

DESOTO COUNTY BEEF NEWSLETTER

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September 2001

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

1	Oak Knoll & Mo Brangus Bull Sale, Arcadia
2-3	FACTS 2001, Citrus Irrigation and Vegetables- The Lakeland Center Call
5	FCA Replacement Heifer Sale, Ocala
6	Fall Pasture Insect Management 2 CEU's, Family Service Center, Room 6, 7:00 PM
7-13	National 4-H Week
11	UF/IFAS Range Cattle REC Field Day, Ona
11	DeSoto/Charlotte Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, DeSoto High Cafeteria
16	Using E-Mail in Agriculture, Family Service Center, Room 6, 6:30 PM
12-13	4-H Fund Raiser - McDonald's Resturant
16-18	Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition - Moultrie, GA
19	Graham Angus Bull Sale - Okeechobee
20	DeSoto County Fair Steer Weigh-In,: 1:00-2:00 PM - Market
25	DeSoto County Cattlemen's Assoc. Annual Meeting- 7:00 PM - Family Service Center
26 & 27	Florida Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL, Airport Marriott Hotel.
26	Lemmon Angus Bull Sale - Okeechobee
30 & 31	South Florida Beef/Forage Program - Hay, Forage & Grazing Tour - Pasco to Okeechobee Counties

DeSoto County Cattlemen's Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the DeSoto Cattlemen will be held on October 25, 2001 at the Family Service Center Annex, 310 West Whidden Street. The meal will begin at 7:00 PM and cattlemen are encouraged to bring their family and up to one guest to the dinner. We again will be enjoying a covered dish dinner with the meat and drink to be furnished by the Association. Members bringing more than one guest are asked to pay \$10.00 per additional guest.

Turner Agri Civic Center

Work has begun at the site across from the High School on the new Turner Agri Civic Center. Site preparation has begun and land is beginning to be moved. The first concrete should be poured around the beginning of October. Scheduled completion dates are June 2002 for the Auditorium and May 2002 for the Extension Office. As with most construction, these dates will probably be pushed back a month or so. However, the Cattlemen's Annual Meeting next year should be held in the new Auditorium.

Anaplasmosis "Old Disease - New Problem"

*Anaplasmosis is an infectious disease of cattle caused by a parasite, *Anaplasma marginale*, that is found in the red blood cells of infected cattle. Although most cattle in South Central Florida are infected by this disease, problems have been few because most become infected at a young age. When calves become infected under six months of age, they will very seldom show enough symptoms to detect that they have been infected. From 6-months to 3 years of age, cattle become increasingly ill with infection and if infected after 3 years, up to 30-50 percent will die if left untreated.*

At this point, one has to ask, "What is the New Problem?" The answer to that is simple, we lost the vaccines in 1998 that for years we had used to vaccinate 2 and 3 year old bulls that were brought into Florida from areas that were basically free of this disease. The consequence of this is that these older bulls are at a much higher risk of contracting the disease and possibly dying or not being available at the critical time of breeding. When bulls average \$1,500 to \$2,000 for a commercial bull, several losses could spell economic problems even in the current market cycle.

Since we currently do not have a vaccine available, then it becomes very important for cattlemen to recognize the clinical signs of Anaplasmosis. If infected you will first notice an anemic animal (pale skin around the eyes, on the muzzle, on the lips, inside the mouth, and the teats) that will be weak and lag behind the herd (especially when working and moving cattle). Other signs can be constipation, rapid weight loss, excitement and yellow-tinged skin. Often a cow/bull will fall or lie down and be unable to get up. Cattle that survive the clinical disease will recover slowly over a two or three month period. Again, keep in mind the susceptible bull, that might become infected at the beginning of the breeding season. Once infected, they become carriers and will rarely show clinical signs a second time.

Also important for the cattleman to know is how the disease moves from an infected animal to a susceptible one. The transmission is considered to be mechanical: either by the mouth parts of biting/sucking insects or by contaminated instruments used by man. Horse flies, deer flies, stable flies, mosquitoes and ticks are known to transmit infected red blood cells from the diseased animal to the susceptible one. Cattlemen using

dehorning saws, castrating knives, needles, tattoo instruments or any bladed instrument that have not been disinfected can transmit the disease.

