

Hardee Rancher Beef and Forage Newsletter



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Winter 2006

Calendar Of Events

January

19	Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show - Osceola Heritage Park, 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane, Highway 192 E, Kissimmee - 8:00AM-3:30PM
31	Hardee Beef Cattle Short Course - Hardee County Extension Office - 7:00-9:00PM

February

2, 7, 9, 14, 16	Hardee Beef Cattle Short Course - Hardee County Extension Office - 7:00-9:00PM
20-25	Hardee County Fair - Hardee County Cattlemen's Arena

March

4	Small Farms Conference - LaBelle
18	Small Farms Conference - Seffner
28-30	Reproductive Management School - Bartow

- The Use of Prescribed Fire on Ranchland -

Lochrane A. Gary/Hardee County Extension Director

With over 1200 people per day moving to Florida for permanent residency many newcomers become alarmed when they see fire in the woods or on a pasture. I have personally witnessed neighbors and well meaning citizens driving wildly up the lane and screaming, "There's a fire in your pasture." It's almost comical when this happens and they see a water wagon, a tractor and disc, fire lanes plowed and you calmly answer, "Yes, we intentionally set this fire. Didn't you see the note we left on your front door. We also left a message on your answering machine." Many folks simply are unaware of the benefits of prescribed fire or a control burn. The purposes of a prescribed burning in present day Florida are as follows:

- Ecological
- Wildlife
- Protection
- Forest management
- Range management
- Water management
- Access
- Aesthetics
- Exotic control

Without fire, fuel loads reach dangerous levels and desirable plant species are displaced. Properly conducted burns can increase the abundance of food plants, increase flowering and seed production, and attract an abundance of wildlife. Hazard fuels are a risk to livestock, timber, people, and improved property. Prescribed burns which reduce fuels benefit the landowner, neighbors and the public. I realize I am preaching to the choir. Today's ranchers and their great-grandfathers have been burning the woods for years but not everyone who lives in this beautiful state recognizes why we do it. Please consider patiently explaining the benefits of prescribed fire to residents who ask so that we may continue to utilize the privilege.

- The 23rd Annual Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show January 19, 2006 -

The 23rd Annual Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show will occur again this year in Kissimmee at Osceola Heritage Park. If you plan to attend, please call the Extension Office in order to RSVP at 863/773-2164. This year's theme is "Basics for the Future." If you need a room, call the Best Western Heritage Park Hotel at 407/846-4646 to make a reservation. Please mention the group code: Florida Cattlemen's Institute.

- Hardee/Polk County Beef Cattle Short Course -

Got questions about beef production? Have them answered and receive the latest information from the University of Florida on every aspect of the cattle business from conception through marketing. This course has been designed for all beef producers. It has been attended by some of the largest ranchers in south Florida as well as newcomers to the business. There is always a lively discussion and we have fun. Please come and join us. If you have any questions about this course, please call Lockie Gary at 863/773-2164.

- Reproductive Management School -

The next Reproductive Management School will be held in Bartow on March 28-30, 2006. The cost for this year's school is \$350.00. The purpose of the course is to strengthen managerial capabilities of owners and operators of beef cattle ranches. This is an intense course in reproductive management of the cow herd. Although the topic of pregnancy diagnosis is given extensive treatment in the program, participants should not expect this training to make them proficient in that skill.

- Researchers Find Animal Antibiotics in Vegetables -

Antibiotics given to livestock can end up in vegetables and pose a health threat to consumers, according to a study looking at the use of animal manure as a fertilizer. The University of Minnesota study will add to the level of public concern about the food they eat. It also serves as a warning to food processors that they need to be vigilant when sourcing their vegetables. The processing industry is under regulatory and consumer pressure to ensure the safety of their food products. Regular breakdowns in food safety and reports on contamination have raised consumer awareness about the problem. The study, published in the *Journal of Environmental Quality*, indicates that processors will have to be careful when sourcing their vegetables, whether non-organic or organic. The contamination threat is due to the US laws allowing farmers to use animal manure as fertilizer in both conventional and organic agriculture. In the study, University of Minnesota researchers found that corn, cabbage, and green onions absorbed chlortetracycline from manure fertilizer obtained from pigs that were given the antibiotic. Chlortetracycline is a member of the tetracycline class of antibiotics that are used in human medicine to treat upper respiratory tract infections and other illnesses. Tetracyclines and other antibiotics also are used as feed additives in poultry, hogs and beef cattle. Feed additives are not used to treat disease, but to promote slightly faster growth and to compensate for overcrowded and unsanitary conditions on industrial-scale farms. When the antibiotics are ingested by a human they can spur the bacteria naturally present in the intestinal tract, including types of bacteria that can cause serious disease, to become drug-resistant, the researchers stated. "Vegetarians may think the huge overuse of antibiotics in livestock and poultry will not affect them, but that's not true for two reasons," stated Margaret Mellon, the director of the Union of Concerned Scientists' Food and Environment Program. "Consumers eating vegetables grown on soil fertilized with manure may be unknowingly ingesting antibiotics. Even more importantly, resistant bacteria that are created on the farm can contaminate air, water and soil that can travel significant distances." While raw and composted manure may be used with little restriction in conventional agriculture, the US Department of Agriculture's rules requires that manure used in organic farming be composted or be applied at least 90 days before harvest. In the study, the crops were harvested within only 42 days, so the findings may not apply to organic vegetables, the researchers stated. Demand for organic foods has increased by almost 17 per cent over the past year, according to a report this week by Whole Foods Market. The latest survey commissioned by leading organic supermarket reveals that about two-thirds of the US' consumers bought organic goods in 2005, compared to just over half in both 2003 and 2004. (Organic Consumers Association, 11/22/05)

