



Forage/Livestock Newsletter

Polk County

Winter, 2003

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:

- Dec. 29, 2003 - Okeechobee Slaughter Cow Sale - Okeechobee, FL
- Jan. 10, 2004 - Horse Judging School, Gainesville, FL
- Jan. 15, 2004 - 21st Annual Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show, Kissimmee, FL
- Jan. 15 & 16 - Humane Care and Handling of Livestock, Gainesville -
information: www.vetmed.ufl.edu/lacs/HumaneCare
- Jan. 22 & 23 - 2004 Florida Ruminant Nutrition Symposium, Gainesville -
symposium information: conference.ifas.ufl.edu/ruminant
- Jan. 24, 2004 - 3rd Annual Florida Bull Test Sale, Marianna, FL - fbulltest.ifas.ufl.edu/sale_info.htm
- Feb. & Mar., 2004 - Master Tree Farmer Program - Satellite Broadcast - Kissimmee, FL
Register by Jan 16. Contact the Extension Office (863) 519-8677 ext. 102 for details.

Web Sites:

- <http://www.cflag.com/> - Central Florida Livestock Agents Group
<http://sfbfp.ifas.ufl.edu/> - South Florida Beef Forage Program

Cattlemen's Institute & Trade Show

The 21st Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show is scheduled for Wednesday, January 15, 2004. The theme for this years program is "Healthy Calves - Bigger Profits". The event will be held at Osceola Heritage Park, 1912 Kissimmee Valley Lane, off Hwy 192 east of Kissimmee. The day will begin with the opening of the trade show at 8:00 AM. The program will get underway at 8:45. For more information on the program see the enclosed brochure. If you plan to attend please call Martha Hammon at the Polk County Extension office (863) 519-8677 ext 112 so we know how many people to expect.

Polk County Livestock Agent Position

Polk County has been without the services of an Extension Livestock Agent for more than two years. The Livestock Agent is jointly employed by the University of Florida IFAS (UF/IFAS) and the Polk County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). The position has been vacant because of budget shortfalls by both UF/IFAS and the BoCC. The good news is, thanks to strong efforts by leaders in the Polk County livestock industry, both UF/IFAS and the BoCC have budgeted funds for the position. The position is currently being advertised. If you or someone you know is interested in the position, details are available at personnel.ifas.ufl.edu/countyvacancies.htm or call UF/IFAS Personnel at (352) 392-4777. Refer to position # 924460.

Pasture Rent survey

A new publication "Polk County Pasture Rent Survey - 2002" is now available at the Polk County Extension Office. This is the third in a series of pasture rent surveys dating back to 1981. The second survey was conducted in 1991. This publication will give the reader a general idea of what is being paid to rent pasture and rangeland in Polk County. The survey questionnaire was mailed to all landowners with Greenbelt tax status on pastureland in the summer of 2002.

Among all the tracts reported in the survey the size ranged from 1.4 acres to 1,870 acres. Rental rates ranged from a low of \$1.00 per acre to a high of \$120.00 per acre. The simple average (sum of rental rates divided by the number of tracts) was \$13.50 per acre. The weighted average (to adjust for higher rental rates on smaller tracts) was \$9.79 per acre. For comparison, the weighted average for all tracts in 1991 was \$6.60 per acre.

The Larra Wasp - An Introduced Parasite of Mole Crickets.

The Larra wasp is a parasite of mole crickets. It was imported to the United States from Bolivia and was released in Alachua County, FL in 1993 as a means of controlling mole crickets. The wasp was found to be a very effective parasite. Preliminary evaluations of wasp parasitism on mole crickets around Gainesville indicated that the level of wasp parasitism was about 70%. The wasp appears to be most successful when it has a good source of nectar for food. The best source of nectar is whitehead broom, *Spermacoce verticillata*, a broad-leaf weed not commonly found in Polk County .

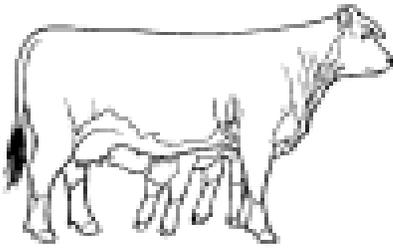
By 1997, the wasp had spread into counties surrounding Alachua County, but had not been found in central Florida, including Polk County. Dr. Howard Frank, with the Department of Entomology at the University of Florida, suggested to Polk County Extension staff that a Larra wasp release might be worthwhile in the Polk County area with the hope of establishing a permanent population. We agreed to participate in this release program.