Well, what do we do this year especially with bulls or heifers purchased from out of state? Currently, there is no vaccine available. However, I am informed that cattlemen can have their local veterinarian purchase an experimental vaccine (version of the old vaccines) from Louisiana. Also bulls can be brought in every 28 days and be given a shot of Oxytetracycline as a preventive treatment. There is hope that a new vaccine will be developed in the next year or two. Oklahoma State University has reported a major breakthrough in producing a new vaccine. As of yet, that vaccine does not include an islet of the strain that causes the infection in Florida.

Range Cattle and Forage Field Day - Ona

The Ona AREC Cattle and Forage Field Day will be October 11, 2001 this year. Call (863-993-4846 or 863-735-1314) by October 9th to reserve a free steak lunch. Please indicate the total number attending if more than one. Registration and coffee are from 8:30 to 9:30 AM with the program beginning at 9:30 AM.

South Florida Beef/Forage Program—Hay, Forage, & Grazing Tour

This tour will begin at the Pasco Extension Office in Dade City. It will cover 6 ranches from Pasco to Okeechobee. The tour will encompass operations with multiple forage varieties and types of operations.

Managing Cool Season Annual Grasses

Carol Chambliss, Extension Agronomist University of Florida

Apply additional nitrogen to ryegrass and other cool season grasses to increase growth after planting and at least once during the grazing season. Extra nitrogen for cool season grasses seeded in a pasture sod is especially important since this type of seeding requires more nitrogen to get comparable growth to that of cool season grasses seeded alone.

Graze cool season grasses when they are 8-10" tall. Do not wait for additional growth to accumulate. Grazing at 8-10" will cause the grass to stool out, and will result in a more even distribution of growth through the season. Rotationally graze cool season grass pastures. Take animals off when forage is grazed down to a 3" height and rest the pasture for 3-4 weeks before grazing again. Other methods of grazing cool season annual grasses are limit grazing and creep grazing. Limit grazing is the practice of grazing high quality pastures a few hours each day with young beef animals or dairy cattle that need a high level of nutrition. This practice may be especially useful to small land owners or producers who own a few purebreds and want to provide them with some high quality forage. During the short grazing period, animals may obtain some or all of their protein and vitamin requirement. When not on the green pasture, animals can graze dry warm season grass or be fed hay.

BULL BUYING CONSIDERATIONS

The trends of some of the Purebred Breeders, has been to pick one certain trait and focus nearly their entire effort in selection aimed at improving that particular trait. Some focused on size, others on sheath, and even others on milk, just to name a few, but usually a one sided approach to selection. In the past, most

of these either single or multiple trait selection was made by the Seedstock Producer, while the Commercial Cattlemen would typically use visual observation to make selections. Today, Commercial Cattlemen are beginning to look harder at selection traits. Commercial Cattlemen will have to exert care not to fall into the same single trait trap that some of the Purebred Breeders have at times fallen into. The really hot ticket among many cattlemen is carcass traits. Carcass traits are important and carcass EPD's should be used. However, they should not be used exclusively in selection of bulls and replacement heifers. If you compare the traits for maternal vs. feedlot performance vs. carcass, you make a decision of their order based on this fact. If your cows will not work for you in your environment, then your problems are a lot larger than whether or not your steers perform in the feedlot or grade and have good carcass performance. Although carcass traits are highly heritable, there are environmental factors that influence whether or not the calf will express his potential. Extremes in weather (hot & cold), days on feed, ration quality and length of feeding can change the carcass performance of steers/heifers of the same genetics. Other things such as age of castration, implant protocol, and the length of the feeding period can do the same. In using carcass information, you must know what the industry target is for carcass characteristics:

