

Hardee Rancher Beef and Forage Newsletter



Hardee County Extension Service
 507 Civic Center Drive
 Wauchula, Florida 33873
 (863) 773-2164
 Fax (863) 773-6861
 E-mail lagary@mail.ifas.ufl.edu

Fall 2005

Calendar Of Events

September

29

Hardee County Cattlemen's Association General Membership Meeting - 7:00 PM -
 Wauchula, Hardee Agri-Civic Center

October

5

Annual Central Florida Prescribed Fire Council Meeting - Wauchula, Hardee Agri-Civic
 Center

13-14

First Annual Quail Management Shortcourse - Arcadia, Turner Center Exhibit Hall

November

1-3	Inter-agency Basic Prescribed Fire Training Course (Cattlemen's Version) - Arcadia, Turner Center Exhibit Hall
4	Cowboy "Chute" Out - Four Person Ranch Team Competition for Pride and Prizes - Location TBA
1-6	Farm Bureau Tour of Mexican Stocker/Feeder Operations
8-10	Echo's Twelfth Annual Agricultural Conference - North Ft. Myers
16	Beef Quality Assurance, The Florida Beef Quality Assurance Program - 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM - Arcadia, Turner Center Exhibit Hall
18	Hardee County Cattlemen's Association 6th Annual All-Breed Bull Sale - Wauchula, Hardee County Cattlemen's Arena
December	
8	Selection and Management Tools to Improve your Calf Crop - 4:00-8:00 PM with dinner - Sebring, Highlands County Extension Service

- Are You Making Money? -

Lochrane A. Gary/Hardee County Extension Director

Recently I had the occasion to visit with a family around the kitchen table after helping to select some good replacement heifers. The owner complained that he wasn't making money even with great calf prices and a 90 percent calf crop! During the course of the afternoon I asked him how he figured the percentage calf crop. Well, come to find out that he did not count some older cows he sold that were with the bulls, some coarse, barren-type cows which he knew were the "wrong kind", and a cow which "just plain died for no reason." This rancher is a good friend of mine and has allowed me to write about our conversation without using his name. When we talk about calf crop there is only one figure which has any meaning and that is the Calf Crop Weaned. Fortunately there is only one way to figure it and we can use cowboy arithmetic. Here it is:

Calf Crop Weaned = total calves weaned (steers and heifers)/total females exposed to bulls during the breeding season (cows and heifers) x 100 = %. The South Florida Beef/Forage Group recently conducted a nine-county survey in south Florida and found the average calf crop weaned to be 68%. This compares with a national average of 83%. Why does Florida lag behind the rest of the nation? I am not sure but I have some educated guesses. In south Florida's nine county area surveyed last in 2003:

- 49% of ranchers purchased bulls primarily on visual appraisal.
- 29% of ranchers tested bulls before turn-out.
- 60% of ranchers had identification on each cow.
- 24% of ranchers had no herd health program.
- 75% of ranchers used no legumes in the forage mix.

There are many reasons why cows don't produce a calf in the weaning pens. Most of the reasons come back to inadequate nutrition and sub-fertile bulls. We don't even pretend to have all the answers. We haven't even figured out all the questions! But if we can help you in any way to be more profitable feel free to call the

Hardee County Extension Service at (863)773-2164. It is our pleasure to be of service to you.

- Prescribed Fire Training Course (Cattlemen's Version) 2005 -

November 1-3, 2005 there will be a Prescribed Fire Training Course held at the Turner Center Exhibit Hall. The course is designed to train cattlemen/private landowners in the use and application of prescribed fire. The course will begin at 12:00 Noon on the 1st and end on Friday the 3rd sometime after 3:30 PM after the conclusion of the Exam for Certification. The cost of this school is \$150.00.

