Bovine Headlines

Happy 4th of July!

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting a lot of you at the Animal/Premise ID meeting in May, and appreciate the attendance!

The ID meeting was the result of 2 concerned cattleman who contacted the extension office asking for some answers. As your Livestock Agent, I strive to deliver the most pertinent information to the producers - suggestions are taken seriously about future programs and meetings. If you are interested in an educational opportunity, please contact me @: (863) 674-4092 or horse1@ufl.edu.

**I have a favor to ask of you: The S. Fl. Beef Forage Program has mailed surveys to many of you, and I would greatly appreciate if you would complete and return it. The results are utilized to create future programming. If you have any questions about the survey, please give me a call.

Thought of the month & money saver: Do NOT fertilize weeds! Effective weed management is critical and will insure that the forage receives all the benefits of fertilization. Thanks,

Lindsey F. Wiggins

Deadline for FREE MONEY:
The USDA set a deadline of July 18th for the ‘Livestock Compensation Program.’ These opportunities are far and few between - so get on the phone! For more information & to see if you’re eligible, please call your Farm Service Agency @: (863) 983–7250.

Step 1: Hand cut forage (hay/grass), put in a Ziploc. Label Ziploc to identify the species of forage (Bahia, Floralta, etc.) and the pasture or bale that it came from *Time is of the essence once the material is placed in the Ziploc so make sure it is mailed or hand delivered immediately.

Step 2: Fill out page 3.

Step 3: Mail to: Forage Extension Laboratory 3401 Experiment Station Ona, FL 33865

Step 4: Receive results (Crude protein and Digestibility)

What’s goin’ on?

- Collier County Goat Breeding & Disease Wrkshp.
  - Aug. 7 @ Collier Ext. Office (For more info.: 239-353-4244)
- Grazing Management 101
  - Aug. 23 @ Okeechobee Ext. Office
- Grazing Management & Tour
  - September 4-5 @ the Dallas Townsend Ag. Center, LaBelle
- Weed Field Day
  - Oct. 15 @ Ona Range Cattle Research & Education Center
- Reproductive Management School
  - Oct. 21-23 @ the Turner Center in Arcadia

Forage testing now available at the Range Cattle Research Center in Ona!

*For tips on how to collect your samples, call Lindsey @ (863)674-4092
It’s Better Dead: “Smutgrass”

What is it?
Smutgrass is a perennial, bunch grass with erect stems. The seed head is very narrow and seeds can be infected with a black fungus (smut) or unaffected and brown. Propagation is by seed and can be commonly found in turf, pastures, and along roadsides. It produces in excess of 1,400 seeds per seedhead and 45,000 seeds per plant. Seed production occurs throughout the growing season and are spread by adhering to livestock, water, and wind. Seed germination averages less than 9% because of a hard seed coat and seed remain viable in the soil for more than 2 years. Smutgrass is an all too common pest that infests 1,000’s of acres in Florida and across the Southeast. Although tropical soda apple (TSA) and Brazilian pepper often get more emphasis, smutgrass is more common and costly than any other pasture weed in Florida. The reason smutgrass is so common is that control can be costly and tricky; however, there are certain strategies that can dramatically improve smutgrass control.

Herbicide Selection
Velpar is the only herbicide that will consistently control smutgrass. Much work has been done to determine the optimum application rate to minimize cost while maximizing control. Research has shown that Velpar at 2pt/acre can control smutgrass, but control failures are common unless environmental conditions are just right; therefore, the IFAS recommendations are to use a minimum of 3pt/acre. Our research, over many locations and many years, has found 3pt/acre to be the lowest application rate that will consistently control smutgrass. Bahiagrass will turn slightly yellow about 15 to 20 days after spraying with Velpar; however, bahiagrass will recover and turn dark green within about 40 days after Velpar application. Roundup (or other glyphosate containing products) will control smutgrass, but it will also completely kill the desirable forage. Unless total pasture renovation is desirable, glyphosate should not be used.

