

Hardee Rancher Beef and Forage Newsletter



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September 2002

Calendar Of Events

September

September
26

Cow-Calf Clinic, Turner Agri-Civic Center, Arcadia, 5:30 p.m.

September
26

Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA) Water Use Regulation Information Workshop, Lake Alfred Citrus Research & Education Center, Lake Alfred, 5:30 p.m.

October

October 4

FCA Heifer Sale, Ocala

October 10

Dairy Footwart Symposium, Hardee County Extension Office, Wauchula, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

October 15	Commercial/Custom Application of Nematodes for Mole Cricket Control, Circle Five Bar Ranch, Gardner, 9-12 a.m.
October 24	Quail Management Seminar, Turner Agri-Civic Center, Arcadia, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
October 26	Hardee County Cattlemen's Assoc. Sporting Clay Shoot at Charles Metheny's, Zolfo Springs, 8 a.m.
November	
November 7	Agri-Tourism Management Seminar, Hardee County Extension Service, Wauchula, 2-5:30 p.m.
November 19-20	Tropical Soda Apple In-service Training, Highlands County Extension Service, Sebring, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
November 21	Hardee County Cattlemen's Assoc. Pre-Sale Dinner Meeting, Hardee County Agri-Civic Center, Wauchula, 7 p.m.
November 22	Hardee County All-Breed Bull Sale, Hardee Livestock Market, Wauchula, 1 p.m.

- Preparing Bulls For The Breeding Season -

Herd bulls are sexual athletes and need to be in optimum shape for the breeding season in order to perform. Too many times “out of sight is out of mind”. We often tend to ignore herd bulls after the breeding season and relegate them to the “back forty” and this may lead to disappointing performance. It's critical that bulls receive proper nutrition and reproductive health management throughout the year. Herd bulls represent half the reproductive influence going into a calf crop and their management is vital to the bottom line. Because of the reproductive and genetic impact of a single herd bull, ranchers should practice outright discrimination over their cow herds by added emphasis on bull evaluation and management.

Breeding Soundness and Health Exams -

Most ranchers tend to think of a breeding soundness exam in terms of checking the bull's semen to insure his capacity to produce live normal motile sperm. However, a breeding soundness exam is much more than a semen evaluation. This test should be performed by an experienced, licensed veterinarian and should include a thorough examination of the bull's sheath, prepuce, extended penis, scrotum and testes, epididymes, head, mouth and eyes, shoulders, back and feet and legs. In addition the bull should be carefully observed as he travels to ensure that he walks freely and without pain. When multiple bulls are lined up for examination, be careful not to crowd the veterinarian. The purpose is a complete examination and not how many bulls can be examined in a given amount of time. Bulls need to be kept in good health and free of disease. A veterinarian should be consulted to establish a disease prevention program and to conduct annual health exams. Older bulls should be checked for trichomoniasis, a venereal disease that causes cows to abort during the first four months of pregnancy.

Conditioning -

Prior to the breeding season, bulls should be kept in large pastures which allow for exercise. Do not house bulls in small confined lots where they can get soft and overconditioned. This is very important, as bulls must travel several miles daily during the breeding season. Physical fitness requires at least 30 days of conditioning prior to the breeding season. One way to insure that bulls get ample exercise prior to the breeding season is to place feed and water distant from each other. Bulls which are in excellent physical condition will retain a higher level of sex drive and will experience less injury due to fighting and riding.

Nutrition -

Yearling bulls need to gain about 2 pounds per head per day prior to the breeding season. Yearling bulls need to be gradually acclimated to a high quality forage based ration. The key to any good nutritional program is to feed the rumen microflora. The rumen microbes that ferment grain are different than those that ferment fiber. Feeding six to eight pounds of a product containing energy in the form of structural carbohydrates, protein, minerals and vitamins is an easy and convenient way to provide supplemental nutrition to bulls prior to the breeding season. When high quality forage is not available, using such a product is even more important to prevent over feeding grain in an effort to raise the energy level. Bulls fitted for sale should be gradually "let down" from their show ration. Grain feeding may be reduced approximately 10% per week to about 60% of the previous intake. Ask the ranch manager from whom the bulls were purchased about the feeding regime prior to sale. Grain should be substituted with a high quality forage. Two year old bulls should be fed to gain about a pound a day. Feed high quality forage in addition to a five to seven pounds per head per day grain mix. Older bulls can eat more total pounds of forage. Remember that supplemental energy requirements may be much higher for two year olds or thin bulls. In addition to adequate energy, be concerned for proper levels of vitamins and minerals which are extremely important for high reproductive efficiency. A good trace mineral mix will positively affect the integrity of the bulls feet as well as his energy level and ability to travel across pasture. Bulls should consume approximately three ounces per head per day. The mineral mix should be made available free choice throughout the year.

Conclusion -

All service age bulls should be deflucked, dewormed and annually vaccinated and be at a minimum body condition score of 6 (on a 1 to 9 scale) prior to the breeding season. Expect younger inexperienced bulls to loose weight quickly during the early breeding season. If younger bulls become too thin, they should be taken out of the breeding pasture and given rest and supplemental feed, as semen quality and volume decrease rapidly in younger bulls which become too thin. Source: Lockie Gary, County Extension Director, Hardee County Extension Service

- Is Eating Beef Bad For You? -

Quite the opposite is true – eating beef is valuable for both adults and children.

Regarding Adults -

According to Tufts Longitudinal Health Study (TLHS), a long term health study on the eating habits of college students, avoiding red meat does not translate to a better health profile. "Non-meat eaters may be misleading themselves into thinking they are on a pathway to better health," says Christina Economos, PhD, assistant

professor and research scientist at the Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. “Many people who avoid foods they perceive to be high in fat, such as red meat, end up overloading on carbohydrates, baked goods and high fat dairy products, which may contribute more to weight gain and elevated cholesterol levels – both risks for heart disease.” Many people are under the false impression that beef is too high in fat. The truth is there are seven cuts of beef that meet the USDA labeling guidelines for leanness, including top sirloin, tenderloin and top round. These cuts, on average, contain 6.2 grams of total fat and less than 2.3 grams of saturated fat per three-ounce serving. Beef is rich in nutrients, including protein (to build muscle and repair body tissues), B-vitamins (for healthy skin and good vision), iron (to help red blood cells carry oxygen through the body so you stay energized) and zinc (to help the body form important enzymes and insulin).

Regarding Children -

Iron is essential in helping transport oxygen throughout the body, supporting the immune system and aiding in brain development. And the best sources of iron are lean meats, such as beef, and fortified grain products. Zinc plays a vital role in a child’s development functions, including the ability to learn and remember. One ounce of lean beef provides 65 percent of the daily zinc requirement for children age seven months through three years. B-vitamins help the body unleash the energy in food, and beef is a great source of these essential nutrients. In fact, a one-ounce serving of lean beef provides 83 percent of the vitamin B12, 21 percent of the vitamin B6 and 20 percent of the niacin a one-year-old child needs.

Source: Mary K. Young, MS, RD, Executive Director of Nutrition, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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