



Polk Rancher

Beef and Forage Newsletter

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Balancing Forage is the Key to Winter Feeding of Nursing Cows

Supplementing breeding cattle through the winter can be a challenging part of ranch management. Certainly a large portion of the ranch budget goes to getting cattle through the 4-5 month period when grass is in short supply with enough condition or body fat to rebreed soon after calving. Basically ranchers in Polk county have two alternatives. Either you have a stocking rate low enough to have excess grass during this period or you feed stored forages such as hay.

One common mistake some producers make is to set their stocking rate based on summer grass yield. Certainly good bahia pastures will carry a cow to ever 1 or 2 acres in the summer, but come Fall there is not enough grass to provide any grazing of any real value. Every area is different, but a good rule of thumb is to set the ranch stocking rate for the grass available in October and April. This way there should be enough grass to minimize the amount of hay and supplement needed to make it through winter.

Even with a lower stocking rate, many operations in Polk County feed hay at least from December through February. Whether your feeding hay or stockpiled grass, you are still going to have to feed a supplement of some kind to maintain enough condition for early rebreeding. Remember that if a cow is going to calve every year she only has 80 days (365-285 pregnant) after calving to heal up and rebreed. Stockpiled grass whether its bahia, hemarthria, rhodesgrass or stargrass will probably not meet the needs of wet cow nursing a calf because this tall, mature grass is lower in protein and energy. Most hay unless it is fertilized and cut every 4 or 5 weeks will not provide all the protein and energy to maintain body condition on cows with calves either.

So what should you use as a supplement? Well the first thing that is very important to know is what is

the feeding value of your forage? It is impossible to balance the cows needs with what is available without knowing what you have. The best way to get this information is with a forage test. The University of Florida provides forage testing for \$8 a sample through the Ona Range Cattle Station. Fresh grass samples as well as hay samples can be tested for both crude protein (CP) and energy (TDN) to provide the basis for knowing what and how much supplement to buy.

Daily Requirements vs. Forage Nutrients			
	Dry Matter Intake	Crude Protein	TDN
Requirement 1000 lb wet cow	20.2 lbs	2.0 lbs 9.6%	11.0 lbs 56.6%
Requirement 900 lb wet first calf heifer	19.2 lbs	2.0 lbs 10.4%	12.0 lbs 62.7%
Bahia Hay for cows	20 pounds	8% 1.6 lbs	50% 10
Bahia Hay for Heifers	19 pounds	8% 1.5 lbs	50% 9.5 lbs
Stockpiled bahia for cows	20 pounds	7% 1.3	45% 9 lbs
Stockpiled baia for heifers	19 pounds	7% 1.4 lbs	45% 8.6
Amount Short for Cows		Hay Grass 0.4 lb 0.7 lb	Hay Grass 1.0 lb 2.0 lbs
Amount Short for Heifers		0.5 lb 0.6 lb	2.5 lb 3.4 lb
32% Molasses	@2 lb/day	0.6 lbs	1.1 lbs
Citrus Pulp	@3 lb/day	0.2 lbs	2.4 lbs
16% Molasses	@5 lb/day	0.8 lbs	2.8 lbs

As you can see, bahia whether stockpiled or harvested does not meet these minimum requirements for maintenance and if a cow is thin, the need for supplementation is even greater. Many different types of supplements are readily available in our area. Molasses and citrus pulp are very commonly used because they are byproducts of the Florida sugar and citrus industries but there are a number of others. The key is to match the system that works best for your labor situation as well as your budget.

Molasses is normally an economical supplement, but molasses alone is low in protein (8-9%) It can be purchased with urea a non-protein nitrogen source or natural proteins. 32% protein molasses contains urea which is the most economical source of protein. This product must be fed to animals with adequate forage, because cattle grazing very short pastures without adequate hay or grass will lose weight very quickly. Also, young or thin cattle do not perform as well as mature cows fed urea. For young cattle and thin mature cattle a 16% protein molasses with more natural protein is recommended. If energy is needed, citrus pulp is an inexpensive source. Citrus pulp has 8% protein and 79% TDN. One other factor in determining a supplement is to realize that the more supplement fed the less hay or grass that a cow will eat. The main thing is to try to have cattle in good shape prior to calving and then have a balanced ration for maintenance or gain. All cows will lose weight after calving but the key is to monitor body condition and minimize this loss so that they breed back in a timely manner.

