

# *DESOTO COUNTY BEEF NEWSLETTER*

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*April 2004*

## ***CALENDAR OF EVENTS***

### **April**

12	Beef Basics 101, DeSoto County Extension Office, 7:00 PM-Basics of Reproduction - Managing for a high calf crop, Management for efficient beef production
13	Beef Seminar: How will BSE and National Animal ID affect my operation? Turner Center Exhibit Hall, 6:30-8:30 PM
19	Beef Basics 101, DeSoto County Extension Office, 7:00 PM-Marketing feeder calves and cull cows, Record Keeping for cow-calf operations.
15	DeSoto Ag-In-The Classroom, DeSoto Middle School, 6th Grade, 8:30 AM-2:00 PM
22	Southwest Florida Farm Credit Annual Meeting, Hardee County Agri-Civic Center, Wauchula, Fl. 6:30 PM
29	DeSoto County Cattlemen's Association Spring Meeting, Turner Center Exhibit Hall, 7:00 PM

### **May**

5-7	53rd Annual Beef Cattle Short Course, Hilton University of Florida Conference Center, Gainesville, Fl
11	Anglers 4-H Fishing Club Meeting, Turner Center Exhibit Hall, 5:15-6:45 PM
11	Homeowner Horticulture Seminar- Ornamental Insect Pests, Desoto County Extension Office, 7:00- 8:30 PM
14	Florida 4-H Foundation Golf Tournament, Lake Wales Country Club, Lake Wales, Fl
17	Beef Basics-Pasture Weed Identification and Management of Poisonous Plants, Desoto County Extension Office, 7:00- 8:30 PM
19	STARS Forage/Beef Field Day - Subtropical Agricultural Research Station; Brooksville, FL
27	Corn Silage Field Day, Plant Science and Education Research Unit, Citra, Fl

## June

16-18	Florida Cattlemen's Association Convention and Allied Trade Show, Marco Island Marriott, Marco Island, Fl
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### **Beef Basics 101- An Introduction Course to the Management of a Cow-Calf Operation**

We are continuing the introductory course to the management of a cow-calf operation. We are going over basic management and skills necessary to have a successful beef cattle operation. You may not have been able to make the first sessions, but I think that you will find the remaining classes informative and useful. There is no charge for attending the classes.

- Basics of Reproduction - Managing for a high calf crop, Management for efficient beef production, Bull Selection and EPD's.
- Marketing feeder calves and cull cows, Record Keeping for cow-calf operations.
- Pasture Weed Identification and Management of Poisonous Plants.

### **BSE and National Animal ID**

Desoto County Extension will be hosting a Beef Cattle Seminar April 13, 2004 at the Turner Center Exhibit Hall beginning at 7:00 PM titled: How will BSE and National Animal ID affect my operation? Dr. Todd Thrift Beef Extension Specialist of the UF/IFAS Animal Science Department and Larry Eubanks, Coordinator, Research Programs State HACCP will be the primary speakers.

### **Prices steady, but some decline expected**

Fed-cattle prices have held up better than most expectations so far this spring, but the numbers continue to suggest the market will soften somewhat during the coming months. This month's Cattle on Feed report illustrates a continuing trend, with the on-feed inventory above one year ago by 4 percent. Inventories have run higher than the year-ago figures since November 2003. During February, fed-cattle marketings and placements into feedyards both were down by 2 percent from February 2003. Analysts with the Livestock Marketing Information Center expect prices to follow a fairly typical seasonal trend this year. Slaughter steer prices in the Southern Plains will average about \$81.50 per hundredweight for the first quarter but are likely to average in the mid \$70s for the second and third quarters. We should see a rebound into the upper \$70s through the fall months.

One surprise in the market has been the strength of cull-cow prices. During January and February, total Federally Inspected cow slaughter was 15 percent below a year ago, according to the LMIC. On a weekly average basis, 85 to 90 percent lean slaughter-cow prices in January and February averaged 24 percent above those for the same period last year, and 29 percent above the five-year average for the period. - Greg Henderson, Drovers editor-Drovers Alert Thursday, March 25, 2004, Vol. 4, Issue 12