- EU bans four more antibiotics -

A European Union-wide ban on using antibiotics as growth promoters in animal feed went into effect Jan. 1. This is the final step in the EU's strategy to phase out antibiotics used for non-medicinal purposes. It's part of the European Commission's overall effort to tackle antibiotic resistance. Antibiotics can now only be added to animal feed for veterinary purposes. The following four substances will be removed:

- Salinomycin sodium used for piglets and finishing pigs.
- Avilamycin used for young pigs, finishing pigs, chickens and turkeys.
- Flavophospholipol used for rabbits, laying hens, market chickens, turkeys, pigs, calves and cattle.
- Monensin sodium used for market cattle.

The flimsy science used to argue for the EU ban can be argued indefinitely. But now that the ban has been implemented in the EU, a movement to do the same in the U.S. is likely in the near future. **Greg Henderson, Drovers Journal**

- CAFTA Deadline Passes -

The January 1 implementation date for the Central American Free Trade Agreement has come and gone without action. A U.S. Trade Representative spokesperson said CAFTA will be delayed by a month - possibly longer. According to CAFTA's provisions, U.S. pork and beef tariffs would be dropped altogether, which was positioned to be good for the pork industry in particular as the countries offer a large pork-variety-meat market. Those opposing the trade pact contend the Central American countries' lack of action is evidence that it's a flawed policy. Five of the six countries involved have ratified the agreement, only Costa Rica has not. But none of the countries moved forward to implement the agreement. **Drovers Alert**

- Livestock Congress Tackles the Politics of Animal Disease -

Recognized thought leaders from around the world will tackle the topic of management and control of animal-disease outbreaks during the 2006 International Livestock Congress in Houston on March 1-2. Topics for discussion include how to prevent the spread of disease as well as lessons learned from outbreaks of avian influenza, Foot & Mouth Disease and BSE. For registration and hotel information, go to www.theisef.com or contact Executive Director Julie Bryant at 817/443-0686 or julie@theisef.com. **Drovers Alert**

- Japanese Government Agrees to Reopen U.S. Beef Trade -

Finally some good news for U.S. beef producers as Japan agrees to start accepting U.S. beef from cattle 20 months of age or younger. The USDA estimates that 35 percent of the U.S. cattle herd will comply with the requirement, but U.S. Meat Export Federation President and CEO Phil Seng says that packers and suppliers estimate that over the next three months only 15 percent of the cattle slaughtered will qualify. That number will grow as more cattle meet age-verification requirements. The first shipment of U.S. beef is expected to head to Japan this weekend, Dec. 17. USMEF representatives and representatives from some smaller U.S. packers will go with the shipment to kick off the resumption of trade. In addition, the USMEF is putting promotion into high gear with press conferences and promotion programs planned to reassure Japanese consumers on the safety and quality of U.S. beef. Although there have been several Japanese consumer surveys reporting negative reaction to U.S. beef, Seng reports that in a survey over the weekend of 1,200 consumers, only 25 percent were willing to accept U.S. beef. Another Japanese show asked six consumers about their comfort level with U.S. beef and only one expressed concern. He says the USMEF will continue to work to win back the Japanese consumer. **Drovers Alert**

- Bright Outlook on Future Trade -

It is anticipated that it will take three years to fully rebuild the Japanese market to pre-2003 export levels. To do that requires that trade representatives continue negotiating to remove the age barrier, since the enhanced U.S. BSE surveillance program complies with international standards set by the OIE. The cattle industry is committed to a full reopening of markets based on international guidelines, says Jim McAdams, NCBA president and cattle producer from Texas, and will continue to work to remove current limitations. What happens if more cases of BSE are found in the United States? USMEF President and CEO Phil Seng says that the Japanese government already expects the U.S. to see more cases. But their agreement is based on their own stringent protocols, so they won't close the market if another case is found as long as the U.S. continues to comply with Japanese standards. With Japan making this move, it is hoped to have a positive impact on other trading partners. Seng says that he hopes the Taiwan market opens by the end of January and that Hong Kong opens trade soon. While talks are ongoing, there's no definite timeline available right now. **Drovers Alert**

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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