- A Victory for Property Rights -

FFB General Counsel Scottie Butler reports that Circuit Judge Bruce W. Jacobus has ruled in favor of David A. Smith in a lawsuit that was brought against him by the state of Florida, which involved land the court determined was owned by Smith. Smith received financial support from Florida Farm Bureau, Farm Credit and several other agricultural groups. The case was originally filed more than nine years ago. The state, at the urging of environmental groups, claimed title to most of Smith's property on the edge of Lake Poinsett in Brevard County. The issue involved defining the boundary around state owned sovereign land under navigable lakes and streams and the establishment of the high water mark. The judge's ruling declared: "On the evidence presented in this case, the Court finds pursuant to the stipulation of the parties that Smith is the owner of the upland property that is subject to the lawsuit." The state had averred that the high water mark of the lake was at the 13-foot elevation. However the judge ruled, "...using the thirteen feet contour places the edge of the lake, in some places, almost three miles from the edge of the lake that a person of common intelligence would clearly recognize as the boundary of the lake. ...the thirteen feet contour does not comport with logic and reason." The ruling won't be final until the time for appeals has elapsed, but Butler is optimistic that any appeal would uphold the decision. "Judge Jacobus was very diligent in his deliberations and issued his order based on a careful review of the facts of the case and existing law," said Butler. Source: Florida Farm Bureau

- Filling Gas Cans Safely -

Carol J. Lehtola and Charles M. Brown

Vehicle fires sometimes occur while people are filling metal gas cans placed on plastic surfaces. This type of fire usually involves a gas can in the back of a pick-up truck with a plastic bed liner. Gasoline tends to carry a static electric charge. When pouring gasoline into a can, this charge can build up on the can. If the can is sitting on concrete or the ground, the static charge can safely flow away. But when the can is sitting on plastic, such as the plastic bed liner in a truck, the static charge can not escape because the plastic is an insulator, that is, it does not conduct electricity. A spark can occur between the can and the fuel nozzle and ignite the gasoline. When the spark occurs in the flammable vapor space near the open mouth of the gas can, a fire occurs. Use only gas cans approved by OSHA and follow these precautions:

- Use only an approved container.
- Don't fill any container while it's inside a vehicle.
- Always place the container you're filling on the ground and away from other customers and traffic.
- Keep the nozzle in contact with the can while you're filling it.
- Never use a latch-open device to fill a portable container.
- Don't smoke.
- While transporting containers, tie them in place.

- Theory Ties BSE Origin to Infected Feed -

A new theory, published in The Lancet medical journal, proposes that BSE may have come from feeding British cattle meal contaminated with human remains infected with a variation of the disease. The infected cattle feed may have come from the Indian subcontinent, where bodies sometimes are thrown into the Ganges River as part of religious ceremonies. During the 1960's and 1970's, Britain imported hundreds of thousands of tons of whole bones, crushed bones and carcass parts to be used for fertilizer and animal feed. Much of that came from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, say the article's authors. Gathering large bones and carcasses from the land and from rivers has long been an important local trade for peasants, the scientists write. Human remains are sometimes among them; some of those remains may have come from people infected with classical Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. The disease was not known to infect cows until 1986, when the first cases were noticed in Britain. Many questions remain about the origins and causes of BSE, but the more conventional theory that BSE came from feed contaminated with tissue from scrapie-infected sheep seems more likely than a human origin. Historically, scrapie has been relatively common in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, and by-products from those animals were going into feed prior to the emergence of BSE. Sporadic CJD on the other hand is rare, affecting one or two people per million worldwide. Given the low prevalence, it seems the probability would be extremely low that bone meal from a CJD victim in India would find its way into livestock feed in the UK. - **John Maday, Drovers associate editor**

- Minnesota Researchers Develop Test for Johne's Disease -

Researchers at the University of Minnesota, working with scientists at the USDA, have used genomic information to develop tests that can rapidly detect and differentiate the bacteria that causes Johne's disease, a chronic wasting disease of cattle and other ruminant animals. The pathogen that causes Johne's disease, *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis*, grows slowly in the laboratory and previous tests often took between six and 18 weeks to process. The new tests can be completed in 72 hours or less, detecting the pathogen in fecal matter or milk. Johne's disease costs the U.S. dairy industry about \$200 million per year due to reduced milk production, and also affects beef herds. The University of Minnesota release notes that this genetic research could lead to a vaccine for Johne's disease. This disease is economically important in the beef and dairy industries, but control, or potentially eradication, of Johne's could become even more critical. The MAP pathogen has been implicated, although not proven, as a factor in Crohn's disease, a serious disease in humans. If that connection actually exists, pre-emptive work on the part of the industry to eliminate Johne's from U.S. herds could help protect human health and consumer confidence. - **John Maday, Drovers associate editor**

