

# MANATEE LIVESTOCKER

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*January / February 2002*

## *Calendar Of Events*

### **February**

12-14	FCA Legislative Quarterly Meeting Tallahassee, FL
19	E-Mail & Internet for Ranchers, Arcadia Family Service Center, 310 West Whidden St, RM 5 – 5:30 to 7:00 PM
20	E-Mail & Internet for Ranchers, Sarasota Twin Lakes Park, Clark Rd, Room C, 5:30 to 7 PM
21	E-Mail & Internet for Ranchers, Sebring, Highlands County Agri-Civic Center, 4509 W. George Blvd., Conference RM 2, 5:30 to 7:00 PM

### **March**

14	Herd Health Program, Wauchula
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### **April**

16-18	Reproductive Management School, Wauchula
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### **May**

1-3	Beef Short Course, Gainesville
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## 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.

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](http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/OR_LS766.txt)

University of Florida's Electronic Digital Information Service (EDIS) webpage. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

## Beef Management Calendar

### 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.

## Size is Important When Breeding Yearling Heifers

A goal of many Florida cattlemen is to successfully breed yearling heifers to calve at two years of age, and breed them back to calve again at three years of age. This gives an additional calf in the lifetime of producing females in comparison to breeding heifers first at two years of age. In Florida we have to overcome three major hurdles to accomplish this goal.

First, the tropical grasses used in Florida do not provide the energy needed to obtain the necessary weight gains required of heifers from weaning until they are exposed to bulls at 15 months of age. Second, the breeding season most used in south Florida is from early winter to early spring when the quantity and quality of tropical grass pastures are most limiting. Third, the Brahman genetics needed in cattle production in south Florida produce good, fast growing females that tend to be late maturing, thus slow breeders.

It is difficult to breed yearling heifers and get them rebred after calving under the above conditions. To accomplish this goal heifers require the best pasture available and liberal amounts of supplemental energy and protein. Supplementation must be initiated at weaning and fed through the following breeding season. Heifers then must be fed energy and protein supplement from the time they calve until they are bred back to conceive their second calf. These cows will require special nutrition after dropping their second calf and rebred at three years of age.

Here are some targets to obtain for a successful yearling heifer breeding program. Heifers should weigh 450 (light mature weight cattle) to 500 pounds or more at weaning. Heifers should obtain 65% of their mature weight when exposed to bulls for the first time. For example, Angus heifers should weigh 600 to 650 pounds or more, while Brangus heifers need to weigh 700 to 750 pounds or more when exposed to bulls.

After breeding, heifers should be managed to gain 1.0 to 1.25 pound per day and have a 6.0 or better body condition score at calving. Heifers should maintain the above body weight and condition score until rebred for their second calf.

A yearling heifer breeding program is expensive, but it can be profitable, especially with good feeder calf prices. However, cattlemen must realize that it is a two to three year program and they must make a commitment to provide good quality pasture and liberal amounts of concentrate supplement to ensure success.

**SOURCE: Findlay Pate, Range Cattle REC, Ona, Florida**

**Published in "The Peace River Farmer and Rancher" – January 2002**

## Florida is Officially Free of Brucellosis: USDA

Here's good news for Florida's 20,000 cattle operations, about 98 percent of which are owned by small farmers. The Agriculture Department declared Florida free of brucellosis earlier this month, and it lifted certain restrictions on the interstate movement of cattle from that state.

Brucellosis class-free status will enhance the national and international marketability of beef from that state, according to a news release. The status hinges on finding no cases of brucellosis in cattle and bison for 12 months.

Florida has not discovered any infected herds in more than 12 months and has met all other requirements of the cooperative state-federal brucellosis eradication program for class-free status. It joins 47 other states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in achieving brucellosis class-free status.

The presence of brucellosis has cost the federal government, states and the livestock industry billions of dollars in production losses, eradication costs and lost or unrealized export markets. As long as the disease is present in the United States, it poses a threat to the \$53 billion U.S. beef industry, the news release added.

Brucellosis is a highly contagious disease of cattle causing abortions and lowered milk production. In humans, the disease causes severe flu-like symptoms that can last for months or years if left untreated.

**SOURCE: Bryan Salvage – Meatingplace.com – Release – December 17, 2001**

## ULTRASOUND – MEASUREMENT OF CARCASS TRAITS

Ultrasound scanning allows the measurement of back fat, loin eye area and marbling in live cattle. This opens the door for the collection of carcass data on a larger segment of sires in the purebred population.

The principal deterrent to improving carcass traits in registered cattle has been the lack of adequate carcass data to generate breeding values for carcass traits on a significant proportion of the sires. Now that we can use ultrasound to generate a substantial database from which to calculate breeding values for carcass traits of more sires, rapid genetic progress in carcass quality will follow.

### BACKGROUND

Ultrasound has been used to estimate muscle and fat measurements in cattle for over 30 years. However, marked improvements in the portability and image resolution of the current generation of ultrasound equipment, along with interfacing with computer-assisted image analysis have finally brought ultrasound technology to the point of practical application. The three carcass measures that ultrasound systems have been adapted to estimate in live animals are back fat (BF), loin eye area (LEA) and marbling (MARB).

**BACK FAT THICKNESS:** Subcutaneous fat thickness between the 12th and 13th rib over the longissimus muscle is the most common measure of subcutaneous fat on a carcass. The BF thickness is directly related to the carcass yield grade. Most reports indicate that ultrasonic determination of BF is accurate to within .1 in. of the actual measure in >70% of the animals scanned.

**LOIN EYE AREA:** The cross-sectional area of the longissimus dorsi muscle at a point between the 12th and 13th rib is the most common carcass measure of muscle thickness. LEA is used in the calculation of yield grade.

Ultrasound estimation of LEA is more difficult than the estimation of BF because of the two-dimensional nature (length, depth). The most recent data indicates that the average absolute difference between ultrasound estimates and carcass measures of LEA is less than 1 in 2.

**MARBLING:** The intramuscular fat in longissimus muscle of ribbed carcasses is the principal determinant of USDA quality grade in cattle slaughtered at less than 30 months of age.

The most recent advance in ultrasound technology has been in computer-aided analysis of longitudinal images of the longissimus muscle to estimate intramuscular fat. Three quarters of the ultrasound measurements of intramuscular fat are within 1.5% of the actual fat value.

The technology to measure marbling is still emerging. Nonetheless, direct measurement of BF or LEA and current prediction models for MARB via ultrasound are adequate to calculate reliable breeding values when large numbers of cattle are scanned. It is likely that this method of collecting carcass information will quickly replace the traditional "kill data" collected on carcasses at slaughter plants.

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For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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