SURVEY OF BEEF-FORAGE PRACTICES

GREATER TAMPA BAY AREA 1982 SUMMARY

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences,
Cooperative Extension Service,
University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida

This publication was promulgated at a cost of $390.50, or 55.8 cents per copy, to inform interested individuals of the results of a 1982 beef forage survey. 8-700-84.

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METHOD FOR OBTAINING INFORMATION

Livestock agents obtained this information from beef producers using mail questionnaires. Agents identified 1899 beef and/or livestock owners. A sample size of 319 is needed to provide a degree of accuracy of ± 5 percent. However, agents in two counties had difficulty in distinguishing beef producers from other livestock owners. Thus, the sample size was increased 5 percent for one county and 10 percent for the other to compensate for non-beef livestock owners. The sample size was also increased 20 percent to compensate for producers who had gone out of business within the last year and for expected incorrect addresses. Therefore, the final sample size was 417. Seventy-eight percent of the questionnaires were returned but only 51 percent (214) were usable. The expected error rate for a sample of this size is ± 6.4 percent with 95 percent confidence.[1] For more detailed information refer to Bench Marking Beef-Forage Practices, Greater Tampa Bay Area, 1982, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida.

Survey Coordinator

Cliff Taylor
311 Rolfs Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611

Agents Conducting Survey

Jo Durrance - Sarasota
Travis Seawright - Manatee
Mark Spelbring - Pasco
Sid Sumner - Polk
Wayne Wade - Hillsborough

Advisory Groups

Extension Beef Advisory Committees
in each of the five counties

Consultants and Support

Bill Kunkle - Beef Specialist
Carrol Chambliss - Forage Specialist
Walter Prevatt - Economist
Gene Cope - Veterinarian
Dick Cromwell - Engineer
Gerald Kidder - Soils Specialist
Kenneth Portier - Statistician
Bill Summerhill - Design
Jim Stricker - Liaison
Maurice Cole - Administration
Rita Slaughter - Word Processor
Patsy Lawrence - Data Entry
John Dixon - Computing

[1] Yamane, T. 1967. Statistics, An Introductory Analysis, 2nd ed. New York: Harper and Row.

Information was gathered in 1982 from beef producers in Polk, Hillsborough, Pasco, Manatee and Sarasota Counties (the Greater Tampa Bay Area). The main purpose of the survey was to determine the present production practices for beef and forage, so Extension agents can direct their efforts to where the most improvement can be made in beef cattle production. The information contained herein was gathered in a specific locale and may not reflect the beef cattle situation for other portions of the state of Florida.

ABOUT THE BEEF OPERATIONS

Kinds of Beef Operations

Most of the beef operations in the five counties (88%) are commercial. **They comprise 90 percent of the cattle** in those five counties.

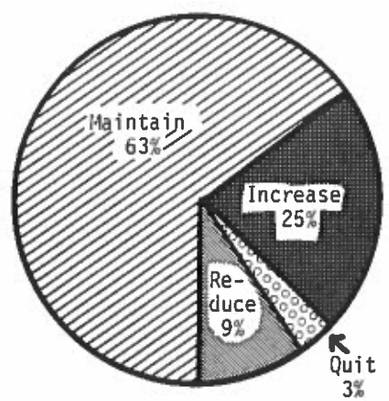
88% Commercial

4% Purebred

4% Purebred and Commercial

Plans for the Next Five Years

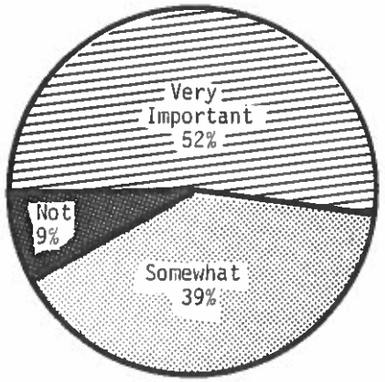
Sixty-three percent of the producers plan to maintain the same size of operation. **They own 57 percent of the cattle.**



Nine percent of the producers plan to reduce the size of their operations. They own only four percent of the cattle. Only 4/10 of one percent of the cattle are owned by the three percent those who plan to get out of the beef business.

