



Polk Rancher

Beef and Forage Newsletter

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Summer is When Weeds and Pests Flourish in South Florida Pastures

This is the time of year when both weeds and pests reach their peak. There are several weeds and pests which need special management in the summer.

Smutgrass must be treated in the summer months when there is abundant soil moisture. Velpar is the chemical to use for smutgrass control at a rate of 1 pound or 1 quart per acre. The effectiveness of herbicide is much lower under dry conditions so it is best to apply following a heavy rain when pastures are damp or even wet. If you are one of the unlucky Polk County ranches and have some of the giant smutgrass variety you will need to apply 2 pounds or 2 quarts per acre for adequate control. Do not apply Velpar near or under oak or other desirable trees. Control is also enhanced when a .25% non-ionic surfactant is added. Grazing must be restricted from pastures treated for at least 37 days. Velpar will also do a good job controlling other annual weeds, so this chemical will really aid in restoring a weedy pasture.

Dogfennel can be controlled in early summer using Weedmaster applied at rate of 1 quart per acre. However, plants that are over 2 feet tall will not be adequately controlled using herbicide. If plants are taller than 2 feet, the combination of mowing and then spraying 18-24" regrowth is more effective. Mowing in late August during the "dog days" will also produce limited control for next year by reducing seed production from these annual weeds.

Prickly Pear Cactus is another weed which can be treated in the summer months. For spot control, mix a 20% Remedy and 80% diesel fuel. Since this mixture will tend to temporarily burn the surrounding grass, summer treatment will provide the fastest recovery period.

Blackberry briars are another summer pasture weed. Crosbow can be used for spot treatment in a

1-1.5% spray. Again the addition of .25% non-ionic surfactant will increase control. Both Crossbow and Weed master can injure limpgrass. And remember all of the recommended herbicides above can be very detrimental to citrus and other neighboring crops.

Armyworms reached record levels in the Southeast last year. Now is the time to begin checking your pastures and especially your hayfields for immature armyworms twice a week. When scouting, open up the grass with both hands and stay still to observe movement of the worms on the ground. Remember that the worms initially roll up when disturbed and take a minute or so to resume movement. It is recommended that you treat an area when 3 or more hair-like worms are counted in a square foot. If you find worms you can treat them with 1 quart per acre of Sevin. In Bermudagrass you may also apply Lannate which may provide better control. However it is very toxic to cattle so avoid possible spray drift on to areas where cattle are grazing or being fed. Lannate also has a 7 day grazing and a 3 day haying restriction. Methyl Parathion is a restricted use pesticide which is also labeled for armyworm control in pastures and has a 15 day grazing restriction.

The best time to apply is in the late evening because the spray is fresh for night feeding, the spray dries more slowly, less evaporation, and less UV light which breaks down insecticides. Worms should be treated while they are ½ to 1 inch long. If you wait until they are 1 ½ inches long they are going to be much harder to control and will stop feeding in 2- 3 days anyway. Remember that armyworms have a 30 day life cycle and the worm stage lasts 2-3 weeks. If you can treat the immature worms you can break the life cycle, but if worms are too large you are better off waiting 2-3 weeks and controlling immature worms of the next generation. These worms eat their body weight every 15 hours so don't wait too long before taking action. In most instances it is not economical to treat armyworms in grazing situations, but it may be the only solution in hay fields that have not grown enough for harvest. If your hayfield has enough grass to harvest, cutting down the field will also serve to control the majority of the worms.

Summer is the worst time for broadcasted fire ant control. If you are planning on treating fire ants wait until September or October when rainfall has decreased. If you decide to spot treat, apply Amdro around the mound in a one yard diameter circle, but do not kick or disturb the mound.

Mole crickets have hatched out and will be beginning to grow. Start looking for hot spots and prevent overgrazing of these areas. At this point we do not have a very affordable large scale control method for mole crickets so we just have to try and prevent over stressing sensitive areas. Prozap Bait can be applied at a rate of 10 pounds per acre for limited control of mole crickets in hot spots.

Spittlebug is another pest which attacks Bermudagrasses, rhodesgrass, limpgrass (hemarthria), and pangola. The adults are 3/8" long and are black with two orange lines across their backs. Spittle bugs are normally a problem in areas of densely matted, moist, overgrown areas being stockpiled for hay or fall grazing. Full utilization of the grass by haying, mowing, grazing or burning will control the nymph stage of spittle bugs by exposing them to heat and dryer conditions.

South Florida Beef-Forage Programs Set for This Summer and Fall

The South Florida Beef-Forage Program, a multi-county extension effort, will be providing series of beef cattle management programs in surrounding counties this summer and fall. A Herd Health Management Program will be held July 20 in Wauchula. August 26 is the date of a Stocking Rate Program also to be held in Wauchula. A Winter Supplementation Program will be held in Sarasota on September 16.

