

Hardee Rancher Beef and Forage Newsletter



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Winter 2005

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
January 20 – Annual Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show – Osceola Heritage Park, Kissimmee
February 8 – Florida Dairy Road Show – 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM - Okeechobee Extension Office, Okeechobee
February 10 – Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Assn. Annual Dinner – 6:00 PM – Location TBA
February 21-27 – Hardee County Fair – Hardee County Fairgrounds, Wauchula
February 28 – Pasture Establishment/Renovation Program – Polk County Extension Office, Bartow
March 1 – Pasture Establishment/Renovation Program – Hardee County Extension Office, Wauchula
March 3 – Pasture Establishment/Renovation – Desoto County Extension Office, Arcadia
March 5 – Small Farms Conference – Okeechobee HS Vo-Ag Facility, Okeechobee
March 8 – Pasture Establishment/Renovation Program – Okeechobee Extension Office, Okeechobee
March 10 – Pasture Establishment/Renovation Program – Hendry County Extension Office, LaBelle
March 19 – Small Farms Conference – Desoto County Extension Office, Arcadia

- Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show -

The 22nd Annual Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show will be held January 20, 2005 at the Osceola Heritage Park (1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane off of Highway 192 East of Kissimmee). The theme this year is "Picking up the Pieces/Preparing for the Lean Years". The trade show will open at 8:00 AM with the

program beginning at 8:45 AM. Randy Blach, Executive Vice President of Cattle Fax will be the Keynote speaker for this year. The Quality Inn Conference Center will have rates of \$55.00 single and \$59.00 double. You will need to mention the Florida Cattlemen's Institute to get this rate.

- A Word about Stocking Rates -

As you drive through rural Florida and get on the back country roads it is easy to see a major difference in the quality of livestock and how they are managed. This is more easily observed in the winter months when cattle are in thinner body condition. Most folks who choose to live in the "country" do so because they enjoy raising livestock. Keeping your own horse, teaching your children values through raising livestock, and raising your own food are all strong motivators for keeping livestock. But no matter how strong the motivation, do yourself and the livestock a service - **DO NOT** overstock your land beyond its carrying capacity.

Overstocking can lead to poor vegetative coverage, higher levels of parasites, erosion and soil compaction and an increased need for supplemental feeding. Many factors contribute to the number of livestock the land can carry. Some of the important factors are:

Soil type - The soil type indicates potential productivity of the grass and also indicates which type of grass may be best suited.

Grass - The type of grass, percent of the ground covered, stage in the growth cycle of the grass, rainfall, drainage, amount and timing of fertilizer, weed and pest control, and amount of rest time between grazing periods all contribute to how many animals can be carried.

Type of Animal - Sheep graze lower than cattle; goats browse shrubs which other animals don't utilize; a 1,000 pound cow eats more than a 100 pound goat; horses' hooves may damage the grass more than cows. There are many things to consider about the animals themselves which influence the safe carrying capacity of the land.

Water and Shade - Availability and location of water and shade all influence the movement of the animals and therefore pressure on the grass

A base recommendation (without consideration of other factors) would be two animal units on five acres. One animal unit is equivalent to one mature cow, or one horse, or five goats.

In summary, animals are enjoyable and rewarding; however, consider carefully and stay within the limits of your land.

- Animal rights groups join forces -

Two large animal-rights organizations announced last week that they intend to merge. The Humane Society of the United States and The Fund for Animals "have united in order to advance their common mission", according to a news release from The HSUS. The merger will formally occur Jan. 1. According to the release, the groups plan to operate their advocacy programs under the banner of The HSUS, and focus on issues such as "fur, sport hunting, factory farming and malicious animal cruelty, including animal fighting". The HSUS has eight million members and a 2004 budget of \$82 million. The Fund for Animals claims 200,000 members and \$7 million budget. The merger, the groups claim, will create a 2005 budget of over \$95 million. Our industry is well positioned to defend against the messages of extremists and to maintain public trust. But as these groups become better organized, animal agriculture also must speak with one voice, communicating a commitment to ethical practices in the production of safe, wholesome food. - J.M.

