

POLK COUNTY LIVESTOCK REPORT

Polk County Extension • University of Florida • IFAS • 1702 Highway 17 South • Bartow, FL

<http://polk.ifas.ufl.edu>

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If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by email or through both email and the U.S. mail, please email me at bccarlis@ufl.edu to let me know.

If you know fellow producers that are not receiving this newsletter, please share my contact information with them so that they may be added to the list.

If you have information that needs to be included in the newsletter, please let me know.

November-December 2007

Your County Agent

I am excited about the opportunity to work with the producers in Polk County. I am Bridget Carlisle and will be serving as your new Livestock Agent. I joined the Polk County Extension faculty in late August from Clay County where I served as a 4-H Agent. I am an alumnus of the University of Florida where I obtained my bachelor's degree in Animal Science and a master's degree in Extension Education. I have been with the UF Extension Service for over ten years.

I am thoroughly pleased to be here in Polk County and I would like to thank you, our producers and industry supporters, for giving me the opportunity to serve you.

This newsletter contains a lot of timely information and you will note a call from the South Florida Beef Forage (SFBF) Group and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to take part in the SFBF Survey and the Ag census. Please help the agriculture industry by making your number count. Do not forget to respond to the survey and the census.

I hope you find the information in this newsletter helpful. I look forward to meeting all of you and serving your livestock and forage production needs. Please feel free to give me a call at (863) 519-8677 x104, or drop by the office if you have any questions or just to say hello. And, lastly, have a warm and joyous Holiday Season!

Bridget Carlisle, Livestock Extension Agent

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Sign up deadline is Nov. 13

Submitted by Edward Sheehan, District Conservationist NRCS

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is now taking applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP is a voluntary program that provides assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air and related natural resources on their land. **November 13, 2007 is the last day applications will be considered for the current funding period.** Growers and Ranchers can sign-up for EQIP at their local NRCS office at the USDA service

center in their county. Growers must meet eligibility requirements.

Cattle producers can benefit from EQIP by installing conservation practices such as cross fencing, watering facilities, brush control and other conservation practices. Additionally, the control of invasive exotic species such as tropical soda apple, cogon grass and others may be eligible for cost-share assistance. The amount of cost-share depends on the species being treated. Addi-

tional practices may be eligible for cost-share payments.

All EQIP applications are evaluated based on a system which utilizes national, state and local priorities to rank the applications.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting your local NRCS office or visiting the national or state NRCS websites. They are: www.nrcs.usda.gov or www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov. The NRCS in Polk County can be reached at (863) 533-2051 ext. 3.

2007 Census of Agriculture

Report forms for the 2007 Census of Agriculture will be mailed to farm and ranch operators on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the option of filling out the Census online via a secure web site.

NASS will release Census data, in both electronic and print formats, beginning in February 2009. Detailed reports will be published for all counties, states and the nation.

The Census provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation. Through the Census, producers can show the nation the value and importance of agriculture and they can help influence decisions that will shape the future of American agriculture for years to come. By responding to the Census, producers are helping themselves, their communities and all of U.S. agriculture.

South Florida Beef-Forage Survey

Since its inception in 1985, the South Florida Beef Forage Group has surveyed beef producers about every five years to determine the beef production trends of South Florida. This information is used to help guide research and determine programming for IFAS/Extension & Research Faculty.

It is important that our results accurately reflect our producers large and small. The information will help me develop my program plan for Polk County livestock producers. I cannot do this accurately without your responses to the survey.

Approximately seventy-five producers will be randomly selected from Polk County to receive the survey in mid-January. I ask, if you receive one of these surveys, please take the time to complete your survey.



Feeding Your Herd Through the Winter

By Bridget Carlisle

Forages can provide much of the nutritional requirements of the cow herd. However, as nutritional quality and quantity decrease during the winter, and cow nutrient requirements increase, supplementation is an absolute must.

It is important that producers begin a supplementation program before it is too late. It is common for beef cattle to lose one body condition score (BCS) following calving when nutritional requirements are at their peak. Couple these increased requirements with decreased winter forage production and we are looking at a nutrient crisis. Cows that drop to a BCS below 5 are less likely to come into heat than those that are at an optimum score of between 5 and 6¹. The cost of winter supplemen-

tation pales in comparison to the cost of a missed or prolonged calving season and feed or forage to re-condition the cow.

Starting early with a low-level supplementation plan is key to maintaining production in the cow herd. Response to supplementation improves with long term low-level supplementation as opposed to a sudden increase in supplementation².

Producers must take into consideration the nutrient levels that are *available* from their forages, and the nutrient *requirements* of their herd to determine the most economical nutrient supplementation program. By matching the herd's specific needs, for example, the producer will not spend precious dollars on a protein sup-

plement when they need energy supplementation instead or vice versa. Not to mention the cost saving of keeping the cattle in reproductive body condition.

Most importantly, cattle producers cannot overlook the importance of meeting their cow nutrient requirements through supplementation. For more information on beef nutrition and supplementation, visit the UF/IFAS electronic data information system (EDIS) beef nutrition topic area at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_Beef_Cattle_Nutrition for a list of publications available, or contact Bridget at bccarlis@ufl.edu or (863) 519-8677 x104.

¹Encinias, M. "Body Condition Score I," NDSU. AS-1026, Dec. 2000.

²Hersom, Matt. UF/IFAS Extension Beef Cattle Specialist.