What are the diseases and parasites South Florida Ranchers need to be concerned with? What are the costs and benefits of a whole herd health program? When are the best times to control parasites and

vaccinate for disease prevention? These are the difficult questions many cattlemen are asking during these difficult times and that will be the focus of the Herd Health Management Program to be held at the Hardee County Agri-Civic Center in Wauchula from 4:00-7:00 PM.

Dr. Anthony Weirather, DVM, Polk City will discuss a reasonable herd health program for South Florida Ranchers and share his experiences controlling the most critical diseases affecting reproduction and calf performance. Dr. Mark Davis will follow with a discussion of the reproductive disease trichomoniasis and its affect on the breeding herd as well as control methods. Lockie Gary, Hardee County Livestock Agent will wind up the program with a discussion on whether or not fly control is cost effective. A dinner sponsored by Merial, makers of Ivomec, will follow and allow plenty of opportunity for interaction with the veterinarians and Extension agents on these issues. If you would like to attend please RSVP to Lockie Gary at 941-773- 2164 by July 15 so that we will have adequate food.

Do you have too many cows on your operation? How do you know and how should you establish the proper stocking rate? Would it be profitable to reduce the size of your herd? These are the questions that a Stocking Rate Program will address on August 26 at the Hardee County Agri-Civic Center in Wauchula from 1:30 to 6:00 PM.

Dr. Bill Kunkle, University of Florida Animal Science Department Nutrition Specialist, will lead a hands on body condition scoring exercise and discussion on timing and the use of this management tool to determine stocking rates and optimal production. John Earman, Vero Beach will demonstrate a computer program he has developed that allows cattlemen to determine impact of production changes on the profitability of a herd for up to 10 years. He will discuss how this tool might be used to determine what affects stocking rate changes would have on reproduction and total ranch performance. This is an excellent opportunity to get some tools to use to answer the difficult question of what is the optimum stocking rate for an individual operation. For more information and to RSVP contact Jim Selph at 941-993-4846 or Doug Mayo at 941-533-0765 by August 20.

The third program coming up in the next 3 months will focus on Winter Supplementation. Bill Kunkle and Findlay Pate, Ona Research and Education Center, will cover the types of feeding programs that are available in Florida and focus on the economic and nutritional value of each. They will compare liquid, by-product and commercially available feed sources. John Arthington, Ona REC, will demonstrate a free ration balancing program developed at Oklahoma State University and how it might be used by Florida cattlemen to determine which feeding programs best suit their needs and be able to determine the total cost of a winter feeding program. The program will be held in Sarasota at the Sarasota County Extension Office from 5:00 to 8:00 PM on September 16. For more information and to RSVP by September 10 contact Jennifer Myers at 941-316-1000 or Doug Mayo at 941-533- 0765.

Other programs coming later in the year will focus on bull selection, hay production, and the new Florida Cattlemen's Association's Best Management Practices for Water Quality.

World Feeder Bermudagrass: Is It Really as Good as the Promoters Say?

*Carrol Chambliss, University of Florida Forage Extension Specialist
and Paul Mislevy, Forage Agronomist Ona REC*

Several people have asked about a new Bermudagrass called "World Feeder". Dr Paul Mislevy had this grass in a test at the Ona Research Center for 6 years in comparison with Bermuda and stargrasses developed in the Southeast. The data in the following table shows the average yield and of the grasses

being harvested every 4 weeks from January through November.

Grass Yields & Quality at Ona REC			
	Tons/Acre	TDN	Crude Protein
Tifton 85 Bermuda	12.2	55-60 avg. 56	11-24% avg. 17%
Florona stargrass	11.2	53-60 avg. 55	11-21% avg. 15%
World Feeder	11.1	50-56 avg. 54	11-20% avg. 15%
Florakirk Bermuda	11.1	52-58 avg. 56	11-24% avg. 16%
Coastal Bermuda	10.9	51-57 avg. 54	11-21% avg. 15%
Florico Stargrass	10.8	55-59 avg. 57	11-23% avg. 15%
Coastcross Bermuda	10.5	52-60 avg. 57	13-22% avg. 17%
Pensacola Bahia	9.7	53-58 avg. 54	13-22% avg. 17%

These grasses were grown side by side with the same fertilizer and management. Three conclusions can be drawn from the study. 1) Protein levels were very similar for all varieties. 2) Tifton 85 clearly had the highest yield. 3) World Feeder Bermudagrass appears to be equal (but no better than) coastal for TDN, CP and yield.

