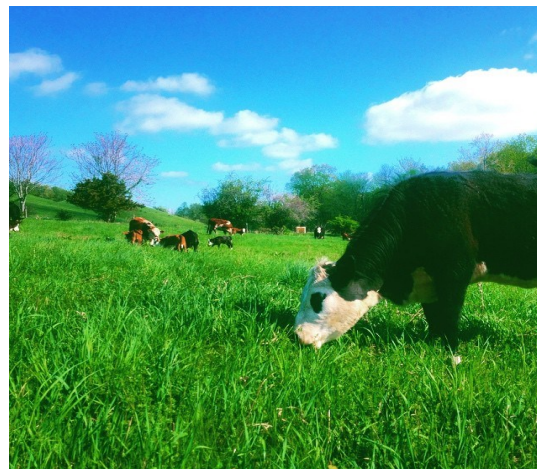
### 2-Day Clinic

### **Classroom Session**

**Friday, Sept. 23rd 10 am – 4 pm**

**Farm Visit Sunday, Sept. 25 12 noon – 2 pm**

<http://ulster.cce.cornell.edu/events/2016/06/24/getting-started-with-rotational-grazing-2->



## Poultry Pecking Problems

Adapted by Michelle Lipari, Livestock Educator, CCE Sullivan County

Originally published by From Tina Savage, UNH Cooperative Extension  
Agricultural Resources Educator



“Henpecked” seems innocent enough, unless you’re on the receiving end! Feather-pecking is a natural expression of dominance in poultry flocks. The severity of the damage associated with feather-pecking can be influenced by management factors and the breed of hens. Pecking behavior leads to feather damage, feather loss, reduced ability to regulate body temperature and reduced egg production in affected birds. In some cases, feather-pecking leads to bleeding at the feather site. Bleeding attracts more pecking, not only by the dominant hen but by all members of the flock. Severe injury, resulting in culling or death may result. If left in the coop a severely injured or dead bird will be cannibalized by the flock. Vent-picking is usually a problem when birds begin to lay, either for the first time or returning to egg production after molting. Vent-picking occurs immediately after an egg is laid while the mucus membrane is exposed. It’s more prevalent in overcrowded floor systems with birds laying eggs on the floor. There may be a genetic component to feather-pecking, since the light breeds are more prone to the behavior than the heavier breeds. Feather-pecking can also be a learned behavior; once one bird starts the practice in your coop, the others quickly learn to join in. Once feather-pecking and cannibalism have occurred in your flock, it is a difficult habit to break. While there is no agreement on the exact causes of feather pecking and cannibalism, there are things you can do to limit or prevent pecking in your flock.

Provide adequate floor space for the age, number and size of the birds.

Provide adequate space at food and water, provide free-choice feed and water at all times. A little too much is better than not enough.

Provide enough nesting sites. Nest boxes should be 12” x 12” x 12”, fairly private and dark inside. You should provide 1 nest box for every 5 hens in the flock. Again, too many is better than not enough. Moderate the light intensity. High light intensity and continuous lighting cause stress that can lead to pecking.

Provide proper nutrition. Feather-pecking may have a nutritional component. Feed a diet balanced for the age and stage of production of your flock.

Remove injured and dead birds from the flock. Injured and dead birds, regardless of the cause, may be pecked and cannibalized by the flock. This may not only cause the spread of disease in your flock, but may also promote pecking and cannibalism.

Provide enrichment or entertainment for the birds. Birds confined to a coop or pen with all of their food and water needs met, may become bored. Enrichment could be as simple as an enclosed run where the birds can hunt insects, peck the soil, and eat grass and seeds. Some flock owners give hens a small amount of fresh greens daily or hang a head of cabbage at bird’s-eye height. Other enrichment devices include white and yellow strings hung for the birds to peck. This will direct the pecking in a less destructive direction.

Consider beak-trimming. Beak-trimming makes the beak blunt by removing the tip of the beak and is common in commercial flocks. It is intended to reduce pecking and cannibalism. A portion of the beak is removed before the chicks are 5 weeks old. Public concern over beak-trimming has made this practice less common for the home flock.

Apply blinders or specs. Applied to the beak, these devices prevent the birds from seeing directly ahead and make it difficult to aim a peck at another bird. They have been used in game-bird production, but aren’t practical in layer

(continued on next page)

If an outbreak of feather-pecking and cannibalism occurs in your flock, evaluate management practices in your flock. Alter or correct anything that may be causing stress, as stress has been shown to lead to pecking and cannibalism. Remove injured birds from the flock or treat wounds with pine tar to discourage pecking. Implementing enrichment or entertainment will distract the birds long enough to break the habit. Oil of ipecac or some of the Bitter Apple products applied to the feathers also might reduce the incidence of feather-picking. Adapted from Cannibalism. Tina Savage, UNH Cooperative Extension Agricultural Resources Educator [https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource000794\\_Rep819.pdf](https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource000794_Rep819.pdf)



Photo Credit: NRCS

(Hiring Youth on Farms Continued from page 1)

Farm parents also need to “practice what they preach” by setting a good example and practicing safety in their own day-to-day activities. This can be difficult, since adults are so used to their daily work and routines that they can forget how complicated the job can be for a young person! Parents need to recognize and compensate for their own weaknesses as teachers. One of the best ways parents can do this is to use tools like Job Safety Analysis (JSA).

Job Safety Analysis (JSA) is a method that helps parents find job safety hazards and eliminate or minimize them by providing a written set of safe job-task steps for children before the job is performed. If properly constructed and used, the job’s JSA form will remind children to do their work correctly and safely each time, helping them to develop strong safety habits while they perform the tasks. In addition, the JSA form can remind parents or adults how to do a job safely, letting them set good examples for children.

Examples and instructions for developing Job Safety Analysis for farm tasks are available at <http://articles.extension.org/pages/69149/job-safety-analysis>

By helping youth learn safety skills early you will be giving them the tools that they will need to be successful and safe in agriculture and in any other field that they go into.

#### Resources

Farm Safety For Just Kids: 800/423-5437, [farmsafetyforjustkids.org](http://farmsafetyforjustkids.org)

National Farm Medicine Center: 800/782-8581, [marshfieldclinic.org/NFMC](http://marshfieldclinic.org/NFMC)

OSHA: Youth in Agriculture: 800/321-6742, [osha.gov/SLTC/youth/agriculture](http://osha.gov/SLTC/youth/agriculture)





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### WEEKLY LIVESTOCK UPDATE

Are you receiving Livestock Weekly Update by e-mail on Fridays? If not, go to <http://eepurl.com/bei625>. Choose Commercial Livestock as an option (you can choose other topics too). Keep up to date with programs, alerts and news for livestock producers. Livestock 360 is a quarterly publication.