

News From the Bullpen



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*"The Mind is Like a Parachute;
it works much better when it's open" -unknown*

DEAR CATTLEMEN:

Please find included in this issue of Bullpen information about the following:

1. Beef Cattle Herd Health Management Seminar
2. The Beef Checkoff
3. Body Condition Scoring & Stocking Rate Program
4. Winter Supplementation Seminar
5. Saw Palmetto Symposium
6. FCA Heifer Sale
7. Cattle Pest Control & Health Program

Hope you find something of benefit to you.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Hogue

County Extension Director/Livestock

1. [Beef Cattle Herd Health Management Seminar - July 20, 1999](#)

The South Florida Beef-Forage Program agents will be holding a Beef Cattle Herd Health Management Seminar, Tuesday, July 20, 1999 at the Agri-Civic Center in Wauchula. Dr. Anthony Weirather will be discussing a practical herd health program for South Florida ranchers beginning at 4:00 p.m.. Dr. Mark Davis will then discuss Trichomoniasis and Mr. Lockie Gary will talk about Fly Control and it's economic benefits. Dinner will be served at the end of the program, and you need to call in reservation to Lockie Gary at the Hardee County Extension Office, 941-773-2164, if you plan to attend.

"A Committee is twelve Men doing the Work of One."-John F. Kennedy

2. The Beef Checkoff: Is It Working for you!

Well the debate and questions about the Beef Checkoff appears to be heating up and petitions are apparently being dispersed for producers to sign, and I thought it appropriate to reprint an article about the checkoff that I wrote a few months ago. I believe this is a subject and a cause that every beef cattle producer needs to consider very carefully and thoroughly, and don't be drawn in one direction or another by emotion, but by fact.

*"Nothing in Life is to be Feared,
It is only to be understood." -Marie Curie*

3. [Body Condition Scoring and Stocking Rate Program - August 26, 1999](#)

The South Florida Beef-Forage Program agents will be holding a Body Condition Scoring and Stocking Rate program beginning at 3:00 p.m. at the Hardee County Agri-Civic Center in Wauchula. This should be an excellent program on body condition scoring and using BCS to help guide and determine stocking rates. Hope to see you there.

Did you ever just wonder:

- Why does sour cream have an expiration date?
- If the universe is everything, and scientists say that the universe is expanding, what is it expanding into?

-If vegetarians eat vegetables, what do humanitarians eat?
-Why do we wait till a pig is dead to cure it?

4. [Beef Cattle Winter Supplementation Seminar - September 16, 1999](#)

It's never too soon to begin thinking about your supplementation program for your cow herd for winter, and to assist you, the South Florida Beef-Forage Program agents will be holding a Beef Cattle Winter Supplementation Seminar September 16, 1999 at Ken Clark Auditorium in Sarasota beginning at 4:00 p.m.. Energy vs protein, use of liquid feeds, supplementing alternatives, and the use of forages for supplementation will be some of the topics discussed. Dinner will be provided courtesy of U S Sugar Corp. and reservations should be called in by Sept. 9th to either Highlands Co. Extension office or to Jennifer Myers in the Sarasota County Extension Office.

5. Saw Palmetto Symposium - August 11, 1999

This years Saw Palmetto Symposium will be held at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center in Immokalee. Please note that RSVP needs to be done by August 4th if you plan to attend.

6. [FCA Heifer Sale - October 1, 1999](#)

Just a reminder that the years Florida Cattlemen's Association Quality Commercial Heifer Sale will be held at the Hardee Livestock Market in Wauchula, Friday, October 1, 1999. Mark your calendar if you plan on attending and buying, and if you are considering selling heifers in this sale, contact the FCA office (407) 846-6221 to get the informational brochure and registration information.