From the data presented there seems to be no obvious advantage for World Feeder in hay production over varieties we already have available, but there are two real disadvantages. First, this is a patented product so you can not legally sell planting materials to other ranches. Second the cost of the planting material is substantially higher at \$650 per acre. The Ona Research Center sells small amounts of Bermuda and stargrass planting material (about five acres worth) for \$100 per acre with no restrictions for selling planting materials. It is possible this grass has some advantages under grazing, this study did not look at that aspect.

Vegetative Planting of Forage Grasses

Carrol Chambliss, University of Florida Forage Extension Specialist

In order to obtain good stands, Coastal Bermudagrass, Tifton 85, stargrasses, and other vegetatively propagated grasses require special attention. When preparing a seedbed, two factors are important: 1) dug sprigs or tops should be planted in moist soil and 2) the seed bed should be free of weeds.

There are four common reasons for stand failures: 1) planting in fields that have stands of other grasses (common bermudagrass), 2) using dried out sprigs or tops, 3) prolonged drought after planting, and 4) grazing before the grass is established. The planting material should be planted on a clean, moist seedbed that is free of other growing grasses. When planting tops, use mature grass 8 to 10 weeks old. Use fresh planting material with at least three nodes or joints. Plant sprigs or tops the same day they are harvested. Cover the planting material immediately or within 15 minutes after dropping on the soil surface. One week after planting spray the area with 1 quart per acre of Weedmaster on Bermuda and stargrasses and Banvel on Limpograss. Experience has shown that bermudagrass tops will dry out quicker than bermudagrass sprigs and quicker than tops of Pangola digitgrass. Packing or firming the soil around the planting material with a roller after it has been distributed and covered is very critical in maintaining adequate soil moisture in the soil surface and thus preventing the planting material from drying out and dying. Grass planted in the summer usually requires 90 days or more before it is established well enough for any type of harvest to be taken. If less than 100% stand establishment has occurred, caution should be exercised during the first year after planting to allow for complete stand development. In South Florida, try to complete summer plantings by August 30.

Prior to planting it is a good idea to take a soil test to determine the phosphorous (P) and potassium (K) level of the soil for fertilization after planting. A University of Florida soil test will also provide the lime requirement needed to reach the target pH for Bermuda and Stargrasses of 5.5 and for limpograss a pH of 5.0. For a soil testing kit contact the Extension Office.

Feeding a High Selenium Mineral is Cheap Insurance for Cattle Performance

Findlay Pate, Director of the Ona Research and Education Center

Florida grown forages and feeds normally contain low levels of selenium (Se). Se deficiency causes reduced growth and nutritional muscular dystrophy (white muscle disease) in calves and poor reproductive performance and retained placentas in breeding cows. One study showed that the average concentration of Se in Florida forages was 0.02 ppm and less than 0.05 ppm in another. A third study showed that grasses contained 0.07 ppm Se in the summer and 0.05 ppm Se in the winter. These levels are well below the 0.1 ppm of Se recommended in the diets of cattle. Dr. Lee McDowell obtained soil, forage and animal tissue samples from nine ranches throughout Florida. The results showed that Se was low in the soil and forage samples. There were also low levels of Se in hair and liver samples of cattle grazing these pastures, indicating the possibility of Se deficiency.

It is legal to supplement cows with up to 3 mg of Se per day, which is three times their requirements. This would be 0.002% Se in a mineral mix consumed at approximately 5 oz/cow/day (high intake mineral mix), or 0.005% Se in a mineral mix consumed at approximately 2 oz/cow/day (low intake mineral mix). The cost of supplementing 3 mg/cow/day of Se in a mineral mixture is 6 cents/cow/year, a low cost insurance policy. However, cattle grazing in Florida have not responded to injections of Se. Research has not shown a positive response to Se injections in calf weaning percentage or calf weaning weights.

Cattlemen should study the feed tag and monitor the intake of mineral mixture to make certain cattle consume adequate amounts of Se, and other minerals important to good beef production in Florida.

Forage Handbook Now Available from the University of Florida

The *Florida Forage Handbook* is a comprehensive guide for planting, managing, and harvesting forage crops for grazing, hay or silage. Written by the leading agronomists, soil scientists and cattle specialists at the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, this book is an excellent reference book for ranchers, dairymen and land managers. There are 33 chapters covering forage production, specific recommendations for more than 20 warm-season forages, 10 cool-season forages, all the basics for native-range management, specific sections for horse and dairy operations, weed and insect management guidelines and 30 color plates for forage identification.

With specific recommendations for forages adapted to Florida, the *Florida Forage Handbook* is an all-in-one manual for growing forage crops in our unique environment. To order a copy you can call IFAS publications at 800-226-1764 with a Visa or Master Card. Or mail a check payable to the University of Florida for \$14.60 (\$10 +\$4 shipping and \$.60 sales tax) to IFAS Publications PO Box 110011 Gainesville, FL 32611-0011. While your ordering, why not get a copy of the *Florida Cow-calf Management* handbook if you don't already have one.