### **Livestock Summary**

The number of cattle and calves on farms and ranches on January 1, 2004, was down 1 percent from year earlier and down over 8 percent from the cyclical peak on January 1, 1996. Last year marked the eighth year of herd liquidation, and there is no hint of movement toward increased female retention. Although moisture conditions have improved somewhat this winter, forage conditions remain very uncertain for the 2004 grazing season. Even with the smallest cattle inventory since 1959, the present environment of uncertainty may not be very conducive to herd expansion. Declining feed grain stocks and strong domestic export demand is resulting in higher feed costs. This rise in feed costs will put additional pressure on cattle feeders. After spring grazing season begins, assuming near-normal grazing conditions, cow slaughter is expected to drop well below year-earlier levels. Cattle inventories are down 5% since 1998, removing some pressure on hay stocks, but poor forage conditions going into winter and increased snow cover are increasing supplemental feeding in many areas. Weather conditions and supplemental feeding needs will be the key to prices on hay over the next couple of months. Hay quality has been an issue, particularly for other hays, and the prices are likely sending mixed signals of fairly strong demand, but poorer quality. After hitting a record 2.57 billion pounds in 2003, beef exports may only reach 220,000 pounds in 2004 if bans currently in place remain for the entire year. U.S. exports remained strong enough to end 2003 at a record high level in spite of the post December 23 ban on U.S. beef and live animals. Significantly reduced exports are likely this year because all major markets except Canada have banned U.S. beef and live animal exports after the discovery of a cow with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Washington State on December 23, 2003. Initially cattle/beef prices declined sharply, but the markets realized that domestic consumer reaction was muted and consumer beef demand remained relatively strong. Any opening of export trade would tighten beef supplies resulting in stronger prices.

## **Lawmakers want COOL enacted sooner**

The U.S. House of Representatives is working to reinstate the country-of-origin-labeling deadline to Sept. 30. A proposed bill would overturn a two-year delay that Congress approved in January. If this new bill passes, food processors and retailers would be required to apply country-of-origin labels on red meat, produce and peanuts. COOL is a hot topic, with some groups supporting labels to distinguish U.S.-grown food from foreign competitors, while others want a voluntary labeling program. There are still questions about who will bear the costs involved. Many also are concerned about the record-keeping demands. The Senate has many COOL supporters, so if this bill passes the House, you can expect it to get a serious review in the Senate. Greg Henderson, Drovers editor-Drovers Alert Thursday, March 25, 2004, Vol. 4, Issue 12

The United States and Australia are the top beef producing countries in the world. More than 100 medicines used by humans come from cattle. One cowhide can produce enough leather to make 20 footballs or 18 soccer balls or 18 volleyballs or 12 basketballs.

## **53rd Annual Beef Cattle Short Course: "Management Issues and Industry Challenges in Defining Times"**

Has the cattle industry been in more challenging times??? The discovery this past year, on December 23rd, of BSE in the United States has resulted in major changes in the way we conduct some aspects of the beef business and has accelerated and brought into focus procedures and processes that were being contemplated prior to December 23rd. Your marketing strategies may be effected by some changes at the processing level related to age of animal at the time of processing. Mandatory electronic individual animal identification and country of origin labeling (COOL) have become more urgent centers of discussion throughout the beef industry. Both will alter past farm and ranch procedures. The origin of the cattle you produce will be more easily identified and you and the end user will know the carcass characteristics of those cattle. Although

carcass characteristics are important, it is equally important to maintain proper genetic make-up of the cow herd to optimize production performance within the production environment. This year's Beef Cattle Short Course program is extremely important to you because it deals with these many current issues. The 53rd Annual Beef Cattle Short Course will be held at the new Hilton University of Florida Conference Center, Gainesville, Florida. This is a new location for the short course and the accommodations should prove to be a great enhancement in both the short course and trade show. The Hilton University of Florida Conference Center is located at 1714 SW 34th Street, Gainesville, FL.

## **Effects of Calf Scours on Weaning Weights**

Montana State University researchers evaluated health and performance records of 3637 calves from inbred and outbred populations over a 14-year period. The inbred cattle were linebred Herefords. The outbred cattle consisted of four genotypes: 1) Hereford; 2) Angus x Hereford; 3) Simmental x Hereford; and 4) Tarentaise x Hereford. Over the 14-year period, the average incidence of scours was 35%; the range was 13 to 64%. Incidence of scours was significantly higher for inbred than outbred calves (41 vs. 28%). Incidence of scours was significantly higher in calves born to 2-yr-old dams and decreased with increasing age of dam. Scours significantly impacted calf weaning weight. Over all years, scouring calves weighed 458 lb at weaning while non-scouring calves weighed 478 lb. Also, outbred calves were significantly heavier than inbred calves (483 vs. 452 lb). The authors concluded that the economic benefit of managing to reduce the incidence of scours should exceed the expense to reduce the economic loss that can occur when calves are afflicted with scours (Anderson et al. 2003. Prof. Anim. Sci. 19: 399).