- Study finds fast growth in organic foods market -

The market for organic products is growing at a much faster pace than the rest of the food industry, according to the results of a recent study. A release from market-research publisher Packaged Facts indicates that U.S. sales of organic foods and beverages will be worth \$32.3 billion by 2009. The research report titles "The U.S. Market for Organic Foods and Beverages", says the organic industry has experienced an annual growth rate between 17 and 22 percent over the past few years, compared to 2 to 3 percent growth in the conventional food industry. Mass-marketing of organic foods in supermarkets and the entry of mainstream food companies into the organic market account for much of the growth. Source: Drovers Alert, December 15, 2004

- Study documents BSE-related losses in Canada -

Canadian cattle producers have lost about \$5 billion (Canadian) since the discovery of an animal with BSE in May 2003, according to a report from the Bank of Montreal's economics department. Cash receipts for cattle through the first six months of this year were close to 30 percent lower than the average for the five years ending in 2002, according to the report. The Canadian packing segment has recovered more quickly than producers, the report notes, and further processors were least affected by the discovery of BSE. Source: Drovers Alert, December 15, 2004

- Britain makes BSE policy changes -

Britain's farm and health ministries said the Over Thirty Months rule, where cattle over that age are banned from entering the food chain, could be removed and replaced with a new testing system sometime in mid-2005. "This decision follows our successful efforts towards eradicating BSE in UK cattle", farming minister Margaret Beckett said in a statement. The main public health protection measure - the removal of specified risk material would remain in place. Source: Drovers Alert, December 15, 2004

- Dog Food Fed to Cattle -

Recently concern has been expressed about the practice of feeding dog food to show cattle to increase the "shine or bloom" prior to showing. This practice is highly discouraged and likely illegal because of concerns surrounding transmission of BSE. Pet food of any sort can contain ingredients that have been banned by the USDA as feedstuffs for cattle. Dog food in many instances contains meat and bone meal, beef and bone meal, lamb meal, meat products, or meat by-products. Feed ingredients that contain these products from ruminants (cattle, sheep, goat, deer, etc.) are illegal to feed cattle regardless of the form that they are fed in (i.e. dog food, pelleted feeds). Dog food labels indicate that the food is for dogs only; feeding the food to cattle is off-label use of the product. Ultimately all show cattle will enter the human food chain. By providing cattle illegal feed ingredients our food safety, health, and cattle industry can be put in danger. Better, cheaper, and safer sources of protein and fat are available for show cattle rations. Anyone that owns cattle that will enter the human food chain has a responsibility to ensure the safety and wholesomeness of the product. One question to ask FFA/4-H advisors, leaders, or exhibitors, would you be willing to eat the products from your show calf knowing what you have fed or done? If not, why should anyone else? Source: Matt Hersom, Assistant Professor Phone: (352) 392-2390 Tim Marshall, Professor Phone: (352) 392-1917 UF/IFAS, Department of Animal Sciences Gainesville, FL

- Renovating Forages Program -

Sponsored by: South Florida Beef/Forage Program

Due to a number of factors such as 3 major hurricanes, low citrus prices and citrus diseases, landowners may see a need to convert citrus land to pastures or re-establish pastures that were damaged by excessive water. The South Florida Beef/Forage Program will be hosting a series of seminars on "Renovating Forages Programs" at 5 different locations in the South Florida Beef/Forage Program area. The following are the topics to be discussed:

- Panel of producers (2-3) from hosting county
- Land Preparation - Lockie Gary
- Grass Varieties - Martin Adjei and Carrol Chambliss
- Fertilization and pH - Jim Selph
- Weed Control and Herbicides - Pat Hogue
- Grazing Management of Newly Seeded Fields - John Arthington and Matt Hersom
- Economics of Re-Establishment - Gary Mikulecky

The program will be held in the following locations:

- February 28, 2005 - Polk County - Bartow
- March 1, 2005 - Hardee County - Wauchula
- March 3, 2005 - Desoto County - Arcadia
- March 8, 2005 - Okeechobee County - Okeechobee
- March 10 - Hendry County - Labelle

If you plan to participate, please RSVP to the host county that you plan on attending:

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For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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