

# *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 [Lgary@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:Lgary@ifas.ufl.edu)

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**September 2004**

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Dear Beef/Forage Producer,

It's been tough and it ain't over yet. K Hardee county cattle came through the recent storms in fairly good shape. We have reports of 17 cattle deaths and I have seen about 25 lame cows mostly injured from fallen debris. Milk production is off at the dairies and some calves are losing weight due to excess moisture in the pastures.

Over 85 Hardee ranchers have benefited from **donations of fencing materials** by the Florida Cattlemen's Association (3 loads), Florida Fence Post, Inc. (1 load) and emergency funds provided by ESF 17 (1 load). Be sure to thank Jim Handley at the FCA office and F.L. Revell at the Ona Post Plant for their generous help when we needed it most. Most cows seem to be off the roads for now even if not in their home pasture.

If you need portable cow pens to prepare cattle for shipment, we have plenty to **LOAN** you. They must be returned. Call Lockie at 773-2164 for details.

If you need free labor to remove trees off of fence lines or if you need free dozer work, please call me and I will do my best to make arrangements for you. Call and get your name on the list and when the labor/dozer become available I will call you.

Please take note of the Herd Health Program and Ona Field Day coming in October. Plan on attending, learn something new, see your friends and eat a good steak.

Call if we can help solve some of your challenges.

Best regards,

Lockie Gary  
County Agent

## **Caring for Livestock after Disaster**

### *Quick Facts*

- Both livestock and humans can become disoriented after a disaster.
- Make surroundings as familiar as possible to aid in livestock readjustment.
- Livestock management priorities should include getting stabilized.
- Post-disaster recovery often leads to pre-disaster mitigation.

### *Priorities*

Disasters, by nature, are catastrophic events that overwhelm the ability of individuals, communities and regions. During such catastrophic events, many things get damaged including transportation, communications, emotions and thinking.

When dealing with livestock during emergencies, it is critical to re-establish your priorities. The first priority should be your personal safety and welfare, followed by the safety and welfare of other people, and finally animals and property. If you are safe, you can do more to benefit animals. If you are at risk, so is their welfare and health. Follow official instructions for access and safety when reentering a disaster zone.

### *Seek and Own*

The first logical step in caring for livestock and other animals is to locate, control and provide for those animals. Locating animals often is limited by transportation blockages from the disaster because normal routes may not be available. Your local emergency manager, usually found at an established incident command post, may have alternatives. If the emergency manager is difficult to find, contact local law enforcement for information. As you re-enter a disaster area, remember hazards may still occur, including:

- Downed power lines
- Flooded areas
- Unstable roads and highways
- Gas and utility leaks
- Debris and wreckage
- Vandals and looters

Leave an itinerary of your search plan with local authorities and family members. Travel slowly, be alert for hazards, and do not enter unsecured areas. Take identification and livestock ownership documents with you as you search. Official emergency responders often evacuate animals, so check with authorities to see if your livestock has been moved to a holding facility before you enter the disaster zone.

### *Sensitivity*

Animals are like people in that they are emotionally affected by disasters. Often violent impacts of disaster disorient and temporarily alter the behavioral state of livestock. When, and if, you locate your animals, realize that they may be upset, confused and agitated. They need help finding their normal behavioral pattern. Here are some proven techniques for doing this:

1. Handle livestock quietly, calmly and in a manner with which they are familiar.
2. Wear clothing and use vehicles that are familiar to them.
3. If possible, keep or reunite familiar animal groups with each other.
4. As soon as possible, place them in familiar settings or one, which is quiet, calm and insulated from additional stimuli.
5. Soft music and familiar sounds may help calm livestock.
6. If possible, clean the animals (i.e., wipe out their eyes, mouths, and nostrils).
7. If possible, move animals away from the residue of the disaster.
8. Treat wounds of injured animals so their comfort level improves.

### *Feed, Safety and Shelter*

Animals and livestock often relate security to the familiarity of their surroundings. In some cases, you may be able to return them to familiar surroundings and enhance their recovery. Unfortunately, a disaster often impacts the familiar surroundings altering the landscape's character, feel, smell, look and layout. To enhance the animal's comfort level, find another place with similar characteristics. Move the livestock there until you can remedy the damage.

Feed and water are a big part in livestock disaster recovery. In addition to the health and nutrient aspects of appropriate feed and water, livestock can become very picky to eat and drink if their feed and water do not smell and taste familiar. This nervousness is usually greater during and after disasters.