Application Timing
The most critical component to effective smutgrass control is proper application timing. Velpar is a soil active herbicide that is primarily taken up by roots; therefore, Velpar should be applied when root uptake will be maximized. This means that rainfall is necessary for effective smutgrass control. Applications of Velpar during the dry period of Spring will often fail to control smutgrass. This is because rainfall is not available to move herbicide into the soil for uptake by roots. The herbicide then begins to degrade in the soil and is not present when the Summer rains begin. Our experience with Velpar is that optimum control occurs when the application is made between June and August. During these months afternoon rain is common and smutgrass is actively growing. Under these conditions, greater than 90% smutgrass control is commonly achieved. Applying the correct herbicide, at the proper rate, at the right time will kill smutgrass and give you more bahiagrass to graze. Fertilizing after Velpar application will increase forage production and allow the bahiagrass to quickly fill the open areas created by killed smutgrass.

Other Factors
While mowing prior to herbicide application is a common practice, research has not shown benefit to mowing prior to Velpar application. Considering the current price of diesel and the time required, mowing is an unnecessary expense. Actually, research has shown that mowing or burning does not control smutgrass, but instead promote the spread or germination of seed. The diameter of plants decreased under continuous mowing, but the number of plants increased. Burning is an inexpensive method to remove stemmy old growth on smutgrass plants and clean up a pasture if a rancher plans to graze the smutgrass during spring before spraying in summer. Mature smutgrass plants are unpalatable to livestock, but new regrowth which is similar in quality to that of bahiagrass, is consumed for several weeks after burning or mowing. It is also common for landowners to include various adjuvants (surfactants, stickers, etc.) when spraying Velpar; however, research has shown that these adjuvants are unnecessary. The purpose of an adjuvant is to improve herbicide uptake into plant leaves; however, most Velpar activity is through root uptake, with only minimal amounts entering the leaves. Granted, leaf uptake of Velpar does occur and in some conditions an adjuvant may improve control, but if Velpar is applied in the Summer months, when rainfall is common, smutgrass control will be maximized and the use of an adjuvant is not necessary.

General Recommendations
- Do not apply Velpar within 100 feet of oak trees because it will cause death.
- Read the Velpar label for complete instructions on re-application interval, safety and cattle withdrawal interval.
- Cattle should be removed for a period of 60 days after applying Velpar.
- If the smutgrass density is greater than 80% of the area (if 8 out of 10 regular steps touch the base of smutgrass plants), complete renovation should be considered, since little bahiagrass is available for stand recovery. However, studies indicate bahiagrass will do an excellent job of recovery even at 70 to 80% smutgrass infestation.

Sources: Jason Ferrell and Brent Sellers. Revised by Lindsey Wiggins
Why should I have my forage tested?

Knowing the digestibility and protein levels of your pasture and/or hay will allow you to make economically sound business decisions when it comes time to purchase supplementation. The cost of the test is only $5.00 and may provide you with information that can save you thousands in supplementation or fertilizer. Also, the ‘Forage Specialist’ at Ona will compile a database with all the forage test results to demonstrate forage quality in different parts of Florida where forage is grown on a variety of soil types. A database like this is currently not available for Florida landowners, but it will provide us with a better, scientific understanding of: pasture management, cattle performance on high & low quality forage, and supplementation rates.

How?

Pasture: The sample should represent the “tops” of the grass. (Cows do not consume the entire stem at once - overstocked and/or overgrazed pastures will eventually allow the cattle access to the lower stem.) A separate sample of the lower half of the plant can also be analyzed to demonstrate the difference in quality between the top and bottom portions of grass.

Hay: To insure that the sample represents the entire bale - insert a probe into the side of round bales vs. the ‘round’ top or bottom of the bale. Remember the round bale is similar to an onion - with many layers. Square bale samples can be taken from any side; however, make sure that the sample tool gathers from the center of the bale as well.
Special Thanks to the “Bovine Headlines” sponsors for their generous contributions and support. The sponsors make this publication possible, and if you would like to be among them - call Lindsey @ (863)674-4092.

