



Fields ready for planting

The field has been plowed and the rows prepared for planting as Hoke County farmers prepare their corn crop. Wet weather conditions have kept some farmers out of the field over the past two weeks, but Hoke Agriculture Extension Chairman Willie Featherstone said that "plan-

ting was still on schedule." "A few farmers started planting last week, but most of the corn will go into the ground over the next month," Featherstone said. "The wet weather has not done any real damage. Everything is on time," he added.

Chihuahua's breath could stop a clock

You And Your Pet

DEAR DOCTOR: I have a little long haired chihuahua, and he sometimes has terrible breath. I feed him the same kind of feed all the time. Once in awhile I give him some steak or lean pork off the table. What can I get to control this problem with his breath?

ANSWER: Your chihuahua has a problem that is frequently seen in aging pets which is teeth and gum problems. In pets, plaque accumulates on teeth just as it does in humans. Eventually, this plaque mineralizes into hard tartar. During this process the gums are pushed back and the root of the tooth is exposed and gum infection accompanies this process. I would suggest having your pet's teeth examined by your veterinarian to determine if there is a problem that can be resolved by cleaning. We now recommend brushing of dog's teeth starting at a very early age to prevent this condition.

DEAR DOCTOR: I have two cats (a boy named Oreo and a girl named Leah). Oreo is a real explorer and Leah does whatever he does. There are some condos being built behind my house. My cats always go out there and play. I'm afraid one of them will get hurt. What can I do?

ANSWER: Cats often like to explore and during this exploring will frequently go as far as a block away from home. I would suggest three possible solutions. First, restrict Oreo and Leah to the house which can be difficult especially if they are accustomed to going outside. Secondly, building a pen to keep them in when they are not in the house. Lastly, only let them

outside when you are able to observe them and thus prevent them from visiting the condos.

DEAR DOCTOR: I will appreciate some more information in regard to hamsters for pets for retirees in reference to a recent column in the newspaper. Would they have to be caged? Can they be handled and petted like a dog? Is there any danger of being bitten?

ANSWER: Rather than getting a hamster for a pet, I would suggest a guinea pig. Hamsters do bite sometimes and if they get out of their cage, they can be difficult to find. Guinea pigs can be kept in a medium size aquarium and can be handled with minimum fear of being bitten. Of course, the cage will require frequent cleaning. Also, be sure to feed a diet designed specifically for guinea pigs. In event you get both a male and female, be sure to breed the female before she is 6 months old.

If the piglet is handled a lot at a very early age, it will be much friendlier and thus give you many hours of enjoyment.

Editor's Note: This column is provided as a service by the NORTH CAROLINA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION. Do you have a question about pet care? If so, send it to "YOU AND YOUR PET", P.O. Box 887, Smithfield, North Carolina 27577.

Despite its name, a cup of buttermilk has only 99 calories, compared with the 150 in the same amount of whole milk.

Wildlife needs farmers' help

By Donnie R. Harris
District Conservationist

To most farmers and land owners in the county wildlife is a crop to be enjoyed by the operator, his family and friends. It's a crop in which they do not expect an income but enjoy watching or hunting game animals such as quail, rabbit, squirrel, deer and others. Well managed wildlife land provides better hunting and recreation conditions for everyone to enjoy and also increases the wildlife population on an area.

Many of our small game populations have declined from previous years. You probably have noticed this yourself while hunting or just walking through the woods. It's getting harder to find a covey of quail on the farm and there seems to be a lot fewer rabbits than there

were in the past. What could it be that's causing this decline in the wildlife population?

Maybe the pesticides from some of the chemicals we use on our crops are having an effect on the animals ability to reproduce or predator animals (such as hawks, owls, fox, snakes and cats) are having a big effect on the small game animals ability to survive.

There is no doubt that these factors have some effect on the wildlife population but these are not the only problems. Wildlife populations are being effected by some of the modern-day farming methods and woodland harvesting practices that we are using today.

Some of these modern-day farming and woodland harvesting methods are: (1) removal of hedgerows (2) burning ditch banks

and harvesting of woodland during spring nesting season (3) mowing field borders, ditch banks and grass waterways during nesting season (4) harvesting of grain crops next to woods (5) destroying den and food trees during woodland harvest (such as oaks, hickory, dogwoods and others) (6) destroying habitats that's favorable for wildlife population.

Woodland areas provide food and shelter for many wildlife species, but do not provide all the needed ingredients for a high producing wildlife habitat.

Wild game animals prefer different varieties of grain for food and shelter, which are usually grown by most farmers. You can improve the wildlife habitat condition on your place by: (1) leaving one or two rows of grain crops

next to woods for wildlife food and shelter (2) delay mowing of grass areas until after nesting season (3) leave den trees and desirable hardwoods for wildlife food and shelter (4) plant wildlife food plots in scattered areas around the farm.

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