Do You Have Crossbred Show Heifers or Steers

Due to the success of the Polk County Youth Fair Commercial Heifer Show there will be a number of 4-H and FFA members looking for top quality commercial heifers to show this year. Heifers for this year's show must have been born between October 97 and January 98 or October 98 through January 99. There will also be youth looking to purchase top quality steers to show again this year. If you have crossbred calves that are show quality contact the Doug Mayo or Janice Jackson at 533-0765 so that we can put together a directory for these youth.

Polk Junior Cattlemen are State Champs Again

For the second straight year, the Polk County Junior Cattlemen won the Team Marketing competition at the Florida Cattlemen's Convention at Marco Island. Travis Harrell, Bartow; Christi Shirah, Kathleen and Brandy Reis, Lakeland won first place with a marketing presentation on a herd of Hereford cattle. Special thanks goes to Crooked Lake Ranch for the use of their cow herd for the video used in the presentation. The other youth who competed in the quiz bowl came in 4th, but they too represented the county well. They were Marc Christ, Lakeland; Brandi Padgett; Lake Wales, Joey Varner; Lake Wales and Chris Cochrane, Ft. Meade. We have some hard working kids who will one day be the leaders of the cattle industry in Polk County.

Don't Forget the PCCA Dinner and Cattle Sale

The Polk County Cattlemen's Association will be holding their annual summer steak dinner on Thursday, July 22 at 7:00 PM at the Ag Center in Bartow. They will also be holding their annual Special Cattle Sale at the Cattlemen's Livestock Market in Lakeland on August 3rd. Cash prizes will again be awarded to the ranch who brings the most cattle-\$150, travels the farthest to the sale-\$100 and the highest price per pound-\$50. This sale is a major fund raiser for the association so save some cattle for this sale.



Are You Kidding Me?

A Cowboy's Guide to Life

Don't squat with your spurs on.

Don't never interfere with something that ain't botherin' you none.

The easiest way to eat crow is while it's still warm.

The colder it gets, the harder it is to swallow.

If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.

Never smack a man who's chewin' tobacco.

If it don't seem like it's worth the effort, it probably ain't.

The biggest liar you'll ever have to deal with, probably watches you shave his face in the mirror every morning.

Never ask a barber if he thinks you need a haircut.

If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.

Don't worry about bitin' off more'n you can chew.

Your mouth is probably a whole lot bigger'n you think.

Always drink upstream from the herd.

Generally, you ain't learnin' nothin' when your mouth is a-jawin'.

Tellin' a man to git' lost and makin' him do it are two entirely different propositions.

Trust everybody in the game, but always cut the cards.

If you're ridin' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there.

Good judgement comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgement.

When you give a lesson in meanness to a critter or a person, don't be surprised if they learn their lesson.

When you're throwin' your weight around, be ready to have it thrown around by somebody else.

Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier 'n puttin' it back.

The quickest way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back in your pocket.

Cow Slang

What do you call a cow who has given birth? - Decaffeinated

What do you call a cow with no legs? - Ground Beef

Why does a cow wear a bell? - Because her horns don't work

Sincerely,

**Doug Mayo
Livestock Extension Agent I**

Calendar Of Events

July

13-15	Forage and Pasture Management School, Sebring
14-16	National Junior Brahman Show, Tampa
20	Cattle Health Management Program, Wauchula
22	Polk County Cattlemen's Summer Dinner, Bartow

August

3	Polk County Cattlemen's Association Special Cattle Sale, Lakeland
10-12	Forage and Pasture Management School, Sebring
11	Palmetto Berry Field, Immokalee
26	Stocking Rate Program, Wauchula

September

16	Winter Supplementation Program, Sarasota
25	Florida Santa Gertrudis Association Bull & Female Sale, Bartow

October

1	FCA Replacement Heifer Sale, Wauchula
2-3	FCA Quarterly Meeting, Ft. Myers
4	Arcadia Brangus Bull Sale, Arcadia
14	Bull Selection Program, Wauchula
14	Braunvieh Association Bull Sale, Bartow
19-21	Sunbelt Ag Expo, Moultrie, GA
28	Hay Production Field Day, Palmetto

November

4	S.E. Hereford Association Pen Bull Sale, Bartow
11	Florida Angus Association Bull Sale, Bartow
11	Polk County Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting, Bartow
18	Southern Source Charolais Bull Sale, Bartow
19	Florida Brangus Breeders Association Bull Sale, Webster



For questions or comments regarding this publication contact [Doug Mayo](#)



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