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### Suggested Immunization Schedule for Horses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease/Vaccine</th>
<th>Foals/Weanlings</th>
<th>Adult Horses (greater than 1 yr. of age)</th>
<th>Broodmares</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tetanus toxoid</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Annual, 4-6 wks before foaling</td>
<td>Combined with EEE, WEE, or influenza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabies</td>
<td>1st dose: 3-4 mo</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Annual, before breeding</td>
<td>Rabies vaccine recommended in S Florida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd dose: 4-5 mo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encephalomyelitis (EEE, WEE)</td>
<td>1st dose: 3-4 mo</td>
<td>Annual, spring</td>
<td>Annual, 4-6 wks before foaling</td>
<td>Combined with tetanus or influenza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd dose: 4-5 mo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Nile Virus</td>
<td>1st dose: 3-4 mo</td>
<td>Annual, spring</td>
<td>Annual, 4-6 wks before foaling</td>
<td>Recommended in S. Florida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd dose: 4-6 wks after 1st dose</td>
<td>Prior to onset of vector season.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd dose: 10-12 mo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional vaccines (for traveling/performance horses - high risks):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease/Vaccine</th>
<th>1st dose: 3-6 mo.</th>
<th>Biannually (high risk)</th>
<th>Biannually w/ one dose administered</th>
<th>Administered in combo. with tetanus, EEE, &amp; WEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd dose: 4-7 mo.</td>
<td>Biannually (low risk)</td>
<td>4-6 wks. before foaling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd dose: 10-12 mo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhinopneumonitis (EHV a.k.a.: Rhino)</th>
<th>1st dose: 4-6 mo.</th>
<th>Biannually (high risk)</th>
<th>5, 7, and 9 months of gestation.</th>
<th>Confirm that product is labeled for protection against EHV abortion.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd dose: 4-6 wks. after 1st dose</td>
<td>Annual (low risk)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd dose: 10-12 mo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This guideline is for horses that have been receiving vaccinations on a regular basis. For additional guidance, contact Lindsey or your Vet.

**Which one do I choose?**

There are many vaccines on the market today and sometimes our veterinarians will ‘push’ vaccines on us that we do not need. For example, the Potomac Horse Fever vaccine is not necessary in a S. Florida, equine vaccination schedule. Notice the “Additional vaccines” section of this article, which includes: Influenza (flu virus) and Rhinopneumonitis (EHV); I recommend these vaccines for ‘high risk’ animals. High risk horses are those that travel or come in contact with ‘off farm’ horses. Day workers, rodeo participants, and trail riders have high risk horses because they are constantly introduced to other animals that may not be on a vaccination regime. The Strangles vaccine is another vaccine that is great for high risk horses. The Strangles vaccine is extremely important in a young horses’ (weanlings & yearlings) vaccination schedule; although, any age horse can be affected by Strangles if they have not received prior exposure - either from vaccination or the disease itself. What about the old, retired ‘nag’ in the back pasture? The 4 Core vaccines (Tetanus, Rabies, EEE/WEE, & West Nile) should keep your ‘old nag’ safe if: he/she is stationary and never exposed to other horses who receive exposure elsewhere. Remember: many diseases are spread by insects, like mosquitoes and flies, which makes S. Florida an ideal environment for disease distribution. A news segment on CNN warns that “Experts are expecting another epidemic of West Nile Virus this summer”, and numerous cases of EEE have been reported in Florida this year! Take precautions and utilize mosquito repellents for yourself and horses.

Vaccines can be very costly, especially if you have multiple horses and the Vet has to be utilized. While consulting with your Vet about your vaccination schedule is very important and crucial to the health of your horses, there are some money saving techniques available for those ‘seasoned’ horse owners - Do it yourself! Many vaccines are available to the public sector through vet supply magazines. The vials are conveniently packaged in small doses for small farms and the savings are significant! If you take the ‘do it yourself’ route there are a few rules to follow: keep the vials at the temp. prescribed on the label (which is usually refrigerated), never leave vaccinations in direct heat or sunlight (like the dashboard of your truck), and ALWAYS follow the label!

