News From the Bullpen

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February - 2002

Calendar Of Events

January

17	19th Annual Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show - Kissimmee
18	Florida Association of Livestock Markets Annual Meeting
18-20	Breeding Management Short Course - Gainesville
29	Pesticide Applicator Certification "Core" course - registration at 8:00 a.m., class 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and test given at 2:00 p.m., CEU's will be offered

February

04	Pesticide Applicator Certification "Training" - registration at 8:00 a.m., class 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and test given at 2:00 p.m., CEU's will be offered
08-17	Highlands County Fair, Sebring
12-14	FCA Legislative Quarterly Meeting Tallahassee, FL
19	E-Mail & Internet for Ranchers, Arcadia
21	E-Mail & Internet for Ranchers, Sebring

March	
14	Herd Health Program, Wauchula

E-mail and Internet Access for Cattlemen

Do you have any questions on using E-mail? At 5:00 p.m. on February 21, 2002, we will have a workshop on "Using E-mail in Agricultural Production". The session will be held in Conference Room 2 of the AgriCivic Center in Sebring. The use of Outlook and Eudora Light will be the focus. We will be covering such items as file attachments, address books, digital cameras along with many other aspects of use of e-mail. This will be targeting new and inexperienced users of e-mail and computers in general. Individuals with intermediate experience with these programs, may or may not find this training useful. Same session will be offered in Arcadia at 5:00 p.m. on February 19, in the Family Service Center, room 5.

Establishing Nematodes for Mole Cricket Control

The University of Florida holds a patent for the sale of mole cricket nematodes (Steinernema scapterisci (Ss)) for the control of Tawny mole crickets. MicroBio, a subsidiary of Berker Underwood of Ames, Iowa, has been granted exclusive rights to mass produce and market the nematode. Nematodes should be available under the name "Nematac S" in spring of 2002. The shelf life of Ss nematode is only two months, so orders placed through selected local vendors will be shipped directly from Berker Underwood to customers for field application, probably by trained custom applicators.

The Mole Cricket Task Force, consisting of personnel of the University of Florida-Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Florida Department of Primary Industries, MicroBio and stakeholders from the cattle, turf, and golf industries, have initiated 25 field research/demonstration projects to test the efficacy and rate of spread of the nematode on pasture when applied in strips. The standard application rate of nematodes is one billion/A, but stripping allows for significant reduction in quantity applied/A. At the Mole Cricket Control Demonstration in November on the Kea-Bo Ranch I had the opportunity to see "Nematac S" applied at a 1/8 rate. To do this a modified five-foot wide no-till planted was used. The planter was driven on "rows" spaced at 40 foot intervals - achieving a 1/8 application rate.

The recommended application for golf courses ($200/A, one billion nematodes) can be substantially reduced to $20-30/A using strip application on pasture. Field application cost would run similar to a bush-hog operation of $5 to10/A. For proper control, nematodes should be injected into the top inch of the soil, during the fall or spring adult mole cricket seasons, after a rainfall, at sundown, in areas where adult mole crickets are abundant.

We are seeking additional demonstration sites for Highlands County that will be treated this spring show handling, mixing, and application techniques. Please contact me to participate in a 25-acre study.

Copies of the fact sheet *Biological Control of Pasture Mole Crickets with Nematodes* and further information is obtainable at the Highlands County Extension Office and on University of Florida's Electronic Digital Information Service (EDIS) webpage found at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/.

TINY LIVESTOCK or It's a lousy world

The cattle tail louse is the most important damaging louse in Florida. The cattle tail louse is a blood-sucking louse, and extensive infestations may cause anemia in cattle. Infested cattle show poor condition, slower weight gain, low vitality, and reduced milk production. Heavy infestations of sucking lice can cause abortion and anemia in animals.

Adult populations of more than five (5) lice will cause economic damage to cattle. Tail louse control can be readily achieved by timed treatments or self-treatment with proper insecticides.

