

# MANATEE LIVESTOCKER

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*July / August 2000 - VOL. 3-00*

## *Calendar Of Events*

### **August 2000**

29	1st Annual Pasture Pest Program - Arcadia
30	Florida Cattlemens Quarterly Meeting - Okeechobee

### **September 2000**

6	Regional Training For Best Management Practices For Cow/Calf Operations: Bartow, Extension Office - 1 to 7 PM
7	Regional Training For Best Management Practices For Cow/Calf Operations: Moore Haven, Connor Center - 1 to 7 PM
21	Florida Equine Institute & Trade Show - Ocala
28-29	Agriculture Labor Relation Forum - Orlando

### **October 2000**

2	Brangus Bull Sale
6	FCA Quality Replacement Heifer Sale

## Tidbit of Trivia:

- What is the only vegetable or fruit is never sold in any form other than fresh ??
- What fruit has it's seed on the outside ??
- What color is pure water ??

## Beef Cattle Management Calendar

### August

- Apply lime for fall and winter crops.
- Harvest Bahiagrass seed.
- Check mineral feeder
- Update market information and marketing plans.
- Check for army worms, spittlebugs, and mole crickets, and treat if necessary.
- Check dust bags.
- Wean calves and cull cow herd.
- Watch for evidence of abortions.
- Observe animals regularly for signs of disease.
- If cattle grubs were found on cattle last winter or heel flies were observed in the pasture, treat for cattle grubs this month.
- Pregnancy test and cull open heifers from replacement herd.

### September

- Heavily graze pastures to be interplanted to cool season pastures.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for mole crickets, spittlebugs, and grassloopers, and treat if necessary.
- Check dust bags.
- Wean calves and cull cow herd if not already done. Remove open, unsound poor producing or overage cows.
- Train cowboys to observe normal and abnormal behavior and signs of disease.
- Be sure any replacement purchases are healthy and have been calthood vaccinated for brucellosis.
- September or October is a good time to deworm the cow herd if internal parasites are a problem.
- When replacement heifers are weaned, give them required vaccinations and teach them to eat - then put them on a good nutrition program.
- Determine bull replacement needs, develop selection criteria, and start checking availability of quality animals.
- Review winter feed supply and feeding plans so that needed adjustments can be made before supplies tighten and prices rise.

## Summer Annuals For Hay?

Producers occasionally ask about choices for a summer hay crop that can be grown on cultivated land. Various crops could be used such as pearl millet or sorghum x sudangrass, japanese or brown top millet crabgrass, and perhaps rhodesgrass, cowpeas and alyceclover. Those attempting to grow pearl millet or sorghum x sudangrass for hay should be aware that their large stems make drying difficult. A hay conditioner that crushes or breaks the stems will be needed. Alyceclover may be the best choice. Following a highly

fertilized crop, such as watermelons or other vegetables on well-drained soils, alyceclover produces excellent quality forage that may be grazed or harvested as hay. This summer annual legume should be planted between April 15 and June 30 at the rate of 12 to 15 pounds of seed per acre. Seed are usually broadcast and covered with a cultipacker or planted with a grain drill that has a small seed box and covered to a depth of 1/4 to 1/2 inch. Fertilize and lime according to soil test recommendations. If alyceclover is planted immediately following a highly fertilized crop, it may not be necessary to add lime or fertilizer. Do not plant alyceclover on land known to be infested with rootknot nematodes, since alyceclover is susceptible to this pest. Do not plant alyceclover (intended for hay harvest) on land infested with coffeeweed. Coffeeweed is toxic to livestock. Herbicides are not available that will remove coffeeweed from alyceclover. If the coffeeweed were to grow taller than the alyceclover (which is not likely), it might be possible to remove it with a weed wiper and Roundup.

## Poisonous Plants

Due to the April/May drought, many pastures are no longer providing grazing. Animals are hungry and may tend to eat plants that they would not normally eat. In low wet areas around the edges and within somewhat open woodlands, the plant "bracken fern" can often be found growing. This plant is poisonous to cattle. Producers should be especially careful if they are moving cattle into new areas, such as into the woods. These areas should be checked for bracken fern and other poisonous plants. If bracken fern is found, do not put animals into these areas or at least observe the grazing habits of the cattle to see if they are eating the fern. A couple of other poisonous plants to watch for are lantana and wild cherry. When the summer rain pattern starts, afternoon thundershowers with accompanying wind gusts may blow down wild cherry trees that are growing in the fence rows. Cattle will tend to eat the leaves which are poisonous.

## Producing High Quality Grass Hay

Crude protein and total digestible energy (TDN) are the two most important criteria used in determining hay quality. Stage of maturity at harvest is the most important factor influencing hay quality. As plants increase in age, crude protein and digestible energy concentration decrease. The improved hybrid bermudagrasses and stargrasses should be harvested at 15 - 18 inches for the first cutting and then cut every 4 to 5 weeks. During mid summer, some producers are harvesting stargrass for silage every three weeks to produce feed that has a protein concentration of 15 percent or greater and a relatively high TDN.

All hay equipment should be serviced and repaired before the hay season begins. A breakdown during harvest almost guarantees rain damage to the hay. Rain leaches soluble nutrients from the grass. It prevents the grass from drying quickly and thus, increases respiration loss and the possibility of mold. Respiration is the breakdown of sugars, etc., in the plant. This process occurs in all living plants, and it continues after the plants are out. Respiration stops when the moisture content drops below 4(r/a. In Florida's climate, rain damage is difficult to avoid. Frequent thunder showers in the summer will usually hit one or more hay harvests. During the summer, if a suitable period of weather occurs for harvesting hay, and if the grass is long enough (15 inches), it may be wise to start harvesting even though the regrowth has not reached a 4 or 5 week schedule.

## New State Regulation of Equine Coggins Test

A Coggins is always required but no longer is it necessary to be notarized for movement or exhibition (horse shows, rodeos, etc.). However, an original or lab certified copy is still required for sales or change of

ownership.

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**For questions or comments regarding this publication contact**



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