Importance of Profit

Slightly over half (52 percent) of the producers feel it's very important for their beef operation to make a profit and **they own 85 percent of the cattle.**



Nine percent of the producers in the five county area feel it's not important for their beef operation to make a profit. However, they own only two percent of the cattle.

FINDINGS ABOUT REPRODUCTION

Percent Calf Crop

The average percent calf crop across all brood cows is 72.

Number of Bulls

Producers indicate they have one bull for every 20 cows.

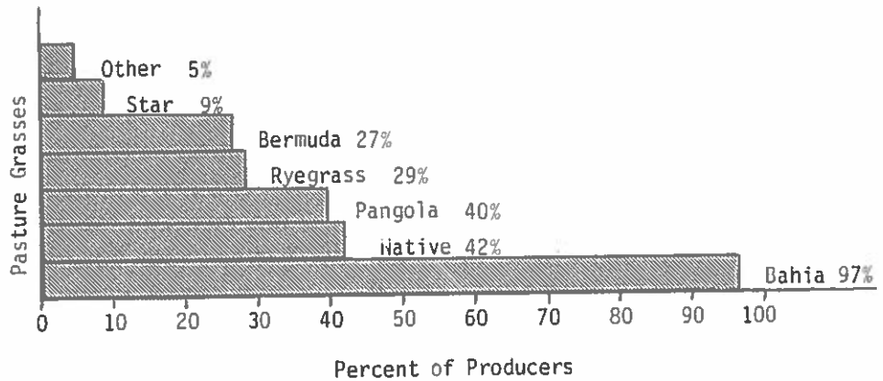
Breeding Season

Sixty-six percent of the producers indicated they do not practice a controlled breeding season. That is, they let the bulls run with the cow herd throughout the year. **These producers own only 24 percent of the cattle.**

The following shows the average number of pounds of the most commonly applied nutrients to pasture and hay:

	Nitrogen (N)	Phosphorus (P_2O_5)	Potassium (K_2O)
Pasture	52	25	33
Hay	68	28	40

Types of Pasture Grasses Used

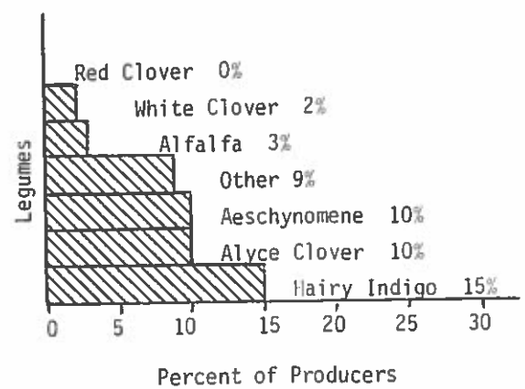


Even though only 42 percent indicate they use native pasture, **these producers own 68 percent of the cattle.**

Rotationally Grazed Pastures

Sixty-one percent of the producers indicated they practice rotational grazing **and they own 67 percent of the cattle.**

The Use of Legumes



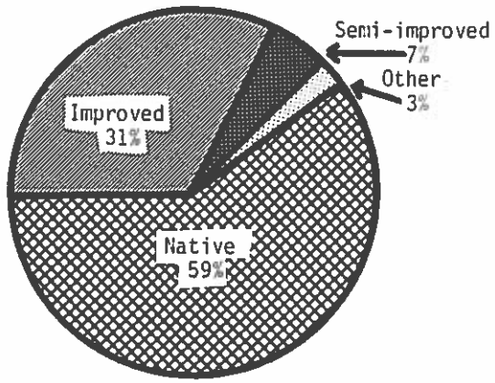
Although hairy indigo is grown by 15 percent of the producers, aeschynomene is fed to more cattle (39 percent) than any other legume.

