

MANATEE LIVESTOCKER

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Calendar Of Events

February, 2000

25	Equipment Field Day, Lake Wales, FL
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March, 2000

14-16	FCA Legislative Quarterly, Tallahassee
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31	State Soil Judging Contest, Manatee County
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April, 2000

9-14	Young Cattlemens Tour, Kissimmee
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15	Feeder Packer Seminar and Games, Sebring
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25-27	South Florida Beef Agents Reproduction and Palpation School. Three day school held in Wauchula. Sign-up early. Cost is \$250.00
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May, 2000

3-5	University of Florida Cattlemens Short Course, Gainesville
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8-12	Florida International Ag. Trade Show, Ocala Florida
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June, 2000

1	Range Cattle REC Field Day, Ona Florida
27-30	Cattlemens Convention, Marco Island

USDA EQUIP Program

The popular Environmental Quality Incentive Program is ready to take applications for the year 2000. This program has been used by Manatee County farmers to improve old irrigation systems, install cross fences, replant pastures, control exotic weeds such as cogon grass and tropical soda apple and recover irrigation water. This EQIP program is available to persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, hayland, sod, nursery operations and other non-urban lands.

To participate in this program you must apply to the USDA Farm Service Agency Office in Wauchula (telephone 863-773-4764). Applications will be accepted between February 14th and March 10th 2000.

Cost share money of up to \$50,000 is available for a minimum five year contract. The USDA will pay up to 75 percent of certain practices. The money is awarded to farmers willing to install practices that give the most environmental benefit for the least amount of money. Practices must be installed according to USDA specifications.

Throughout the state priority areas have been established. The portions of Manatee County that drain into Tampa Bay are within the Tampa Bay Priority Area. Portions of Manatee County that drain into Charlotte Harbor (Myakka River) are within the Charlotte Harbor Priority Area. Farmers do not compete to get in the program with farmers from outside their own priority area.

For more information, contact the USDA/NRCS or the Manatee Soil and Water Conservation District staff at 941-907-0011.

Grazing Management of Perennial Grasses

Most of our improved perennial pasture grasses need extra attention in late winter and early spring. When warm weather arrives, these grasses need time to grow new roots and rebuild energy reserves in the crown and roots. Allowing the plants to rebuild and attain a healthy condition permits them to better withstand any stress that might come along during the remainder of the growing season.

In some pastures, the grass will have been grazed down to the ground by mid February or earlier. Although bahiagrass can withstand a certain amount of overgrazing, other grasses cannot. When warm weather arrives and the grass starts to regrow, cattle should be removed from these pastures and kept off until the grass has fully recovered.

Floralta and Bigalta Limpograss (hemarthria) are susceptible to overgrazing, especially the Bigalta cultivar. Therefore, cattle should be removed from these pastures once they are grazed down during the winter. Cattle

should not be put back in until the regrowth is 14 to 16" tall. Then rotational grazing can be started with cattle being removed when the grass has been grazed to an 8' stubble height.

If grazed close during the winter, Pangola and the other digitgrasses should also be allowed to regrow to a height of 10 to 12". Rotational grazing can then be started with cattle being removed from a pasture (rotated) when the grass has been grazed down to a height of 4 to 6". In mid-summer, these pastures need a minimum of one week and preferable three weeks rest between grazing periods. Three to four weeks of rest between grazing periods is needed before and after mid-summer.

Allow stargrass to regrow to a height of 10 to 14" and then graze back to a 5" stubble before rotating cattle. If grazing is needed before the desired height is reached, follow the old rule of thumb "take half, leave half."

In general, it is always desirable to have pasture size and cattle numbers adjusted so that a pasture can be grazed off in one week or less.

REPLACEMENT HEIFERS

by **Lochrane A Gary**

Replacement heifers, their selection and development is the key to reproductive performance. The second most important management step is to keep heifers growing after weaning. Most important is the emphasis on skeletal growth during and after weaning. Heifers need to weigh approximately 65% of their expected mature weight at the beginning of the breeding season.

Heifers selected for breeding should be born during the first half of the calving season. These heifers should be older, heavier and out of the more fertile cows. They should have a better chance of reaching puberty and conceiving early. Select at least 50% more heifers to breed than needed for replacements. Not all will become pregnant and you won't be happy with all that do.

Breed heifers to a bull known to sire small calves at birth. A live calf in the weaning pen is far better than a calving problem which may result in a crippled or stunted heifer or worse. The performance of a first-calf heifer is a reliable indication of her future usefulness. During the first production cycle, the most important factor is for a heifer to produce a live calf and breed back within 90 days.

Must Do's During The Breeding Season

- Keep a vigilant eye on cows to see if they are cycling. Observe bulls closely to insure that they are getting the cows bred. Remove crippled bulls and replace immediately.
- Monitor pastures closely to keep cows distributed over feed resources. Nutrient levels must be kept high. Cattle cannot be expect to become pregnant on fresh air and sunshine.
- Keep the mineral box fresh at all times.
- Every cow that has lost a calf or did not calve should be marketed immediately. Why keep a loser?

Are You Kidding Me?

Things That Make You Go Hmm

What do chickens think people taste like?

Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?

If you take an Oriental person and spin him around a few times will he become disoriented?

What hair color do they put on the drivers' license of a bald man?

When dog food is new and improved tasting, who tests it?

Why do they sterilize the needle for a lethal injection?

Why is it called tourist season if we can't shoot at them?

University of Florida Beef Cattle Short Course

This Short Course will be a full two and a half days, featuring 15 nationally recognized professionals from various parts of the United States. This Short Course is one that everyone involved in the Beef Cattle Industry will want to attend.

For further information, contact Travis Seawright at 941/722-4524 ext. 236, or your local Farm Service Agency.

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



[Travis Seawright](#)



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