Selecting Bulls Based on Milk EPD's Does Impact Their Daughters Productivity

Buchanan--1996 Oklahoma Animal Science Research Report

Calf birth and weaning weight, and cow weight and condition scores were evaluated for 361 cow-calf pairs with the dams involved in a study sired by high or low milk EPD Angus and Polled Hereford bulls. The Angus bulls used in the study had an average milk difference of +19.2 to -13.7, and the Polled Hereford bulls had a range in milk EPD difference of +16.8 to -10.7. Calves born to daughters of high milk EPD Angus bulls were 65 pounds heavier (steers) and 25 pounds heavier (heifers) at 205 days of age. Correspondingly, the high milk EPD Polled Hereford sired dams had calves that were 42 pounds (steers) and 13 pounds (heifers) heavier at 205 days. As might be expected, the body condition score for the heifers sired by high milk EPD bulls was substantially lower at weaning time (approximately .5 body condition score). The authors concluded that beef producers can use milk EPD's with confidence, but should have a clear understanding of their feed resources before bulls with extremely high milk EPD's are used in certain environments.

Land Value Survey Says Central Florida Pasture Values Up 10%

The Florida Land Value Survey conducted by the University of Florida Ag Economics Department indicates that agriculture land values in the Central Florida Area (which includes Polk County) are on the whole higher than last year. The survey provides estimates of the value of different types of agricultural land for 5 regions across the state. The survey asked respondents to estimate these values as of May 1999. Those surveyed included rural appraisers, farm lenders, real estate brokers, farm managers, land investors, county extension agents, farm service and NRCS personnel and county property appraisers.

In our area of the state, average improved pasture land values were up by almost 10% to \$2,137 per acre. Last year's average value was \$1,944. For unimproved pasture land the average values rose almost 6% from \$1,255 per acre in 98 to \$1,329 this year. Pasture lease rates on the other hand remained fairly steady with improved pastures renting for an average of \$17.30 per acre and \$9 per acre for unimproved pastures. Transitional land, which is defined as land that will likely be developed for non-agricultural uses, also increased for areas within 5 miles of a major town to \$11,082 per acre and \$6,968 for areas more than 5 miles from town. For the first time since 1990, orange and grapefruit land values have improved. Mature orange grove land increased in value slightly to \$6,780 and grapefruit increased by almost 7% to \$3,543. With all of the problems facing Florida Agriculture today, it is good to know that at least the value of the land is continuing to improve.

Hay Production Field Day Set

What does it take to make high quality hay for beef and dairy cattle as well as horses? Which varieties of grasses is the best for my area? What is the best process for successfully establishing a quality hay field? What is the best way to store hay to prevent spoilage in the field? Can a ranch make money raising hay to sell? Where can I purchase hay equipment and what type of equipment is available now?

These and other questions will be the focus of a South Florida Beef-Forage Program "Producing Quality Hay with Tropical Grasses". The Hay Field Day will begin at the Manatee County Extension Office in Palmetto on October 28 at 9:30 AM.

The program will focus on producing quality hay with the grasses adapted to Florida. Bill Kunkle, UF Animal Science Department, will lead a discussion of what factors influence the feeding value of hay. With so many forage varieties available, it can be confusing deciding which varieties fit with the goals of your operation. Paul Mislevy, UF Range Cattle Research and Education Center, will compare the different varieties of stargrasses, Bermudagrasses and other grasses which make quality hay. Martin Adjei, UF Range Cattle Research and Education Center, will discuss the process needed to successfully renovate a pasture and establish vegetative or sprig planted grasses. Storage of hay can also greatly affect the final feeding value of hay. Carol Chambliss, UF Agronomy Department, will discuss what can be done to prevent quality decline with the methods of storing hay in the pasture. He will also demonstrate how to test the moisture and feeding value of hay. Clay Newsome, manager of the West Coast Tomato Company's hay operation, will share how he has been able to establish a market for square bale horse hay on their 1000 acre stargrass and Bermudagrass operation. There will also be equipment dealers on hand to demonstrate the latest hay equipment available. If you are interested in producing quality hay for yourself or to sell, you will not want to miss this opportunity. Please RSVP at 941-533-0765 by October 20.

Service Directory to Be Updated



The annual Polk Rancher Service Directory will be updated for the year 2000. For the past two years, we have published a list of the people who provide services that are not available in the phone book for ranchers in this county. This is a free service, so if you have a business such as day working, fence building, livestock hauling, hay cutting or sales, tractor work or another service of interest to cattle ranchers, please fill out the enclosed form and send it in to the Extension office. Also if you are currently listed in the directory and have changed your business or phone number, please fill out the form and note the needed changes. These services will also be listed on the South Florida Beef-Forage Program web site on the service and product directory link at www.ifas.ufl.edu/~sfbfp/beef.html. This directory does not serve as an endorsement by the Extension Service, but simply a listing of services available.