Is There An End To This Drought?

From the Southeast Climate Consortium

With much colder than normal ocean waters now in place in the tropical Pacific Ocean, it is nearly certain that La Niña will persist and possibly strengthen during the remainder of the fall and winter. La Niña conditions usually bring warmer weather to the entire region, with temperatures generally averaging 2 to 4 degrees F higher than normal from November through March.

With the arrival of La Niña, there is also a good chance that drought conditions, currently moderate in south Florida, will continue and possibly worsen throughout the winter and into next spring.

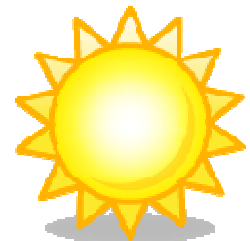
If below normal rainfall occurs

during the cool season, moisture recharge of groundwater, soils, ponds and reservoirs will be limited. Farmers who plan to plant winter forage and do not have irrigation capability have a high risk of being seriously impacted by the winter drought. In addition the risk of increased wildfires should be expected during the winter and spring wildfire season.

The Southeast Climate Consortium has estimated the impacts on climate based on past La Niña events. For Polk County, it is estimated that rainfall will not exceed two inches per month from November through March. This estimate is 48% less than the average

rainfall. However there is a 34% chance that rainfall will exceed two inches per month over November through March. Perhaps a glimmer of hope?

More information on the developing La Niña and its potential impacts can be found at www.AgClimate.org and www.CoastalClimate.org.



Calculating Your “Calf Crop”: The Bottom Line

All cattle producers are in the merchandising business, and in cow-calf operations, the merchandise that is produced is weaned calves. Every good business should know what their gross output is and the percentage of loss. However, do we as cattle producers truly take into consideration the loss and our gross output?

The term “calf crop” can mean different things to different individuals. If weaned calves are a cow-calf operation’s product, then the “calf crop” should translate to the percent of weaned calves or “weaning rate.” Each producer should have, if not a firm calculation, an idea of their weaned calf crop percent.

So how do you *accurately* calculate your weaning rate? In the span of one year, what is the total number of heifers and cows exposed to a bull or artificial insemination? How many of these heifers/cows become pregnant?

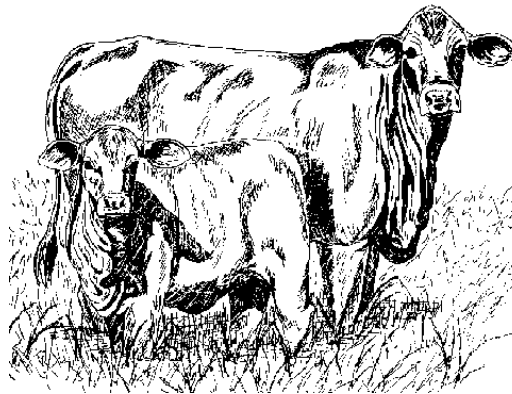
$$\text{Number Pregnant} \div \text{Number Exposed} = \text{Pregnancy Rate}$$

How many of these cows/heifers calf out? Some producers may have already culled their open cows; however, the culled cows still need to be considered when calculating rates.

$$\text{Number Calved} \div \text{Number Exposed} = \text{Calving Rate}$$

Lastly how many total calves were actually weaned? Again, the total number of exposed females needs to be considered when calculating the Weaning Rate.

$$\text{Number Weaned} \div \text{Number Exposed} = \text{Weaning Rate}$$



Open and non-producing cows play a significant role in decreasing profitability. Failing to recognize their impact may lead to an oversight of detractors to the bottom line.

Upcoming Events

November

- 2 Jr. Cattlemen’s Officer Mtg., BHS, 2pm
- 6 Election Day
- 8 Southern Source Charolais Bull Sale, Bartow, 1pm
- 13 EQIP Application Deadline
- 15 Jr. Cattlemen’s Annual Meeting, So. Aud., 6pm
- 15 Cattlemen’s Annual Meeting, Stuart Center, 6:30pm
- 27 Beef Nutrition Short Course, Ona REC, 7-9pm

December

- 5 Polk County Farm Bureau & Cattlemen’s Legislative Appreciation Dinner
- 5-7 FL Cattlemen’s Year End Quarterly Meeting, Crystal River

January

Look for your South Florida Beef Forage Survey

- 17 FCA Institute & Allied Trade Show, Kissimmee
- 29-30 Ruminant Nutrition Symposium <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/ruminant>

February

- 6-9 National Cattlemen’s Beef Assoc. Annual Convention, Reno, NV
- 23-29 Polk County Youth Fair

Cattlemen’s Institute & Allied Trade Show

The Cattlemen’s Institute & Allied Trade Show, “Keys to Profitability” Nutrition, Health & Management for Reproduction will be on Thursday, January 17th, at the Osceola Heritage Park East of Kissimmee. The event will feature FCA President, Larry Rooks, Randy Blach of Cattle Fax, Cliff Lamb of the University of Minnesota and UF/IFAS Research & Extension Specialists. The producer panel will include Carl McKettrick, Market Owner/Cattle Buyer; Hal Phillips, Veterinarian/Producer; Dan Dorn, Supply Development of Decatur County Feedyards; and Mike Milicevic, General Manager of Lykes Ranch. For more information, please contact Bridget at bccarlis@ufl.edu or (863) 519-8677 x104.