### *Reacclimating Livestock*

Since the structure and layout of your operation may change because of a natural disaster, or you decide you want to change things to enhance future management, it may be necessary to treat livestock as if they are new to the site. Let them learn the fence layout and the availability of water and feed. Your native forage feed availability may work into this process if the disaster impacted the previous forage supply. It is important for both animal safety and landscape

recovery if you inhibit livestock grazing pressure on disaster-impacted sites until they become stable.

### **Feeding Livestock Safely After the Big Storm**

There is always the potential for trouble following any major storm. Whether it is a large thunderstorm, tornado, or hurricane it can cause severe damage to the farm's livestock feeding system. Feed can get wet from rain or flooding and branches or entire trees can fall into pastures. Any of these events can spell disaster to the livestock producer.

Wet grain can mold and heat quickly. Spontaneous combustion may occur within a short time and create a fire. Dry portions of the grain should be removed and stored separately in a dry area. Use one of the following methods for handling the wet grain:

1. If possible, get the grain to a commercial dryer quickly.
2. If dry storage is available, use a natural air-drying system with a metal perforated floor or a lateral duct system. Put the grain over the drying tunnel to a depth of not more than six feet. Use a crop-drying fan to force air up through the grain.
3. If neither a commercial dryer or tunnel is available, spread the grain in as dry a place as possible, to a depth of not more than six inches.
4. Shelled corn can be ensiled wet if the moisture content ranges between 25% and 35%.

Wet ear corn should be dried as soon as possible, if it is flooded. Separate dry ear corn and store it in a dry area. Handle wet ear corn as follows:

1. Dry the ear corn if facilities and equipment are available. Remove corn from the crib, since mud and debris washed into the crib may make drying difficult or impossible. Then place the ear corn over a drying tunnel and force air through the corn with a drying fan.
2. Shell the corn if shelling equipment is available.

Wet hay will begin to heat and mold very quickly. Spontaneous combustion could occur within 2 or 3 days. Move and restack any dry portions of hay. Promptly remove wet hay from buildings and spread it out to dry. Turn and

shake it frequently. Open wet bales and spread them out well. Mechanical drying is better and faster than manual drying. Construct a drying tunnel of dry hay bales. Stack the hay over the tunnel to a depth of not more than six feet. If you stack baled hay over the drying tunnel, break bale ties first.

Wet corn silage will most likely not be damaged if floodwaters are drained away from around the silo soon after flooding. Watch silage for evidence of spoiling as you remove it for feeding.

Livestock should be provided with clean uncontaminated water. Inspect feed supplies. Damaged feed grains and moldy hay can cause digestive disturbances or worse. Horses, sheep, poultry, swine, and cattle are affected most severely in that order from damaged feed. Do not force livestock to eat silage that has been flooded, even if it appears unchanged.

Standing water may have ruined some of your pastures. Lack of adequate forage could force animals to eat poisonous plants, which may be present in and around the pasture. Remove fallen wild cherry tree limbs from pastures to prevent animal poisoning. Wilted wild cherry leaves produce Prussic Acid that can kill an animal. Before restocking a pasture, remove debris, especially along fence lines and corners. Livestock may be injured from pieces of barbed wire, sharp metal, and trash. Also, be sure to inspect the fence around the pasture for signs of damage from fallen trees or debris from flooding that could allow animals to get out. Wet feeds may produce mold spores, some of which are toxic to certain livestock. If you must feed wet or flood-damaged feed, proceed with caution. Watch animals carefully for signs of illness. Mixed feeds, grains, and roughages, which have heated or spoiled, have little nutritive value for livestock, depending on the extent of the damage. Do not feed heated, badly molded, or sour feeds, or moldy legume hays to any livestock. Once feeds have been dried, they can be fed in limited amount to beef cattle and young dairy stock. Use extreme caution when feeding moldy protein concentrates. Mix moldy feed with 90% to 95% clean feed at first and then watch the cattle carefully. Beef cattle on full feed may go off feed. Milk production in dairy cattle may be lowered. Some animals may develop respiratory or nervous disorders from inhaling spores. Do not feed moldy feeds to horses, sheep, swine, or pregnant cattle. This can cause death. Some diseases are spread by water. Any flooded feed could be contaminated, even when dried. Watch animals for signs of nervousness, listlessness, going off feed and general unthriftiness. Contact your veterinarian if you observe any of these symptoms.