- Hurricane Relief -

The USDA has earmarked \$50 million dollars to go to emergency food assistance for survivors of Hurricane Katrina. The USDA is increasing the level of assistance available to current food stamp recipients affected by the hurricane and providing assistance to hurricane survivors who never participated in the food stamp program before. The USDA will also ensure that schools will provide free lunches to students who have been relocated because of the hurricane. Ag Secretary Mike Johanns authorized states to pre-load electronic food benefit cards with \$50 worth of assistance so recipients can buy food even before their applications have been processed. To read more, go to drovers.com. Additional information and updates about the USDA's hurricane relief efforts are posted daily at usda.gov. For information about making contributions for disaster assistance go to firstgov.gov and disasterhelp.gov

- FDA Changes BSE Rules -

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration published several amendments to the July 2004 interim final rule, "Use of Materials Derived from Cattle in Human Food and Cosmetics." The rule prohibits the use of cattle-derived materials that can carry the infectious agent for BSE in human foods, dietary supplements and in cosmetics. Now, the rule has been eased, based on scientific evidence, to allow the use of the small intestine in human food and cosmetics, provided that the distal ileum has been removed. The distal ileum is a part of the cow's digestive tract that could carry the infectious agent. You can read more about the rule changes at drovers.com

- Organic-beef Facility Proposed -

News reports indicate that a Wyoming group is exploring the possibility of opening a natural and organic beef slaughter and processing facility. The group, Farm to Fork, Inc., would be the parent company for the proposed Rocky Mountain Custom Cuts. The facility would be set up so that producers would share in the profits on products as well as getting paid for cattle delivered to the facility.

- Americans Respect U.S. Food Industry -

U.S. consumers have a high regard for restaurant, agriculture and grocery industries. They ranked first, third and fourth, respectively, in a recent Gallup poll. In all, 1,001 adults across the nation participated in the survey. They rated their overall image of 25 business sectors. Negative scores for the three food sectors were only 8 percent, 13 percent and 15 percent, respectively. In all, 58 percent had a positive attitude toward the restaurant, agriculture and grocery industries. The oil and gas industry scored the lowest.

- FAWN Tower Site -

The FAWN weather site has been up and running for several months and individuals can access the site by either phone or via the web. The weather station in Arcadia is located near the County Extension Service Office which is just north of the DeSoto County High School. The dial up service is available by calling 866-754-5732. After dialing and the system answers:

- Enter one (1) for the latest weather information
- Enter the three digit weather station number which is 490 for Arcadia or 380 for Ona.

If you are accessing the site from the web, go to <http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu> and follow the prompts to select a given weather station site. Weather data provided from the site includes: air temperature, dew point temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and wind direction.

- Smog Caused by Dairy Cows?????? -

An article in a newspaper in California's San Joaquin valley said that a study released by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District stated that gases from ruminating dairy cows, not exhaust from cars, are that region's biggest single source of smog. The article went on to say:

"With 2.5 million dairy cows - roughly one of every five in the country - emissions of almost 20 pounds per cow mean that cattle in the San Joaquin Valley produce more organic compounds than are generated by either cars or trucks or pesticides, the air district said. The finding will serve as the basis for strict air quality regulations on the region's booming dairy industry. Source: CNFC E-letter, August 5, 2005

Lockie's Note: Talk about ridiculous! The dairy industry will be forced to invest millions of dollars of expensive pollution-control technology in feedlots and waste lagoons, and may even have to consider altering cattle diets to meet the regions planned air-quality regulations. May this kind of "science" never occur in Florida.

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



[Lockie Gary](#)



Back to the Cooperative Extension Newsletters Page



Back to the South Florida Beef-Forage Program HomePage