Promote Beef & Your Ranch with a Road Sign

In an effort to extend the Florida Beef Council's consumer marketing program, they are offering a shared road sign program to ranches and organizations interested in promoting beef. The Beef Council is providing 4 ft. By 8 ft. Aluminum signs with a colorful picture of a steak and the slogan "Beef. It's What's for Dinner." Also included on the sign will be the name of the sponsoring ranch or organization. The signs cost \$200 to produce, but the Beef Council will pay half of the cost so your cost would be \$100. To avoid the \$75 shipping charge, these signs can be picked up at the Florida Cattlemen's Association office in Kissimmee. See the enclosed order form or contact the FCA office at 407-846-6221 for more information.

Polk Junior Cattlemen Kick Off New Year

at the Bombing Range

The Polk County chapter of the Junior Cattlemen's Association's first activity of the 99-00 year will be a field day at the Avon Park Bombing Range on Saturday, October 9 starting at 10:00 AM. They have planned a day of games and a tour of the native range cattle leases. If you know of a young person age 8-20 who is interested in learning about beef cattle, contact the Extension Office for a membership application and details about the field day.

Herd Bull Selection Program October 14 in Wauchula

There will be 10,000 new beef bulls going into service on Florida ranches this year. Some of these bulls will sire a large calf crop while others will never achieve a pregnancy. Many of these bulls will last six breeding seasons while others won't make it through their first. Some of these bulls will sire daughters you'll want to keep and whose steers will make you money. Other bulls just sire plain calves. Some sell for \$2000 others \$800, so how do you know which bulls will make you money?

The South Florida Beef-Forage Program and ABS will be sponsoring a Herd Bull Selection Program which will provide some of the tools to help you make wise bull purchases. The program will be held in Wauchula at the Hardee County Agri-Civic Center on Thursday, October 14 from 3:00 to 6:00 PM. Dinner will be provided following the program. Please RSVP to Lockie Gary at 941-773-2164 by October 7 so that adequate food will be prepared.



Come find out how to maximize your chances of selecting the better bulls and avoiding the "duds". Find out what records are most important and what to look for when making a visual evaluation. In addition, the latest technologies used for bull selection such as ultrasound, libido testing and breeding soundness exams will be demonstrated. A panel of experienced cattle producers will also be on hand to share how they select bulls for their herds. See the brochure enclosed with the newsletter for more details.

Hands-On Seminar for Cow-Calf Simulator Ranch Analysis Computer Program

John Earman, developer of the "Cow-Calf Simulator" computer program, will be holding a seminar to give producers an opportunity to get first hand experience with his ranch analysis program. This program was developed to incorporate Florida grasses and production patterns to allow producers to estimate the cost and output of ranch production over the next 10 years. Unlike other programs which require detailed records, John's program has been designed to estimate ranch output with whatever is available such as tax returns and basic production records. This program gives managers the option of simulating changes in production to determine the affect on their herd numbers, profitability and net worth through ten years of the cattle price cycle.

The seminar will be held at Buck Island Ranch, Lake Placid on November 16 from 9:30 to 3:30. Lunch

will be provided but they do ask that you RSVP so that adequate food and computer space are provided. Contact John at 561-562-3684 or email to jearman@ibm.net for more details. If you want more information on the Cow-Calf Simulator go to his web site www.rancherecon.com.

Sunbelt Expo Set for October

The Sunbelt Agriculture Exposition, the Southeast's largest farm and equipment show, will be held in Moultrie, Georgia from October 19-21. The Expo features numerous agricultural equipment and chemical exhibitors who have live demonstrations in the fields surrounding the trade show. There will also be a tent for cattle producers with purebred cattle, drug company representatives and cattle handling equipment. For more information call 912-985-1968 or check out their web site at www.sunbeltexpo.com.

Conservation Expo 99

The 1999 Conservation Exposition will be held on Friday, November 5 near Lake Wales at Lake Aurora Christian Camp. This will be a field day to demonstrate land conservation technology. Scheduled demonstrations will focus on erosion control, pesticide management, road and trail construction, utility pipe installation, clearing vegetation, exotic plant control, fire protection, reforestation, water conservation, wetland protection and xeriscaping. For more information contact Geri Mulford at 941-965-2861 or Dorothy Staley at 352-338-9565.