## **Rapid BSE tests ready**

The USDA recently approved rapid test kits for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy from two companies - IDEXX Laboratories Inc. and Bio-Rad Laboratories Inc. The tests, which offer results in hours rather than days, will be used as part of the USDA's stepped-up surveillance efforts. The agency plans to test more than 4,000 cattle brains per week. - Greg Henderson, Drovers editor-Drovers Alert Thursday, March 25, 2004, Vol. 4, Issue 12

## **DeSoto County Cattlemen's Association Spring Meeting**

The 2004 DeSoto County Cattlemen's Association Spring Meeting will be held at 7:00 P.M., Thursday, April 29th at the Turner Center Exhibit Hall. All members, along with their family are invited to attend. Members are asked to bring a covered dish. You may bring one guest to the steak dinner. Members bringing more than one guest will be asked to pay \$10.00 per each additional guest. The program for this Spring meeting will be on Tropical Soda Apple Control, both new products and biological control.

## **Carcasses piling up in Northwest**

Creekstone Farms has begun sampling brain and stem tissue in cattle slaughtered at its Arkansas City, Kan.,-based plant in anticipation of the USDA's approval of the company's plan to test all cattle for BSE. Creekstone executives believe Kansas State University will soon be designated as an approved BSE-rapid test site, and that the university will then designate the Creekstone lab a "satellite laboratory," where KSU technicians, under USDA supervision, will conduct BSE rapid tests.

Last week, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service announced accreditation of the first seven state laboratories for the federal BSE testing/surveillance program. The newly accredited labs are dispersed across the country to ease some of the burden of extra testing on the federal laboratory in Ames,

Iowa. The seven labs are located in Davis, Calif.; Fort Collins, Colo.; Athens, Ga.; College Station, Texas; Pullman, Wash.; Madison, Wis.; and Ithaca, N.Y. - Greg Henderson, Drovers editor-Drovers Alert Thursday, March 25, 2004, Vol. 4, Issue 14

## **Summer beef promotion ready to sizzle**

In an effort to help keep domestic beef demand strong in light of closed exports market, the beef industry is expanding its summer grilling campaign. The new checkoff-funded advertising, as part of the overall "Taste of America Summer Grilling Promotion," will tap into Americans' passion for beef during the summer grilling season. The Taste of America Summer Grilling Promotion will celebrate the anniversary of the hamburger, which made its public appearance at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. Dozens of marketing elements make up this checkoff-funded summer campaign. For more information, visit [www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com](http://www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com)-Greg Henderson, Drovers editor-Drovers Alert Thursday, March 25, 2004, Vol. 4, Issue 14

## **Forest Service sells cattle in grazing dispute**

The U.S. Forest Service auctioned cattle seized from a rancher in a long-running battle over grazing rights on public land, according to an Associated Press report. The cattle brought \$121,000, which will help pay for gathering the cattle from the Gila National Forest. The rancher did not hold a lease for use of the Gila land but contends to have grazing rights based on historical use of the land predating the forest's creation in 1964. Authorities began rounding up cattle last month after a judge found the rancher in contempt of court for continuing to graze cattle in the forest in violation of earlier rulings

## **Beef Cattle Management Calendar**

### **April**

- Deworm cows as needed if not done in March. Vaccinate against blackleg and brucellosis after 3 months of age and before 12 months of age.
- Plant warm season annual pastures.
- Check and fill mineral feeder.
- Check dust bags or apply treated ear tags & check for external parasites and treat if necessary.
- Observe cows for repeat breeders.
- Market cull cows and bulls.
- Mow large infestations of
- Tropical Soda Apples prior to fruit set by the plants.
- Attend BSE and Animal ID Seminar at the Turner Center Exhibit Hall.

### **May**

- Remove bulls May 21 to end calving season March 1.
- Plant warm season perennial pastures.
- Fertilize warm season pastures.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for spittlebugs and treat if necessary.
- Apply spot-on agents for grub and louse control.
- Vaccinate and implant with growth stimulant any later calves.

- Reimplant calves with growth stimulant at 90-120 days, when you have herd penned.

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**If you have any comments or need additional information, please contact the DeSoto County Extension Office at (941) 993-4846.**

Sincerely,

**James F. Selph**

**DeSoto County Extension Director, IV, Livestock**

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**For questions or comments regarding this publication contact**



[James F. Selph](#)



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