Characteristics	Target	Acceptable Range
Slaughter Weight	1225	1025 - 1350
Carcass Weight	775	650 - 850
Ribeye Area (sq. in.)	14	11 - 15
Ribeye Area/cwt. of Carcass wt.	1.8	1.7 - 1.9
Yield Grade (1 - 5)	2	1 - 3.5
Backfat Thickness (in.)	.4	.3 - .6
Quality Grade	Choice	Prime - Select
Marbling	Small	Slight - Abundant
Maturity	A	A

Most producers in Florida (90%—1998 South Florida Beef Forage Program Survey) raise their own replacement heifers. That being the case, the focus of genetic selections will come from the sire and certainly maternal traits should be considered. Birth weight, mature weight, and hip height are highly heritable. I am sure you are no different than I am in how we feel about a cow that will drop a calf and walk away from it. The cow that shows no maternal instincts is just not the type of brood cow that we want in our herd. We also have to think about performance both at the ranch and in the feedyard. Weaning weights, yearling weights, ADG, and feed conversion are just some of the performance traits. Although most producers put the greatest emphasis on weaning weights, yearling weights are also important as an indicator of the acceptable slaughter weight that the industry is trying to obtain.

I probably should have titled this article "Single Trait vs. Multiple Trait Selection of Herd Sires". I did not though, because I wanted cattlemen to focus more on the difficulty of the overall selection process and that it is not as easy and singular in focus as some would have it appear. That 1225 pound slaughter weight calf is produced by a frame 5-6 cow that in moderate flesh (bcs of 5) weighs 1200-1300 pounds and when mated to bulls of equivalent frame and weight. If we go strictly for a carcass trait, then we can quickly get in trouble with cows that are too large for the Florida environment. A good road map to selection would begin

with a thorough understanding of where a cow herd is and where we want it to be in the future. Then use the tools available to select with, such as EPD's and actual animal performance, ratios, etc. The final selection tool should be visual appraisal of the animal. To accomplish the task of buying the right bull to go into the cow herd is not easy. The producers who have been the most successful have stayed to the middle of the road and with multiple traits in their selection process. Good luck in your bull buying this fall.

Use of Computer Technology for Cattlemen

Many of our farmers and ranchers now have the availability of computers in their home and businesses. If you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail, please send a message to jselph@mail.ifas.ufl.edu. You can also correspond with me using this e-mail address. I normally check e-mail 1 or 2 a day, usually including weekends. On October 16, 2001, beginning at 6:30 PM at the Family Service Center, Room 6, we will have a workshop on "Using E-Mail in Agriculture Production". The use of Outlook and Eudora Light will be the focus. We will be covering such items as file attachments and address books, along with many other aspects of use of e-mail. This will be targeting new and inexperienced users of e-mail and computers in general. Individuals with intermediate experience with these programs, may or may not find this training useful.

Fall Pasture Insect Management—October 6th

On October 6, 2001 at 7:00 PM at the Family Service Center, Room 6, we will be having a workshop on Fall Pasture Insects. We will cover Fall Army Worms, Spittle Bugs and Mole Crickets. Identification, Life Cycles and Control will be covered with all three insects. Since space is limited, we will register the first 25 to call in at 863-993-4846. This course will be worth 2 CEU's (Private) for renewal of your pesticide license.

- *Gowan has received a 24 (c) registration for Imidan® 70W (phosmet) for use on oranges and Grapefruit to control Apopka weevil (*Diaprepes abbreviatus*). (FDACS letter of 7/24/01).*
- *The source of sources for the West Nile Virus is: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/awic/wnvirus/wnfacts.htm>. (USDA ARS Release via AgNet, 8/13/01).*
- *Thanks partly to poor pasture and range conditions, expansion of the nation's cowherd likely won't begin before next year. That estimation by Jim Mintert, a Kansas State University Extension livestock marketing specialist, is confirmed by the July 1 USDA cattle inventory report. It showed beef cow inventories were down slightly from a year ago nationwide. Meanwhile, modest heifer retention previously forecast for the second half of this year now seems far less likely. Clint Peck, Beef, Sept 1, 2001*

If you have any comments or need additional information, please contact the DeSoto County Extension Office at (863) 993-4846.

Sincerely,

James F. Selph, DeSoto County Extension Director, IV, Livestock

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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