

DESOTO COUNTY BEEF NEWSLETTER

Post Office Box 310
Arcadia, FL 34265-0310
(941) 993-4846
(941) 993-4849
E-mail: jselph@ifas.ufl.edu

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

28	Special Slaughter Cow & Bull Sale - Arcadia State Livestock Market, 1:00 p.m.
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January

14-15	Florida Ruminant Nutrition Symposium - Gainesville at the Holiday Inn West
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21	16th Annual Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show - Kissimmee Valley Agricultural Center located at Highway 192 East
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Feburary

3	Economic and Ecological Values of Grazing Lands - Manatee and Sarasota Counties - USF Campus - Sarasota
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4	Florida State Fair Youth Steer Show - Tampa Fair Grounds, 7:00 p.m.
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5	Florida State Fair Youth Beef Show (Brahman, Angus, Brangus, Senepol, & Non-Registered) - Tampa Fair Grounds, 8:00 a.m.
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9	Florida State Fair Youth Beef Show (Limousin, Hereford, Pinzgauer, Santa Gertrudis, Simmental, Maine Anjou and All Other Breeds) - Tampa Fair Grounds, 9:00 a.m.
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24-25	Florida Weed Science Society Meeting - Eustis
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**16th Annual
Florida Cattlemen's Institute**



and Allied Trade Show



The theme for this year's Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show will be "Controlling the Cost of Production Through Better Management." This year's Institute and Allied Trade Show will be held on January 21, 1999 at the Kissimmee Valley Agricultural Center on Highway 192 East. The host Motel will be the Holiday Inn Express located just east of the Agricultural Center on Highway 192. For reservations call 407-846-4646 and let them know that you will be attending the Florida Cattlemen's Institute for their special rate of \$39.00 per night.

The Institute will begin with the Trade Show opening at 8:00A.M., followed by the welcome given by Dr. Mike Martin, the new Vice-President for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS). Dr. Martin comes to us by way of the University of Minnesota. This will be an excellent opportunity to hear and meet Dr. Martin.

*The keynote speaker for this year's Institute is Allan Nation. Allan has been the editor of **The Stockman Grass Farmer Magazine** since 1977. This magazine, based in Jackson, Mississippi, is the only North American publication specializing in intensive grazing and pasture production systems for beef, sheep and dairy cattle. As the son of a commercial cattle rancher, Mr. Nation grew up in Greenville, Mississippi, and has traveled the world studying and photographing grassland farming systems. He is a frequent speaker in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Ireland, and New Zealand on grassland farming topics.*

*Allan will be speaking on "Harvesting Sunshine to Lower Production Cost" at this year's Institute. He is the author of **Pasture Profits with Stocker Cattle, Quality Pasture, Grass Farmers and Paddock Shift**. With the industry's economic situation, you will not want to miss this talk on lowering production cost for your operations.*

Interested individuals/companies who would like to exhibit their products at the trade show should contact Dr. Mike Fanning (941-658-3400) Extension Livestock Specialist or Mr. Terry Weaver (941-465-5856), Chairman of the FCA Allied Membership Committee. For any Cattlemen interested in exhibiting cattle, contact Doug Mayo (941-533-0765) Extension Livestock Agent

Florida Ruminant Nutrition Symposium

The annual Ruminant Nutrition Symposium will be held in Gainesville at the Holiday Inn West on January 14 and 15. Registration is \$55.00 if received before December 21. Late registration is \$65.00

The symposium is approved for eight ARPAS credits. If you need a registration form contact Mark Kistler, Okeechobee County Extension Director, at (941) 763-6469 or Pat Hogue, Highlands County Extension Director at (941) 386-6540.

Pasture Renovation

Pasture renovation has been defined as "the improvement of a pasture by partial or complete destruction of the sod, plus liming, fertilizing, weed control, and seeding as may be required to establish desirable plants." In Florida, our pasture renovation programs usually start in the fall with the plowing and planting of a cool season annual such as ryegrass, small grain, clover or a combination of these. The permanent pasture grass is planted the next year at the beginning of or during the summer rainy season.

The plowing or primary tillage done in the fall allows the cool season forage crop to be planted on a clean, tilled seed bed which usually means more and earlier production as compared to over seeding on a sod. Tillage in the fall and again after the cool season forage has stopped growing (May) provides for more complete destruction of any weeds and remnants of the old pasture sod. This type of strategy should result in a clean, smooth, well-prepared site for planting of the new pasture.

A similar strategy has incorporated the use of a herbicide in an attempt to insure complete kill of certain weedy grasses. The herbicide Roundup has been used in late summer to kill the old pasture sod and weedy plants such as smutgrass, and common bermudagrass. To be effective, the herbicide must be applied before plant growth slows. In the fall, a no-till drill is then used to plant the cool season forage into the killed sod. This practice would conserve soil moisture as compared to tillage, which could be an advantage in getting the cool season crop started. Producers should weigh the costs and advantages before choosing one system over another.

Source: Dr. C. G. Chambliss, Agronomy Department, UF/IFAS

The Beef CHECKOFF: Is It Working for You?