Although tail lice may be present year-round, certain times of the year are preferable for treatment. From early spring to fall are good treatment times. Proper control procedures in the fall will prevent the winter buildup of eggs and subsequent damage when the nymphs emerge. Early spring applications will control the damaging emergence of nymphs from the overwinter build-up of eggs as well as aiding in horn fly control. Midwinter spray treatments are not economically feasible since the population is generally in the egg stage and will not be killed by an insecticide application.

Late spring and summer continued use of dust bags will give excellent control of tail lice as well as horn flies. This optimum timing of proper pesticides can result in the control of more than one pest for the cost of controlling one species. The cost of using a dust bag ranges from .01 to .003 $/day/animal.

Source: *Management of External Parasites with Forced-Use Dust Bags* by P. G. Koehler and J. F. Butler

Web Sites of Interest

Listed here are several web sites that may prove of interest to you.

- South Florida Beef/Forage Program web site is located at: http://ifas.ufl.edu/~sfbfp/beef.html. This page also contains links to many beef related sites.
- IFAS Florida Automated Weather Network (FAWN) site is located at: http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu/.
- National Cattlemen's Beef Association which is located at: http://beef.org.
- Florida Cattlemen's Association web site at: http://www.floridacattlemen.org/.
- Arcadia State Livestock Auction Market Report at: http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/OR_LS766.txt.
- University of Florida's Electronic Digital Information Service (EDIS) webpage. http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/

E-mail: I usually check my e-mail twice a day and I can be reached by E-mail at gamikulecky@mail.ifas.ufl.edu.

Beef Management Calendar

January

- Apply lime for summer crops. (See Extension Publication Liming for Production of Forage Crops in Florida) (Check soil pH and apply lime according to soil analysis - soil sample kits are available in the Extension Office.)
- Check for lice and treat if necessary.
- Control weeds in cool season pastures. (See Extension Publication WEEDS IN THE SUNSHINE: Weed Management In Pastures and Rangeland - 2002)

(Pesticide Applicator training available at Highlands County Extension Office, see calendar)
- Begin grazing winter clover pastures when approximately 6 inches high. Rye should be 12-18 inches high.
- Check mineral feeders.
- Put bulls out for October calving season.
- Make up breeding herd lists if using single sire herds.
- Watch for calf scours.
- Give bulls extra feed and care so they will be in condition for breeding season.
- Make sure cow herd has access to adequate fresh water.
- Buy only performance tested bulls with superior records.
- Get taxes filed. (Remember the government only wants what it is owed - it's up to you to calculate the taxes owed.)
- Discuss herd health with your veterinarian and outline a program for the year. Review herd health program with your veterinarian regularly.
- Carry a pocket notebook to record heat, breeding abnormalities, discharges, abortions, retained placentas, difficult calvings and other data.
- Observe cow herd for calving difficulties.
- Watch for grass tetany on winter pastures.
- Increase magnesium levels in mineral mixes if grass tetany has been previous problem (if you are not already using a high magnesium mineral).
- Examine bulls for breeding soundness and semen quality prior to the breeding season.
- Vaccinate cows and heifers against vibriosis and leptospirosis prior to the breeding season.

February

- Top dress winter forages, if needed.
- Check and fill mineral feeders.
- Put bulls out with breeding herd.
- Work calves (identify, implant with a growth stimulant, vaccinate, etc.).
- Make sure lactating cows are receiving an adequate level of energy.
- Watch calves for signs of respiratory diseases.
- Cull cows that failed to calve while prices are seasonally up.
- Check for lice and treat if needed.

March

- Prepare land for summer crops.
- Begin grazing warm season permanent pastures.
- Check and fill mineral feeder.
- Observe bulls for condition and success. Rotate and rest if needed.
- Deworm cows as needed.
- Make sure calves are healthy and making good weight gains.
- Hang forced-use dust bags by April 1st for external parasite control or use insecticide impregnated ear tags.
- Identify, vaccinate, implant, and work late calves.
- Put bulls out March 1st for calving season to start December 9.
- Remove bulls March 22nd to end calving season January 1.

For further information about material in this newsletter phone: 863-402-6540 or E-mail: Gary Mikulecky
County Extension Director & Livestock Agent III

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