FORAGE PRODUCTION

Acres Used for Pasture

On the average, producers indicate they have 1244 acres of pasture. However, this ranges from two acres up to 59,300.

The following gives some insight into the kinds of pasture used by beef producers:



Tons of Hay Produced

In 1981 beef producers harvested an average of 132 tons of hay.

The Practice of Soil Testing

Sixty-three percent of the producers indicate they generally use soil tests to guide their fertilizing and liming decisions. **These same producers own 88 percent of the cattle.**

The Practice of Liming

Fifty-two percent of the producers indicate they have limed **pastures** within the past three years. **These same producers own 71 percent of the cattle.**

Fifty-seven percent of the producers who responded to the question indicated they have limed **hay** land in the past three years. **This represents about 55 percent of the cattle.**

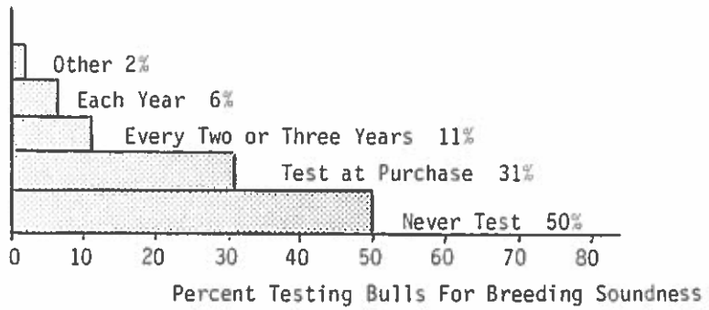
The Practice of Fertilizing

Seventy-five percent of the producers indicated they fertilized **pastures** within the past year. **These same producers own 92 percent of the cattle.**

Eighty-five percent of the producers who responded to the survey indicated they fertilized hay.

Breeding Soundness Evaluation

Fifty percent of the producers indicated they never evaluate semen and reproductive tract of bulls for breeding soundness. **However, these same producers own only 26 percent of the cattle.**



Practice of Palpating Cows

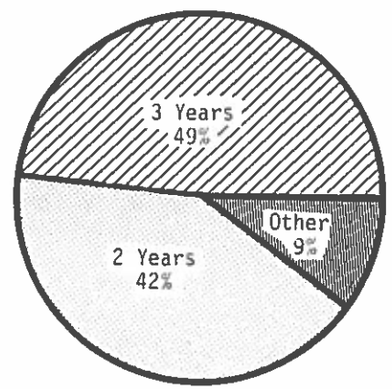
20% of producers palpate all cows

16% of producers palpate dry cows only

Producers who palpate all cows own 41 percent of the cattle. Producers who palpate only dry cows own 37 percent of the cattle.

Age Heifers Calve

Forty-nine percent of the producers indicate their heifers calve at the age of three years. **However, this includes 66 percent of the heifers.**



Percent Culled

Most of the producers, 84 percent, indicate they cull 10 percent or less of their cow herd each year. **These same producers own 62 percent of the cattle.**

84% Cull 10 percent or less each year

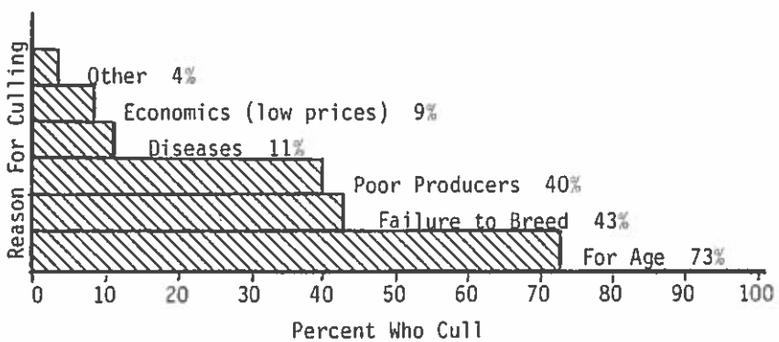
7% Cull from 11 to 15 percent each year

5% Cull from 16 to 20 percent each year

4% Cull 21 percent or more each year

Reasons for Culling

Age is the main reason for culling as indicated by 73 percent of the producers **who own 79 percent of the cattle.**



Relatively few producers (9 percent) cull based on low prices. They own only 4 percent of the cattle.