7. Cattle Pest Control & Health Program - August 26, 1999

The Highlands County Cattlemen's Association in cooperation with the Extension Office will hold an Animal Health and Pest (worm, flukes, flies) Control in a cattle program for county producer, Thursday evening, August 26, 1999. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium at the Agri-Civic Center, Sebring and will be sponsored by Life Services and Merial. Dinner will be served as part of the program and reservations should be made by calling the County Extension Office by Friday August 20th. More information about speakers will be forthcoming as they are finalized.

The Beef Checkoff: Is It Working for you!

Since 1987 cattle producers across the nation have participated in the \$ 1 per head Beef Promotion Checkoff as a means to promote their product and fund research projects beneficial to the beef cattle industry. As most of you may know, the Livestock Marketing Association is now asking for a new referendum to decide whether to continue the Beef Checkoff. Petitions are going to have to be signed by enough producers across the US including Florida in order for another referendum to be considered. As one who believes strongly that the Beef Checkoff is one of the best things the collective beef industry has done for itself, I would urge you to look at the issue carefully before considering signing a petition to put this to another vote. Consider whether the \$1 per head has had a beneficial effect, or whether you believe it is just one more dollar out of your pocket. It may be time to consider alternatives to the collection methods currently in place, but I submit that if \$1 per head contributes to unprofitability it may be time to consider doing something else other than beef cattle production.

Several analyses of the Beef Checkoff have been done and have reached the conclusion that it is working for numerous reasons, but a recent research project conducted by Dr. Ron Ward, Professor of Economics at the University of Florida, IFAS, Food and Resource Economics Dept. actually was able to reach monetary conclusions as to whether the Checkoff was working for the beef industry or not. The public relations and advertising campaigns funded by the checkoff have improved the image of the beef industry as a whole, and has increased the demand for beef by consumers when other influences on the market are eliminated. We have lost market share with consumers to chicken and pork, but without the checkoff and the ad campaign it funds, we would have lost more. Although the servings of beef per household member by consumers has dropped by one serving since 1984, when the number of servings is calculated out to pounds of beef consumed, there is actually an half pound gain realized because of increased production and the increased demand created by the checkoff.

Research and public relations efforts funded by the checkoff have dispelled the negative image about health problems created by consuming beef, and have dispelled myths about other health related issues and beef such as *E. Coli* and BSE.

Foreign marketing efforts funded by the Beef Checkoff have resulted in increased sales and demand for US beef and beef products in numerous foreign countries.

In the final analysis, Dr. Wards research shows that additional demand for beef produced in the US both at home and abroad resulting from efforts funded by the Beef Checkoff have ultimately resulted in higher prices for both live and fed cattle than would have been received without the checkoff efforts. Although the fed cattle has had a slightly greater benefit in prices than the live markets, based on the economical analysis done by Dr. Ward, the Checkoff has resulted in about \$ 6 per head additional income for 500 pound calves. Although \$ 6 doesn't seem like much, consider that it only took a \$1 investment to get that additional income. Is the \$1 investment worth getting \$6 back? You will each have to be the judge of that but also consider all the advertisement you see about beef today compared to before the Checkoff and all the positive impact it has made for the industry and your way of life. I can only believe that there has been nothing but positive effects for the beef industry, and if we do away the checkoff where will the money come from to continue to compete with pork and chicken and the public relations efforts they have ongoing. We can't afford to lose more market share to them, and we're the only ones who will tell the beef story but the funding has to be available to do it.

And one final point, USDA estimates that if enough signatures are gathered to force a referendum, it would cost somewhere between \$3 and \$4 million in physical costs of registration, communication with producers, and voting to conduct the referendum. This does not include the cost of staff and volunteer time that will need to be spent dealing with the referendum, and the total cost will have to be paid by Checkoff dollars. The nearly \$4 million estimate is as much or more that was spent developing foreign markets in 1997.

Dr. Wards as well as the other articles evaluating the checkoff are available for viewing on the National Cattlemen's Beef Association home page at <http://www.beef.org>.



For questions or comments regarding this publication contact

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