Written by: Lindsey Wiggins  
Sources: www.aap.org and the ‘Horse Industry Handbook’
**“Management Strategies for Shortening the Calving Season.”**

These pages, in the last issue, discussed the advantages and disadvantages of having a short breeding season. The following information will give you insight on how to shorten the season effectively. Reducing the length of the calving season is one of the most cost-effective procedures that large or small ranchers can implement. Reducing the period over which calves are born facilitates a multitude of prudent management practices while also increasing returns through increased pregnancy rates, heavier weaning weights and total pounds of saleable beef.

The primary objections of moving to a controlled breeding and calving season generally include:

- Limiting exposure of the cows to bulls does not give cows an adequate opportunity to conceive.
- Changing from a long breeding season to one of shorter duration is too expensive due to the loss of good cows that are late calvers.
- The perceived difficulty or lack of knowledge as to how to initiate a controlled program effectively.

The first objection has little foundation; a management change from a long to a short calving season does not penalize fertile, productive cows. As the data in Table 6 indicate, cows that are given adequate rest after calving and that have cycled before the start of the breeding season will conceive early in the breeding period.

**Table 6. Distribution of pregnancies by periods in a 75-day breeding season.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breed Type</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Percentage Pregnant by Periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angus</td>
<td>Brahman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-21</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44-65</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 100 100 100 100 100

From W.L. Reynolds.

* Average pregnancy rates by periods for the four breeds.

Note from Table 6 that 55 percent of all the herd had conceived by the first 21 days and 79 percent by the end of 43 days. Only 5 percent of the herd conceived during the last 12 days of the breeding season. The low pregnancy rate in cows that calved and cycled before the breeding season began is indicative of problem breeders and cows that probably should be eliminated because of their impaired fertility. Table 7 further substantiates that cows conceiving late in a controlled breeding program tend to be poor performers from one year to the next.

Note especially that pregnancy rate was only 45 percent in the group that conceived during the last 12 days of the breeding season. This contrasts with an 86 percent pregnancy rate for those cows conceiving in the first 21 days. Extending the breeding season for slow breeding cows only perpetuates subfertile cattle and complicates management.

**Table 7. The effect of time of conception on the pregnancy rate in the subsequent year.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Conception</th>
<th>Young Cows*</th>
<th>Mature Cows**</th>
<th>All Cows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st 21 days</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd 21 days</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd 21 days</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final 12 days</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From W.L. Reynolds, T.M. DeRouen and D.C. Meyerhoeffer

* 3 and 4 year-old cows

** 5 years and older

**Management of Herds with Long Calving Seasons (5 months or more)**

For calving seasons of 5 months or longer, it is generally advisable to split the herd into 2 groups. This may entail moving some cows from spring to fall calving or fall to spring depending upon the primary calving season desired. In the first year, time of breeding is restricted to the desired length, that is, 60 or 90 days. The initial time restriction is often determined by appraising the percentage of the herd calving in the first 1 to 2 months of the former breeding season. From a practical standpoint, most producers initially reduce the spring calving group by 20 to 30 percent of the total herd. The breeding season is restricted in the spring, and all cows are held until calves are weaned and/or the herd is pregnancy tested. At this time, inferior cows are culled. The nonpregnant but productive females are shifted to a separate area to become the nucleus of the fall calving herd. The fall calving cows are then exposed in a defined and controlled breeding season during the winter months. If cows shifted into the fall calving herd are nursing heifer calves when the new breeding period is initiated, take precautions to prevent puberal nursing heifers from becoming pregnant.
Breeding season cont’d.

