

DESOTO COUNTY BEEF NEWSLETTER

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June 2004

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June

16-18	Florida Cattlemen's Association Convention and Allied Trade Show, Marco Island Marriott, Marco Island, FL
17	FCA Bull Sale - Marco Island, FL

August

10	Pasture Insect Control--Fall Armyworms, Turner Center Exhibit Hall, 7:00 PM
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Red Imported Fire Ant Nemesis Gains Foothold in Florida

According to the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and scientists who are working to control the red imported fire ant, the permanent establishment of a new species of phorid fly is bad news for the aggressive ant that has spread across the southern United States. The establishment of the fly *Pseudacteon curvatus* is significant because it is the smallest of the decapitating flies and they fly attacks only fire ants. Phorid fly maggots live in the head capsules of their fire ant hosts, eventually decapitating them and pupating inside their heads. This means it can attack small worker ants, which are the most abundant workers in an ant colony. ARS scientists at the Center for Medical, Agricultural and Veterinary Entomology in Gainesville, Fla. , recently reported that they collected *P. curvatus* flies from a research site southwest of Gainesville, one year after the flies were initially released. This confirms the flies survived the first overwinter and have permanently established themselves within red imported fire ants in the U.S.

R-CALF, consumer groups demand public BSE hearings

The battle between the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the upstart Rancher's Cattlemen's Action Legal Fund intensified this week as differences over trade issues and consumer safety were brought to a boil.

Specifically, R-CALF joined three consumer activist groups in a press conference denouncing the USDA's handling of BSE prevention and detection policies, implying that American consumers are at risk from the disease. The groups joining R-CALF were Public Citizen, Consumer Federation of America and Consumers Union. R-CALF and the consumer groups called on the USDA to "maintain the current ban on Canadian beef and cattle imports until a scientific analysis can be conducted by a balanced panel of experts under the auspices of the Institute of Medicine and the National Academy of Sciences." NCBA president Jan Lyons called R-CALF's actions "shocking," and said "These groups are apparently willing to destroy consumer confidence in our products to achieve their partisan political gains, such as damaging the reputation of the Bush Administration and blocking international trade."

"It is inexcusable for cattle producers to align themselves with consumer activist groups that have for decades tried to destroy the favorability of beef in the American diet. NCBA and its members are committed to building consumer demand for beef and ensuring that our consumers have the safest product in the world for their families," Lyons said. To read more, [click here](#).

INCREDIBLE! Just three weeks ago, R-CALF CEO Bill Bullard rocked the beef industry by saying "USDA was playing fast and loose with the safety and health of U.S. consumers," after a federal judge ordered a temporary halt to the shipment of bone-in cuts of meat to the United States. Now, the organization that claims to represent independent cattle ranchers and feeders saddles up with three anti-beef activist groups to prevent the USDA from continuing trade with Canada. R-CALF has now lost all claim to the "independent" flag they so proudly wave. And this week's actions prove they will use any tactic to further their isolationist, anti-trade policies. -Greg Henderson, Drovers editor-Drovers Alert Thursday, May 27, 2004, Vol. 4, Issue 21

USDA under fire for Canadian beef entering U.S.

The USDA allowed U.S. meatpackers to import ground beef and other processed beef from Canada last September despite a ban on importing those products because a BSE-positive cow had been found in Alberta. A total of 33 million pounds of Canadian processed beef entered the United States in the following six months, under a series of undisclosed USDA permits. The agency made exceptions when it concluded that certain products would not pose a health risk because of meat processors' risk mitigations "Clearly the process and our failure to announce some of these actions was flawed," said Ron DeHaven, the USDA's chief veterinary officer. An untimely bungle. If it wasn't evident before this week, it is now - BSE has become a political football that opponents of the Bush Administration will use in this election year. - Greg Henderson, Drovers editor-Drovers Alert Thursday, May 27, 2004, Vol. 4, Issue 21

BSE, CJD rumors plague market

A report by a Tennessee television station saying a U.S. soldier had developed Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and linked it to BSE sent cattle futures plummeting to the \$3 per hundredweight daily limit Tuesday. However, that same day, a Reuters report stated that U.S. health authorities were not investigating any reports of possible cases of the human form of variant CJD, which has been linked to BSE. "I don't know of any active cases right now of the variant kind," said Dave Daigle, a spokesman for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He did say, however, that the CDC last year investigated a case of classic CJD in a U.S. soldier stationed at Fort Campbell. CJD occurs naturally in about one in 1 million people, apparently due to a genetic mutation. The United States has between 200 and 300 cases of CJD each year.- Greg Henderson, Drovers editor-Drovers Alert Thursday, May 27, 2004, Vol. 4, Issue 21

Court rules against Iowa packers owning livestock

Iowa opponents of packer ownership of livestock won a victory last week when a federal appeals court sent the case back to a lower court for further review. The question of whether the Iowa law is constitutional is back in federal court in Des Moines. U.S. District Judge Robert Pratt had declared the law unconstitutional in January 2003, but the appeals court overturned that ruling. In the original ruling, Judge Pratt said, the packer ban "unconstitutionally discriminates against out-of-state interests in favor of local ones." "The appeals court didn't say (Pratt) misinterpreted the law," says Neil Hamilton, Drake University's Agricultural Law Center director. "It means there will be another day in court for the state to show the law doesn't discriminate." - Greg Henderson, Drovers editor-Drovers Alert Thursday, May 27, 2004, Vol. 4, Issue 21

