



Forage/Livestock Newsletter



Polk County

Fall, 2002

Florida Cattle Market Update is now available on the UF Ona Range Cattle REC Web site:
<http://rcrec-ona.ifas.ufl.edu/markets.html>

Coming Events:

- **October 15 & 16** - Beef Cow Mineral Supplementation Workshop, Tues., Oct. 15, Fat Boys BBQ Okeechobee, Wed., Oct. 16, Florida Cattlemen's Assoc. Building, Kissimmee. **Preregistration required.** Contact the Polk County Extension Office for more information.
- **October 17** - Mole Cricket Biocontrol: Demonstration of Commercial Nematode Application on Pasture, Thurs., Oct. 17, 9:00 AM, lunch courtesy Lakeland Livestock Auction. **Preregistration required.** Call the Polk County Extension Office to register - more information below.
- **October 31** - Angus Bull Sale, Agricultural Center, Bartow.
- **November 7** - Note: * **cancelled** * Hereford Bull sale, Bartow * **cancelled** *
- **November 7** - Eco Tourism Seminar, Hardee Co. Agric. Center, 2 PM to 5:30 PM
- **November 21** - Charolais Bull Sale, Agricultural Center, Bartow.
- **November 21** - Equine Institute and Allied Trade Show, Thurs. November 21, Arabian Nights, Osceola Co. Theme: Equine Behavior and Health.

Newsletter Renewal

We are required by law to update our mailing lists periodically. If you wish to continue receiving this newsletter please return the enclosed postcard. If you do not return the card, call or e-mail your name will be removed from the Forage/Livestock Newsletter list. Information requested on the card is for affirmative action purposes only. You may also call Martha Hammon at (863) 519-8677 ext 112 or send an e-mail to mahammon@mail.ifas.ufl.edu to keep your name on the list.

Mole Cricket Biocontrol Demonstration

It has been known for many years that a nematode, when applied to an infested pasture, will control mole crickets. The parasitic nematode is once again commercially available. On Thursday, October 17 there will be a field demonstration of strip-application of nematodes by Mr. Bill Copland, a custom applicator. The demonstration will be held on the Tomkow Bros. Ranch, north of Lakeland on Hwy. 98. Look for a pipe gate with an "S" in the center on the east side of the road. The gate is about 1/4 mile north of Conibear RV and just south of the Fire Tower. The demonstration will begin at 9:00 A.M.

After the demonstration a lunch will be served courtesy of Cattlemen's Livestock Market, Lakeland. The lunch speaker will be Mr. Will Miller, Land Use Specialist with SWFWMD. Mr. Miller will talk about SWFWMD's grazing programs. So plans can be made for lunch, **please RSVP to Martha Hammon at (863) 519-8677 ext 112** or complete and mail the coupon below **no later than Tuesday, October 15.**

Perennial Peanut for High Quality Hay/Pasture

Perennial peanut is a high quality tropical legume which comes from Brazil. Two varieties, "Florigraze" and "Arbrook" were developed by Dr. Gordon Prine in the UF/IFAS Agronomy Dept. Perennial peanut is adapted to well drained sandy soil in Florida and, once established, will remain productive for many years.

Establishment

Perennial peanut must be established with rhizomes (underground stems) dug from an established stand. The best time to plant perennial peanut is January and February. Begin preparing the planting site several months ahead of planting. Plow or deep disk the field, followed by periodic tillage plus herbicide, if needed, to kill all vegetation and produce a clean seed bed. Arrange for a supply of rhizomes ahead of time. A list of suppliers is available online <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AG105> or from the Extension Office. Many rhizome suppliers will deliver, plant and roll the field to firm the soil around the rhizomes. You may also pick up the rhizomes and plant them yourself. It will take from one to two years for perennial peanut to become fully established. Good weed control plus irrigation will result in more rapid establishment.