Whitehead broom plants were planted, as a wasp nectar source, at a ranch near Bartow in the summer of 2002, with a release of Larra wasps planned for the fall of 2002. Due to cold weather, the wasp release was postponed until the summer or fall of 2003. Just before the wasp release in October of 2003, Larra wasps were discovered feeding on the whitehead broom plants at the release site. The wasp had apparently migrated from Alachua County and established itself here in Polk County. The best way to determine the presence of this wasp is to observe them on nectar plants such as whitehead broom. If you have an interest in establishing some whitehead brome plants on your land to attract the wasp, contact the Polk County Extension Office for a source of the plants.

United States Animal Identification Plan (USAIP)



USAIP Executive Summary - Protecting American animal agriculture by safeguarding animal health is vital to the well-being of all U. S. citizens. It promotes human health; provides wholesome, reliable, and secure food resources; mitigates national economic threats; and enhances a sustainable environment. Essential to achieving this goal is an efficient and effective animal identification program. Building upon previously established and successful animal health and animal identification programs involving many animal industries, an industry-state-federal partnership, aided by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA), was formed in 2002 to more uniformly coordinate a national animal identification plan. This resulting plan, requested by the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and facilitated by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), was formulated in 2003 for presentation at the October, 2003 annual meeting of the USAHA. More than 100 animal industry and state-federal government professionals representing more than 70 allied



associations/organizations collectively assessed and suggested workable improvements to the plan to meet future U. S. animal identification needs.

Fundamental to controlling any disease threat, foreign or domestic, to the nation's animal resources is to have a system that can identify individual animals or groups, the premises where they are located, and the date of entry to that premises. Further, in order to achieve optimal success in controlling or eradicating an animal health threat, the ability to retrieve that information within 48 hours of confirmation of a disease outbreak and to

implement intervention strategies is necessary. The USAIP is focused on utilizing state-of-the-art national and international standards with the best available and practical technologies. It is dynamic and flexible, and will incorporate new and proven technologies as they become available. States' needs in implementing animal identification will receive priority within the uniformity provided by federal oversight.

The USAIP currently supports the following species and/or industries: bison, beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, sheep, goats, camelids (alpacas and llamas), horses, cervids (deer and elk), poultry (eight species including game birds), and aquaculture (eleven species). Implementation will be in three phases: Phase I involves premises identification; Phase II involves individual or group/lot identification for interstate and intrastate commerce; and Phase III involves retrofitting remaining processing plants and markets and other industry segments with appropriate technology that will enhance our ability to track animals throughout the livestock marketing chain to protect and improve the health of the national herd. Initial implementation will focus on the cattle, swine, and small ruminant industries. In transition, the USAIP recommends that: all states have a premises identification system in place by July, 2004; unique, individual or group/lot numbers be available for issuance by February, 2005; all cattle, swine, and small ruminants possess individual or group/lot identification for interstate movement by July, 2005; all animals of the remaining species/industries identified above be in similar compliance by July, 2006.

These standards will apply to all animals within the represented industries regardless of their intended use as seedstock, commercial, pets or other personal uses. It is well acknowledged that costs associated with the USAIP will be substantial and that a public/private funding plan is justified. Significant state and federal costs will be incurred in overseeing, maintaining, updating, and improving necessary infrastructure. Continued efforts will be required to seek federal and state financial support for this integral component of safeguarding animal health in protecting American animal agriculture.

For the Current Work Plan Draft, please visit: http://usaip.info/US_AIP_Plan_Draft_092903_Ver_4_0_Master_.pdf

SOURCE: Scott Stuart, (719) 538-8843, USAIP Communication Subcommittee Co-Chair, Release - November 12, 2003

Beef Management Calendar

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.

January

- Apply lime for summer crops.
- Check for lice and treat if necessary.
- Control weeds in cool season pastures.
- Check mineral feeders.
- Put bulls out for October calving season.
- Make up breeding herd lists if using single sire herds.
- Watch for calf scours.
- Give bulls extra feed and care so they will be in condition for breeding season.
- Make sure cow herd has access to adequate fresh water.
- Buy only performance tested bulls with superior records.
- Get taxes filed.
- Discuss herd health with your veterinarian and outline a program for the year.
- Review herd health program with your veterinarian regularly.
- Carry a pocket notebook to record heat, breeding abnormalities, discharges, abortions, retained placentas, difficult calvings and other data.
- Observe cow herd for calving difficulties.
- Watch for grass tetany on winter pastures.
- Increase magnesium levels in mineral mixes if grass tetany has been previous problem (if you are not already using a high magnesium mineral).
- Examine bulls for breeding soundness and semen quality prior to the breeding season. Vaccinate cows and heifers against vibriosis and leptospirosis prior to the breeding season.

February

- Top dress winter forages, if needed.
- Check and fill mineral feeders.
- Put bulls out with breeding herd.
- Work calves (identify, implant with 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Stricker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "S".

James A. Stricker
County Extension Director

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