Since 1987 cattle producers across the nation have participated in the \$1 per head Beef Promotion Checkoff as a means to promote their product and fund research projects beneficial to the beef cattle industry. As most of you know, the Livestock marketing Association is now asking for a new referendum to decide whether to continue the Beef Checkoff. Petitions are going to have to be signed by enough producers across the U.S. including Florida in order for another referendum to be considered. As one who believes strongly in the Beef Checkoff as one of the best things the collective beef industry has done for itself, I would urge you to look at the issue carefully before considering signing a petition to put this to another vote. Consider whether the \$1 per head has had a beneficial effect, or whether you believe it is just one more dollar out of your pocket. It may be time to consider alternatives to the collection methods currently in place, but I submit that if \$1 per head contributes to unprofitability, it may be time to consider doing something else other than beef cattle production.

Several analyses of the Beef Checkoff have been done and have reached the conclusion that it

is working for numerous reasons, but a recent research project conducted by Dr. Ron Ward, professor of Economics at the University of Florida, IFAS, Food and Resource Economics Department, actually was able to reach monetary conclusions as to whether the Checkoff was working for the beef industry or not. The public relations and advertising campaigns funded by the checkoff have improved the image of the beef industry as a whole, and have increased the demand for beef by consumers when other influences on the market are eliminated. We have lost market share with consumers to chicken and pork, but without the checkoff and the ad campaign it funds, we would have lost more. Although the serving of beef per household member, by consumers, has dropped by one serving since 1984, when the number of servings is calculated out to pounds of beef consumed, there is actually a half pound gain realized because of increased production and the increased demand created by the checkoff.

Research and public relations efforts funded by the checkoff have dispelled the negative image portrayed about health problems created by consuming beef, and have dispelled myths about other health related issues and beef, such as, E. Coli and BSE.

Foreign marketing efforts funded by the Beef Checkoff have resulted in increased sales and demand for U.S. beef and beef products in numerous foreign countries.

In the final analysis, Dr. Ward's research shows that additional demand for beef produced in the U.S. both at home and abroad resulting from efforts funded by the Beef Checkoff have ultimately resulted in higher prices for both live and fed cattle than would have been received without the checkoff efforts. Although the fed cattle have had a slightly greater benefit in prices than the live markets, based on the economical analysis done by Dr. Ward, the Checkoff has resulted in about \$6 per head additional income for 500 pound calves. Although \$6 doesn't seem like much, consider that it only took a \$1 investment to get that additional income. Is the \$1 investment worth getting \$6 back? You will each have to be the judge of that, but also consider all the advertisements you see about beef today compared to before the Checkoff and all the positive impact it has made for the industry, and if we do away the checkoff where will the money come from to continue to compete with pork and chicken and the public relations efforts they have ongoing. We can't afford to lose more market share to them, and we're the only ones who will tell the beef story, but the funding has to be available to do it.

And one final point, USDA estimates that if enough signatures are gathered to force a referendum, it would cost somewhere between \$3 and \$4 million in physical costs of registration, communication with producers, and voting to conduct the referendum. This does not include the cost of staff and volunteer time that will need to be spent dealing with the referendum, and the total cost will have to be paid by Checkoff dollars. The nearly \$4 million estimate is as much or more that was spent developing the foreign market in 1997.

Dr. Ward's, as well as the other articles evaluating the checkoff, are available for viewing on the National Cattlemen's Beef Association home page at <http://www.beef.org>.

Source: News From The Bull Pen, Highlands County Extension Newsletter

DeSoto County Ag Center



As many of you are aware, the Legislature last Spring gave \$200,000 to DeSoto County for the purpose of constructing an Agriculture Center. On December 1, 1998, the County signed a contract with Gene and Phil Turner for the donation of 40 acres across from the High School. The initial money from the Legislature will be needed for architectural work, permits, etc. More money will be needed from the Legislature in order to begin initial construction, which will probably be done in phases.

The need for such a facility is great. The Ag Center will be used to conduct educational programs, 4-H activities, and many other important community events. It will provide the Extension Office a larger place to display and house the important information and resources our community needs. During times of natural disaster, the Ag Center will provide much needed shelter relief space.

We again need your help to make the Agriculture Center a reality for DeSoto County. Please write letters to the following Legislators and tell them the need for an Agriculture Center in DeSoto County:



*Representative Lindsay M. Harrington
115 Tamiami Trail, Unit #2110
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
Address to: "The Honorable Lindsay Harrington"*

*Senator John McKay
2424 Manatee Avenue West, Suite 101
Bradenton, FL 34250
Address to: "The Honorable John McKay"*

*DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners
Chairman Mr. Bob Avant
201 East Oak Street
Arcadia, FL 34266
Address to: "Commissioner Bob Avant"*

I encourage all citizens from DeSoto County to write letters to all three persons. All letters can be dropped off at the Extension Office or mailed directly to the addresses above. Thank you for your support!

*I would like to wish you and your families
a Happy Holiday Season and a
Prosperous New Year!
-Jim*

If you have any comments or need additional information, please contact the DeSoto County Extension Office at (941) 993-4846.

Sincerely,

James F. Selph,

DeSoto County Extension Director, IV, Livestock

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



[James F. Selph](#)



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