

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@ifas.ufl.edu

October 2008

Calendar Of Events

October

21-23	- Reproductive Management School - Desoto County Extension Service
23	- Hardee Cattlemen's Pre-Sale Dinner - Hardee County Agri-Civic Center, 7:00 PM
24	- Hardee Cattlemen's Association 9th Annual All-Breed Bull Sale - Wauchula Livestock Market, 1:00 PM

November

3-7	Master Goat Program - Sarasota, contact Dr. Robert Kluson @ 941-232-3090 for details.
13	Jatropha Mini-Conference - Hardee County BOCC Chambers, 9:00 AM - Noon

- Worthy of Investigation -

As the Hardee County Extension Director it is incumbent upon me to provide you with researched based information which will provide you with timely information in order to make an educated decision. Are you ready for some possible good news? In cooperation with the Hardee County Economic Development Office we are providing you with an opportunity to investigate a potential biodiesel crop for Hardee County. The name of the plant is *Jatropha curcas*. We believe it could become a part of our energy solution. It is NOT a silver bullet nor do we suggest that it will ever replace citrus, but it may become one of the tools we can use to gain energy independence. I am asking you as a landowner to consider its possible applications as well as its possible limitations.

Here are just a few questions to consider:

1. Will it thrive in Hardee County?
2. What is the recommended spacing?
3. What diseases/pests affect it?
4. What are the water and fertilizer requirements?
5. Have BMP's been established?
6. Can it be mechanically harvested?
7. Who will process the seeds and purchase the oil?
8. What will it cost to get started?
9. What is the profit potential and associated risks?
10. Are there energy grants available to help me get started?

The folks presenting and the folks on the panel have nothing to sell. We are all on a learning curve. Come and give us your thoughts. Your only costs will be three hours of your time. Hope to see you there.

Lockie Gary, Hardee County Extension Director

Jatropha Mini-conference
November 13, 2008
BOCC Chambers/Wauchula
9:00AM - Noon

- Proposed Downer Rule is all about Public Relations -

USDA announced a proposed rule this week to completely ban the slaughter of cattle that become non-ambulatory, even after the initial inspection by the Food Safety Inspection Service. These animals would be condemned and disposed of. The number of cattle affected by this new rule is miniscule - .003% T of cattle slaughtered. So this isn't a rule designed so much to bolster food safety; nor is it expected to have much impact on producers' bottom lines. The aim of this rule is to maintain consumer confidence in beef. All the negative publicity created by the Humane Society of the U.S. over the downer cow issue has made it clear to producers that while the issue is a minor one, it can have a big consumer effect. Every segment of the industry has been solidly behind this new rule, because it's in their own economic best interests to send the proper message relative to humane handling of animals. It is, however, one of those precedents that has to be concerning for the industry. This new rule has no basis in science; it's a public relations move. Ultimately, the industry must respond to consumer wishes. But, at some point, the industry is going to have to trust itself to actually respond to these desires or we will continue to see the government becoming more and more involved with the marketing of our product. Source: Troy Marshall, Cow-Calf Weekly, Friday, August 29,

2008.

- Two Animal Rights Initiatives on November Ballot -

Animal rights supporters have targeted two states on opposite sides of the country for animal welfare ballot initiatives this year. In Massachusetts, voters will decide on a statewide ban on greyhound racing by 2010. The initiative could close two greyhound tracks in the state. In California, voters will decide on Proposition 2, a ballot initiative sponsored by a coalition of animal protection groups requiring that egg laying hens, veal calves and pregnant sows have room enough to lie down, stand, turn around and fully extend their limbs, effective 2015. The initiative, Standards for Confining Farm Animals, is backed by the California VMA. Some CVMA members have formed the Association of California Veterinarians largely because they disagree with their association's support for Proposition 2. This week, the American Veterinary Medical Association issued a statement indicating the organization is concerned about the California ballot initiative. "Although the AVMA applauds every effort to promote animal welfare, the Association is concerned about possible, unintended negative consequences to animal welfare of enacting the measure". The AVMA statement said the organization "believes Proposition 2, 'Standards for Confining Farm Animals', is admirable in its goal to improve the welfare of production farm animals; however, it ignores critical aspects of animal welfare that ultimately would threaten the well-being of the very animals it strives to protect. "The best housing environments take into consideration all relevant factors, including: freedom of movement; expression of normal behaviors; protection from disease, injury and predators; adequate food and water; and proper handling. Proposition 2 would clearly provide greater freedom of movement but would likely compromise several of the other factors necessary to ensure the overall welfare of the animals, especially with regard to protection from disease and injury." Selection of California and Massachusetts for animal welfare initiatives was not random. Clearly they were identified as states where voters would likely support such measures. In California, the United Egg Producers held a rally this summer in hopes of swaying public opinion on the issue. The group estimates that up to \$50 million will be needed to successfully fight the issue. Source: Drovers Alert, August 27, 2008/ Volume 10, Issue 35.

- NCBA Statement on Industry-Wide Affidavit for "COOL" -

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is pleased to join an industry-wide coalition in announcing the development of a standardized affidavit to declare country of origin for livestock throughout the marketing chain. Tomorrow, NCBA and other representatives from throughout the livestock and meat industries will meet with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary Bruce Knight to present this affidavit. Our goal was to create a simple, efficient, and effective means of declaring livestock origin from conception to consumer, and we believe this affidavit does exactly that. Producers can fill in information specific to their cattle and assert the origin of any animal being sold. Livestock marketers further along the ownership chain can use individual affidavits to create a single, combined affidavit for a group of animals. Representatives from every point in the supply chain unanimously agreed to use this standardized affidavit, which will greatly ease the burden that a mandatory COOL places on producers. NCBA has focused on implementing COOL in a manner that provides maximum benefit and minimal disruption to our ranchers. We believe this affidavit will be a significant help in that effort. Additionally, NCBA is working with our industry partners on the issue of so-called 'gap cattle', which are animals traded in the period between July 15, 2008 (the date that declared all livestock present in the U.S. as being of U.S. origin) and the September 30, 2008 implementation deadline. We are well aware that owners of these animals would be very hard pressed to recreate the paper trail documenting origin. The industry consensus is that current owners should be considered to have first-hand knowledge of those cattle. Therefore, these animals should be allowed to move through the marketing chain using the standard affidavit. NCBA will continue to work on behalf of our

cattlemen to put in place an effective and accurate labeling system. Additionally, we will be leading the effort to educate producers on how to comply with the new rule. Source: NCBA News Release.

Lockie Gary
Hardee County Extension Director

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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