Maintenance

Perennial peanut has no known insect or disease problems in Florida. Research has shown that the two most important fertilizer elements needed by perennial peanut are sulfur and potassium. Since it's a perennial, perennial peanut responds to fertilization much the same as a citrus tree. The most important management goal for perennial peanut is to maintain a high level of carbohydrate reserves in the rhizomes. A general fertilizer recommendation, when hay is removed, is 20 lbs of sulfur and 80 lbs of potassium per year. This can be supplied with 120 lbs of Sulfate Potash Magnesia (Sulpomag) and 100 lbs of Murate of Potash. Since both sulfur and potassium are water soluble, it will be better to apply half the fertilizer in April and the other half in late June or early July. If the stand is grazed, less fertilizer will be needed.

Harvest Management

High quality perennial peanut hay can bring a premium price. Unfortunately, it's very difficult to harvest high quality hay in central Florida in the summer. With good spring rains or irrigation, the first hay harvest can be taken in late April with additional harvests about every 8 weeks. One strategy might be to harvest the first growth for hay, before the summer rains begin, and then graze the stand until the first of September. Because the plant is storing carbohydrates for the winter, **there should be no grazing or hay harvest between the first of September and the end of October.** A final hay cutting can be taken in early November.

Emergency Preparedness

What should you do to protect your animals in case of a disaster such as a hurricane or wildfire? Experience from Hurricane Andrew and the wildfires in north Florida a few years ago indicated animal identification was most important. In both cases fences were destroyed and animals roamed far and wide. Many animals had no identification and it was difficult, if not impossible, to connect an individual animal with an owner.

Be sure your animals have some form of identification. A number of options are available including: tattoos, hot iron brand, freeze brand, photos/sketches/registration papers, halters/collars, and a microchip inserted under the skin. Good identification is also a deterrent to theft or at least will help recover animals that were stolen.

Research may provide protection against BSE

Scientists at the University of California at San Francisco say research suggests a mutated form of the protein that causes bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease, may protect animals against the disease. The researchers say they genetically altered a strain of mice so that the animals made a mutated form of a protein called a prion, which prevented the animals from becoming ill when injected with a form of prion that usually causes disease. Dr. Jiri G. Safar said, "We found that the (genetically engineered) mouse became completely resistant to the prion disease." Safar said he and his colleagues now hope to develop a genetically engineered strain of cattle that is resistant to BSE (Source: Drovers Alert 9/29/02).

Irradiated ground beef from Tyson/IBP

IBP Fresh Meats, a unit of Tyson Foods, announced this week (9/23/02) they will offer a new line of irradiated ground-beef products. The new line features exact-weight, case-ready, ground-beef trays, pre-formed patties and chub packs in five-pound and eight-pound sizes. All packaging will include the "Irradiated for Food Safety" emblem (Source: Drovers Alert 9/29/02).

Beef Management Calendar

October

- Plant cool season legumes.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for external parasites, especially lice, and treat if needed.
- Check for spittlebugs and grassloopers and treat, if needed.
- Watch condition of cow herd; maintain adequate nutrition.
- Isolate any additions to the herd for 30-60 days and observe for signs of disease; retest for brucellosis and leptospirosis.
- Be sure you have adequate handling facilities, and they are in good working order.

November

- Have soils tested.
- Observe cows daily to detect calving difficulty.
- Use mineral with high level of magnesium if grass tetany has been a problem in the past.
- Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
- Maintain adequate nutrient level for cow herd.
- Calve in well-drained pastures.
- Survey pastures for poisonous plants.
- Start summarizing your annual records, both production and financial-then you will have time to make adjustments for tax purposes.
- Re-Evaluate winter feeding program and feed supplies.
- Get breeding soundness exams on bull battery so you have time to find replacements if some fail.
- Implement bull conditioning program.

- Review plans and arrangements for the upcoming breeding season.
- Check progress of developing replacement heifers - are they going to meet your target weight by the start of the breeding season?

December

- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
- Deworm cows and heifers prior to winter feeding season.
- Observe regularly for calving difficulties.
- Rotate calving pastures to prevent diseases.
- Watch for scours in calves.
- Investigate health of bulls before you buy.
- Have dead animals posted by a veterinarian or diagnostic laboratory.
- Complete review of management plan and update for next year. Check replacement heifers to be sure they will be ready to breed 3-4 weeks prior to the main cow herd.

Sincerely,

James A. Stricker
County Extension Director