Leading Diseases

Producers indicated brucellosis is their leading disease problem. Fourteen percent indicated they have experienced problems with brucellosis; **these same producers own 15 percent of the cattle.**

14% Problems with brucellosis

No more than two percent of the producers indicated they had problems with any one of the following diseases.

Problems with leptospirosis

Problems with vibriosis

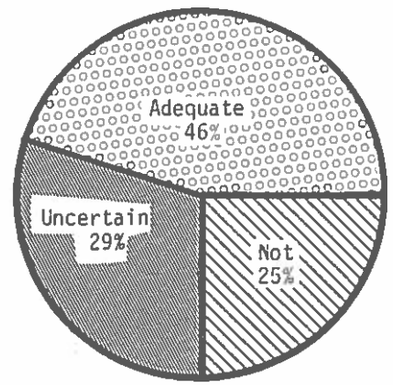
Problems with red water

Problems with IBR and BVD

Problems with blackleg

Feed During Winter Months

Only 46 percent of the producers feel their winter feeding program is adequate for greatest net returns, **these producers own 58 percent of the cattle.**



Analyzing Hay and Silage

Only thirteen percent of the producers who feed hay or silage indicate they have it analyzed. **These same producers own 26 percent of the cattle.**

The Practice of Feeding Salt and Minerals

Almost all producers feed salt and minerals. Ninety-three percent of those who responded indicated they feed salt. **This represents 73 percent of the cattle.** Of those who feed salt, eight percent feed it in winter only, while 92 percent feed it year 'round.

Ninety-eight percent of the producers feed minerals, representing 96 percent of the cattle. Of those who feed minerals, 10 percent feed them in winter only, while 90 percent feed them year 'round

Winter Feed Used For Cows and Heifers by Percent of Beef Producers

	For Cows	For Heifers
Hay	83%	64%
Native Range	63%	44%
Winter Pasture	31%	22%
Deferred Grazing	22%	21%
Other	20%	20%
Silage	3%	3%

Protein Supplement

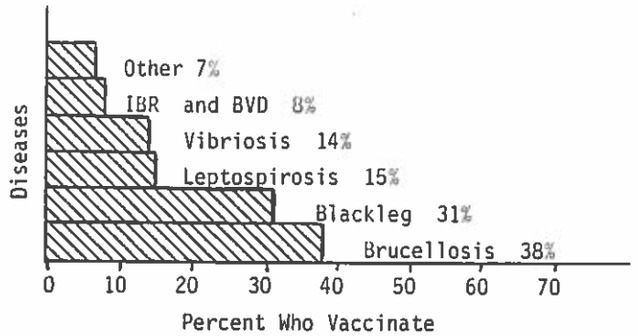
Forty-three percent of the producers use mineral supplements containing protein. Thirty-seven percent of the producers use molasses supplement during the winter months. **These same producers own 67 percent of the cattle.**

Even though 35 percent of the producers feed protein blocks to the cow herd, **this represents only 14 percent of the cattle.**

Protein Supplements Used During Winter Months by Percent of Producers

	For Cows	For Heifers
Mineral Containing Protein	43%	35%
Molasses Supplement	37%	31%
Protein Blocks	35%	29%
Range Cubes	24%	23%
Other	6%	8%
None	4%	3%