MOTT ELEPHANT GRASS

Dwarf types of elephantgrass were first discovered in the 1940s, and Mott dwarf elephantgrass was developed in the 1970s in Tifton, Georgia. Mott achieves a maximum height of about 5 to 6 feet compared to 12 to 18 feet for the tall types. Nodes (joints) on the stems of Mott are very close together (1 inch) compared to those on tall types (4 to 6 inches). This results in a leafy forage with a stem that stays relatively short until the plant flowers in the fall. As a result, it is not as difficult to manage for grazing. Forage of Mott is very high in nutritive value. Crude protein is generally in the range of 12 to 14% when it is fertilized with 120 to 150 lb of nitrogen per acre per year. Digestibility is usually in the range of 65 to 70%. High nutritive value is possible because the majority of the forage eaten by animals is leaf. During 3 years of experiments, yearling beef steers grazing Mott elephantgrass gained in excess of 2 lb/day over 5-month grazing periods from May to October. Mott elephantgrass is not used widely in Florida, mainly because it must be planted vegetatively and the planting process is costly and not completely mechanized. Mott has potential for small family farms that can provide the labor necessary to get it established, but it is generally not practical for large enterprises. Mott elephantgrass is best adapted to well-drained, fertile or well-fertilized soils. I have a patch of this grass at my house that I used for my sons 4-H projects. I am going to eliminate it, but I thought I would put this article in my newsletter and see if any one would like this grass as planting material. A small patch of this grass could be useful in feeding (for example) a small group of bulls.

Trade Time For Weight

"For years, everyone thought that to reduce shrink you needed to gather the cattle and get them penned early while it was still cool. We didn't understand that from the time we begin moving cattle, shrink begins," says Frank Brazle, a long-time Kansas State University (KSU) Extension livestock specialist and stocker operator.

"All told, I might be able to add 9-12 lbs. per head to a set of cattle," Brazle says, describing the potential difference of gathering cattle at daybreak, vs. 2-3 hours after sunup. In fact, based on years of personal experience and a growing body of research, Brazle says gathering cattle when the rooster crows, rather than waiting an hour or two, can take two helpings of shrink before cattle reach the scale.

Of course, gathering stocker cattle for shipping early in the day can make plenty of sense: You beat the heat, you're ready for the trucks and such a gather might be stipulated in the buyer contract. But, this traditional routine may cost producers more than they realize. First, there could be more weight heading into the pens. As an example, in one multi-year KSU study evaluating steers grazing Smooth Bromegrass pastures, steers that were gathered three hours after daybreak shrunk at a rate of 0.5%/hour compared to .69%/hour for steers gathered at daybreak. Steers shrunk 0.71% and 0.67%/hour when gathered at 1-2 hours after dawn, respectively.

According to Brazle, part of the time element has to do with cattle grazing patterns. Depending on factors such as forage type and environment, he explains cattle will typically graze during 2-4 distinct periods throughout the day. The primary grazing period is often during the early morning. So, trapping cattle at first

light robs them of their main meal of the day. All told, Brazle says producers can pick up about 3 lbs./head/hour for every hour after daylight they're allowed to graze, until 9 a.m. or so. Next, along with getting more weight to the pen, delivering cattle just in time to load them means there are more of the pounds you gathered climbing onto the truck. Brazle says shrink due to feed deprivation and transportation comes in both the loss of fill, excretion of feces and urine, and potential fluid loss from animal tissue. "Cattle begin to lose body weight at the time they are moved," Brazle emphasizes. "The greatest proportion of body weight loss occurs during the early hours of feed and water deprivation." For perspective, based on multiple research studies, Brazle says cattle shrink at approximately 1.0%/hour for the first 3-4 hours of food and water deprivation. It then declines to as little as 0.1%/hour up through 10 hours.-- Beef Stocker Trends, News and Views on Stocker Segment Issues from Beef Magazine, June 1, 2004

Cloning the Clone of a Famed Japanese Bull

Researchers have successfully produced a genetic clone of a bull they cloned several years ago. The bull calf-a clone of a clone-was born in Japan more than four years ago, but the birth was kept a secret until now because the researchers wanted to be sure the calf was healthy. Xiangzhong Yang of the University of Connecticut in Storrs and Chikara Kubota of the Kagoshima Prefectural Cattle Breeding Institute in Kagoshima, Japan, made the Guinness Book of World Records in 2000 when they reported that they had cloned one of the most famous bulls of all time: Kamitakafuku, a 17-year-old Japanese bull that has been used to inseminate more than 350,000 cows. Now, the researchers have created another success for the record books. They have cloned Saburo, one of Kamitakafuku's clones. The effort produced two live calves in 2001; one clone died shortly after birth due to anemia, but the second, called Sho-zaburo or "Saburo Junior," has thrived for the past four years in Japan.----Genome News Network, May 26, 2004.

Beef Cattle Management Calendar

June

- Check mineral feeder, use at least 8% phosphorus in mineral and not over 2 ½ to 1 calcium to phosphorus ratio.
- Check pastures and hay field for spittlebugs, mole crickets, and army worms.
- Treat if necessary; best month for mole cricket control.
- Check dust bags.
- Watch for evidence of pinkeye and treat.
- Get heifers vaccinated for brucellosis if not already done.
- Pregnancy check cows.
- Re-implant calves at 90 to 120 days with growth stimulant.

July

- Control weeds in summer pastures.
- Apply nitrogen to warm season pastures, if needed.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for army worms and mole crickets, and treat if necessary.
- Wean calves and cull cow herd.
- Watch for evidence of foot-rot and treat.
- Revaccinate calves at weaning for blackleg.
- Check dust bags.

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

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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