This may require early weaning of some or all heifer calves from cows being shifted into the fall program. At the conclusion of the first fall breeding period, all open females should be culled. The plan calls for both herds to be managed identically with one exception. To ultimately eliminate the fall calving herd, no replacement heifers are added to the herd. Heifers of exceptional quality born to fall calving cows may be retained as replacements but should be held and bred to calve in the spring. Therefore, as a result of cow mortality and the absence of the usual 5 to 15 percent replacement addition, the fall calving herd will progressively decrease in size to the point that it may be eliminated. If a fall calving season is desired, a similar plan is used, but the ultimate objective will be to maintain a controlled fall calving group while simultaneously eliminating the spring calvers. This normally takes a period of 3 to 5 years depending upon the culling rate and the herd size perceived to be a practical management unit.

Management of Herds with Moderate Calving Seasons (greater than 80 days)

In herds where the calving period is more than 80 days but less than 5 months or in situations where a split calving season is undesirable or impossible, reducing the calving period requires more planning and careful follow-through. Although good nutrition and close attention to feeding regimes and cow condition can shorten the interval from calving to first estrus, cows will breed only slightly earlier. With such management, the breeding date will move back approximately 10 days or less annually. Therefore, reducing the breeding and calving period through improved management alone will give only marginal improvement. Consequently, more specific and direct actions are necessary if the calving period is to be reduced within a reasonable time. This is accomplished normally by a percentage of the late calving cows being replaced by heifers that are to calve in the first 30 to 60 days of the calving period. Exactly what percentage of the herd is replaced is governed by the existing calving distribution or how quickly it is desired to reduce the calving period. As discussed, 80 percent of the cows in most herds are already calving in a 3- to 4-month period with nearly 70 percent occurring during the first two months. Thus, in most herds the usual replacement rate ranges from 20 to 40 percent.

Results from research done on cow-calf operations in Arkansas

The objective of the Arkansas Beef Improvement Program (ABIP) is to demonstrate cost-effective beef cattle and forage management practices. One of the special ABIP projects is reducing the breeding and calving season. The purpose of the project was to document the beef cattle management changes necessary and the impact of those changes when changing from a yearlong calving program to a 90 day calving season. Listed below is the summary of actual Arkansas cow-calf information where calving seasons were reduced.

**Farm Summary 1**

In the first year of the project, the calving season was 10 months long. The producer’s goal was to reduce the calving season to January, February and March. This was accomplished where 100 percent of the cows were calving in the desired calving season in four years. Other results are:

- Calving interval decreased from over 400 days to less than 340 days
- Herd size increased by 47 percent due to better utilization of the land resources
- Total pounds of beef sold increased by 11,673 pounds
- Cost per cow decreased by 52%

**Farm Summary 2**

This producer wanted to reduce the calving season from 10 months to 90 days. His goal was to calve 100 percent of the cows from January 1 to March 31. This was accomplished in three years. Other results are:

- Gross income per cow increased 39%
- With an off-farm job, more flexibility with his time was achieved

**Farm Summary 3**

This producer started with a calving season of 170 days and wanted to reduce it to 60 days from February 1 to March 30. This was accomplished in four years. Other results are:

- Cow numbers increased by 11%
- Total pounds of beef sold increased by 10%

All three of these farms were able to successfully establish a plan to reduce the length of the calving season and improve their cattle operation for future profits.

Written by: Tom R. Troxel, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist - University of Arkansas & Revised by: Lindsey Wiggins
C.O.O.L. is coming

The Farm Bill was passed and COOL will be implemented in the near future. There is no information available at this time as to when ranchers need to be in compliance or what equipment (EID tags, panel tags, records, etc.) will be required. You can rely on your extension agent to provide you with the latest news about this issue. I will send a mailing when the rules have been created and will make myself available for your assistance.

Note: This newsletter can also be found (in color) at: http://hendry.ifas.ufl.edu. Under the Agriculture list on the left side of the screen, find & click on Livestock. Current and previous newsletters will be posted regularly. Also, if you would like to receive an electronic copy of “Bovine Headlines”, via e-mail - call Lindsey @ (863)674-4092.