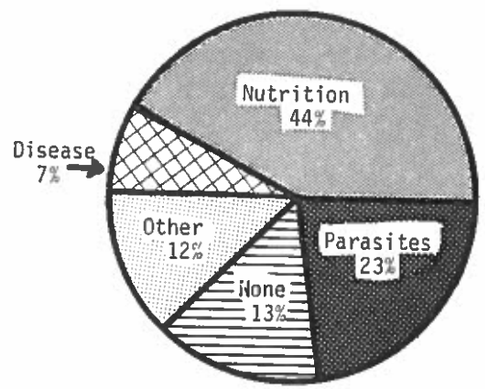
More producers (38%) indicated they had vaccinated for brucellosis, than any other disease. **These same producers own 70 percent of the cattle.**



Nutrition is Big Problem With Reproduction

Forty-four percent of the producers who responded to the question indicated nutrition is their single most important problem. **These same producers own 60 percent of the cattle.**

Most important problems by percent of producers:



PRODUCTION

Weights at Weaning and Selling in the Five County Area

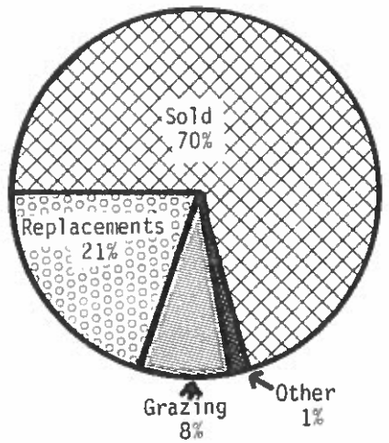
The weaning weight average for all producers is 375 pounds. The weaning weight average across all calves is 415 pounds. The selling weight average for all producers is 394 pounds. The selling weight average across all calves is 431 pounds. Some of the producers are weaning calves and growing to heavier weights.

Age at Weaning and Selling

The average weaning age by producers is 6.86 months. The average selling age by producers is 6.90 months. However, some of the producers are selling calves several months after weaning.

Uses of the Calf Crop

Seventy percent of the calves that were born between October, 1980 and September, 1981 were sold. Twenty-one percent were used as replacements for the herd, and eight percent became grazing animals.



Implanting with Growth Stimulants

Fifteen percent of the producers who responded to the question said they implant calves with growth stimulants. **These same producers own 52 percent of the cattle.**

Identification of Cows and Calves

Slightly over half (53 percent) of the producers who responded to the question said they use a system to individually identify each cow. **These same producers own 60 percent of the cattle.** Thirty-five percent of the producers indicated they identify the calf. These same producers own 31 percent of the cattle.

Production Testing Records

Twenty-two percent of the producers indicate they keep production testing records such as birth date and weight at selling. **These same producers own 13 percent of the cattle.** Eighty-seven percent of those who keep records use them for culling purposes.

PARASITE CONTROL

External Parasites

Most of the producers (94 percent) indicate they practice external parasite control. **This represents 99 percent of the cattle.**

Method to Control External Parasites by Percent of Beef Producers

Method	Flies	Ticks & Lice	Grubs
Spray	69%	56%	28%
Dust Bag	38%	17%	9%
Ear Tag	17%	5%	4%
Pour-on	10%	11%	11%
Back Rubber	8%	5%	2%

Spray is the most widely used method to control external parasites. Sixty-nine percent of the producers indicate they use this method to control flies. These producers own 73 percent of the cattle. **Seventeen percent of the producers use ear tags to control flies which represents 42 percent of the cattle.**

Deworming

Most producers practice worming at least once each year.

80% Worm bulls

76% Worm cows

67% Worm calves

Liver Fluke Treatment

Only 21 percent of the producers indicate they treat for liver flukes, **which represents 34 percent of the cattle.**

BEEF PRODUCERS' NUTRITION PROGRAM

Forages

The following reveals the percent of producers who use various forages for cows and heifers during the **winter** months. Sixty-three percent of the producers indicate they use native range for the cow herd, while 44 percent use it for heifers.