Fall Field Day In Lake County

The Livestock Agents in Lake, Sumter, Volusia, Brevard and Orange Counties will be hosting a program on October 14 just North of Polk County at Smoak Cattle Company off Highway 33. Topics for discussion will range from Consumptive Water Use Permits, Certified Burning, Cool Season Forages, Winter Supplementation, Sovereign Lands Issues to Hay Equipment Demonstrations. For more information, contact Bill Price at the Lake County Extension Office 352-343-4101.

Small Farm Program in Hernando County

There will be a small farm program and trade show held in Brooksville on Saturday, October 30 at the Hernando County Fairgrounds starting at 9:00 AM. Workshops provided will focus on, fencing, beekeeping, smoking meat, tropical fish production, landscape plant propagation, goat management, beef production, blueberries, pasture raised poultry and hydroponic gardening. This event will also feature displays of equipment, associations, and rare farm animals. There will be something for the whole family with hay rides, antique tractors, chicks hatching, a petting zoo and a pigmy goat show. For more information contact Wayne Odegaard at 352-754-4433.



Are You Kidding Me?

Bad Timing

A preacher was ending a sermon on alcohol abuse. He said, "If I had all the wine in the world I'd take it and throw it into the river." With even greater expression he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd through it into the river." And then finally he said, "If I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and through it in the river." He sat down.

The song leader rose and looked somewhat shaken as he looked at the bulletin and said, "For our closing hymn, let us stand and sing #365 "Shall We Gather at the River".

What A Divorce

A judge was interviewing a woman regarding her pending divorce, and asked "What are your grounds for your divorce?" She replied, "About four acres and a nice little home ." "No", he said, "I mean what is the foundation of the case?" "It is made of concrete and brick", she responded. "I mean," he continued, "What are your relations like?" "I have and aunt and uncle living here in town, and so do my husbands parents." He said, "Do you have a real grudge?" "No," she replied, "We have a two -car carport and have never really needed one." "Please," he tried again, "is there an infidelity in your marriage?" "Yes," she responded, " both my son and daughter have stereo sets, but we don't necessarily like their music." "Ma'am, does your husband ever beat you up?" "Yes, about twice a week he gets up earlier than I do." Finally in frustration the judge asked, "Lady, why do you want a divorce?" "Oh I don't want a divorce," she replied, "I've never wanted a divorce. My husband does. He said he can't communicate with me."

City Slicker Salesman

Joe, an insurance salesman from New York heard that there were no insurance agents within 200 miles of Broken Spoke, Montana. So, Joe packed up and moved his business to Broken Spoke.

On his first day a cowboy came to apply for a policy. Joe asked the cowboy if he'd had any accidents and he said "Nope". Joe said, "No accidents in your entire life?" The cowboy said, "Not lessen you count the time a steer busted my ribs or that sidewinder snake set his durn fangs in my backside." Joe said, "Wouldn't you call those accidents?" The cowboy drawled, "Nope them varmints done it on purpose."

Sincerely,

Doug Mayo
Livestock Extension Agent I

Calendar Of Events

October

1

FCA Replacement Heifer Sale, Wauchula

2-3	FCA Quarterly Meeting, Ft. Myers
4	Arcadia Brangus Bull Sale, Arcadia
9	Polk Junior Cattlemen's Field Day, Avon Park
14	Bull Selection Program, Wauchula
18	Braford Bull Sale, Arcadia
19-21	Sunbelt Ag Expo, Moultrie, GA
22	Cattlemen's Replacement Heifer Sale, Lakeland
28	Hay Production Field Day, Palmetto
29	Graham Angus Bull Sale, Okeechobee

November

4	S.E. Hereford Association Pen Bull Sale, Bartow
5	Hardee Farms Black Bull Sale, Chiefland
5	Horned Hereford Bull Sale, Okeechobee
8	Angus, Brangus, Charolais Bull Sale, Arcadia
10	Adams Ranch Braford Bull Sale, Ft. Pierce
11	Florida Angus Association Bull Sale, Bartow
11	Polk County Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting, Bartow
12	Lemmon Angus Bull Sale, Okeechobee
16	Cow-Calf Simulator Seminar, Lake Placid
18	Southern Source Charolais Bull Sale, Bartow
19	Florida Brangus Breeders Association Bull Sale, Webster

December

3-4	Nutrena Youth Steer & Heifer Show, Bartow
11	Kathleen FFA Youth Cattle Show, Bartow

January

8	Market Steer Clinic and Jackpot Show, Bartow
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For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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