Short-term dietary requirements for farm animals during disasters – For specific amount and type of feeds, consult your veterinarian		
Animals	Amount of water per day (higher amounts apply to summer months)	Amount of feed per day
<b>Dairy cows</b>		
In production	7-9 gallons	20 lb. hay
Dry cows	7-9 gallons	20 lb. hay
Heifers	3-6 gallons	8-12 lb. hay
Cow with calf	8-9 gallons	12-18 lb. legume hay
Calf (400 lb.)	4-6 gallons	8-12 lb. legume hay
<b>Swine</b>		
Brood sow		
With litter	4 gallons	8 lb. grain
Brood sow (pregnant)		
	3 gallons	2 lb. grain
Gilt or boar	1 gallon	3 lb. grain
<b>Sheep</b>		
Ewe with lamb	1 gallon	5 lb. hay
Ewe (dry)	3 quarts	3 lb. hay
Weanling lamb	2 quarts	3 lb. hay
<b>Poultry</b>		
Layers		
	5 gallons per 100 birds	17 lb. per 100 birds
Broilers		
	5 gallons per 100 birds	10 lb. per 100 birds
Turkeys		
	12 gallons per 100 birds	40 lb. per 100 birds
<b>Horses</b>		
All Breeds	5-12 gallons per 1000 lb.	20 lb. hay per 1000 lb.
<b>Cats and Dogs</b>		
All Breeds	1 quart per animal	ad libitum dry food

## **USDA Assistance Available in Areas Designated as Natural Disaster Areas – Emergency Loans**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides emergency loans (EM) to help cover production and physical losses in counties declared as disaster areas by the President or designated by the Secretary of Agriculture. For physical losses only, the FSA Administrator may authorize EM assistance.

The loan limit is up to 80 percent of actual loss, with a maximum indebtedness under this program of \$500,000.

Loans for crop, livestock, and non-real estate losses are normally repaid from 1 to 7 years depending upon the loan purpose, repayment ability, and collateral available as loan security. Loans for physical losses to real estate are normally repaid within 30 years. In unusual circumstances, repayment may be extended. The current annual interest rate is 3.75 percent.

### **Eligibility for Loans**

- Established family farm operators.
- Citizens or permanent residents of the United States.
- Have the ability, training or experience to repay the loan.
- Have suffered a qualifying physical loss, or a production loss of at least 30 percent in any essential farm or ranch enterprise.
- Cannot obtain commercial credit.
- Can provide collateral to secure an EM loan.
- Receipt of application is within 8 months of the disaster designation date.
- Keep acceptable farm records.
- Operate in accordance with a farm plan they develop and agree to it with FSA.
- May be required to participate in a financial management training program, and may be required to obtain crop insurance.

### **Loan Uses**

- Restore or replace essential property.
- Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year.
- Pay essential family living expenses.
- Reorganize the farming operation.
- Refinance debts.

## **Where to Apply for Assistance**

### **Wauchula Service Center**

316 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Wauchula, FL 33873-2606  
863/773-4764  
863/773-2445 fax

### **Bartow Service Center**

1700 Hwy. 17  
Bartow, FL 33830  
863/533-2051  
863/533-1884 fax

### **Tavares Service Center**

1725 David Walker Dr.  
Tavares, FL 32778-4954  
352/742-7005  
352/343-6275 fax

### **Sebring Service Center**

4505/4507 George Blvd.  
Sebring, FL 33872  
863/385-7853  
863/385-7028 fax

## **Disaster Safety Facts**

1. More injuries occur in the recovery process than during the disaster.
2. Electrical safety is important after a disaster.
3. Slippery surfaces cause falls and injuries.
4. Be sure the water is safe before you drink it.
5. Snakes and vermin are often prevalent after floods and hurricanes.
6. Gas leaks can cause explosions after disasters.

7. Stress levels are often high after disasters. Learn how to deal with stress.
8. Consider all foods that have been in contact with floodwater as contaminated.

**SEPTEMBER, 2004**

<b>OCTOBER, 2004</b>
1 - The Farm Bull Sale - Okeechobee, FL
12 - Animal Health Topics for Today and Tomorrow - Wauchula, FL
14 - UF/IFAS, Range Cattle Research and Education Center Field Day - Ona, FL
16 - Florida Santa Gertrudis Association Auction
21 - Little Creek Farm Bull Sale - Kissimmee, FL
21 - Meadows Creek Bull Sale - Kissimmee, FL
21 - Callaway Angus Bull Sale - Kissimmee, FL
22 - Ankony Angus Bull Sale - Ocala, FL
22 - Graham Angus Bull Sale - Okeechobee, FL
28 - Florida Angus Association Bull Sale - Hardee Livestock Market
29 - Lemmon Cattle Company - Okeechobee, FL
<b>NOVEMBER, 2004</b>
5 - Hardee Farms Black Bull Sale - Chiefland, FL
18 - Hardee Cattlemen's Association Pre-Sale Dinner and Meeting
19 - Hardee Cattlemen's Association 5 <sup>th</sup> Annual All-Breed Bull Sale - Hardee Livestock Market