

DESOTO COUNTY BEEF NEWSLETTER

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

7	Beef Cattle Herd Health Seminar - Okeechobee Extension Office, located at 458 Highway 98 North, Okeechobee, 1:00 - 4:15 PM
8	Lawn and Gardens Program - Family Service Center Annex, 1:00 - 4:00 PM
14	Pesticide Safety for Mixers and Loaders - Hardee County Extension Service, Wauchula, 7:30 - 9:00 AM, (1.5 CEUs)
14	Pesticide Safety for Mixers and Loaders - Hardee County Extension Service, Wauchula, 3:00 - 5:30 PM, (1.5 CEUs)
19-24	DeSoto County Fair
21	Swine Show - DeSoto County Fairgrounds, 7:00 PM
22	Steer Show - DeSoto County Fairgrounds, 7:00 PM
23	Steer and Swine Sale - DeSoto County Fairgrounds, 7:00 PM

April

19	DeSoto County Cattlemen's Association Spring Meeting - Family Service Center Annex, 7:00 p.m.
20	Ag in the Classroom Program - DeSoto County Middle School, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
21	Marketing Florida Cattle Program - Sebring, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
24-26	18th Annual Reproductive Management School - Hardee County Agri-Civic Center, Wauchula
TBA	Pesticide License Review and Testing location TBA

May

2-4	50th Annual Beef Cattle Short Course - Sheraton Hotel, Gainesville
14-18	Aquatic Weed Control Short Course - Fort Lauderdale
31	4-H Award Reception - Family Service Center Annex, 6:00 PM

Shrink of Marketed Calves

Body weight loss or shrink is a normal occurrence of calves once removed from the cow, feed, or even their accustomed surroundings. Calves will shrink about 3% during the first 4 to 5 hours following removal from the cow or feed. Three percent shrink has become the cattle industry standard as a basis for establishing sale weight of newly weaned calves.

If calves are gathered and immediately weighed for sale, their live weight is shrunk (reduced) by 3% to establish a sale weight. In the trade this is termed pencil shrink. The 3% pencil shrink approximates live weight loss by calves sold through an auction market.

Shrink is a phenomenon the seller must be aware of because it influences the value of a calf. A 500 pound steer calf on today's market sells for \$4 to \$5 less for every 1% increase in shrink. A truck load of calves will bring \$400 to \$500 less for each 1% increase in shrink.

An example of how rapidly shrink occurs, we penned a group of crossbred steers at weaning for 6 hours without feed or water. These calves averaged 501 pounds when removed from the cow and shrunk 4.5% to an average weight of 478 pounds six hours later.

To estimate auction market shrink, Extension workers in North Carolina compared calf arrival weights at the auction market with calf weights when sold. They found a shrink of 2% and this did not include weight losses prior to the calf's arrival at the auction market.

North Dakota researchers used steer and heifer calves that were on a preconditioning and backgrounding program to study marketing shrink. Calves transported from the farm to the auction market and placed on hay and water the day before the sale lost 6.2% of their on farm weight by the time they were sold, while calves hauled to the auction market the day of the sale and sold within 2 hours after arrival lost only 2.4% of their on farm weight when sold.

The important principle to remember is that shrink is closely related to the time a calf has been removed from the cow or feed. Calves sold at the ranch should be gathered as easily as possible, weighed immediately, and adjusted to an agreed upon pencil shrink.

If ranch marketed calves are loaded on the truck and hauled a distance for weighing the pencil shrink should be adjusted accordingly. If calves are weighed on the truck, insist that trucks arrive on time such that calves do not remain penned for extended periods.

For calves sold at an auction market, the seller should gather calves with limited commotion then haul them immediately to the auction market. Try to deliver calves such that they are sold as quickly as possible after arrival.

It is recognized that many ranchers with small herds must pen calves the day before the sale. Some ranchers even deliver calves to the auction market the day before the sale. It is important that these calves be provided hay and water, but they will still lose considerable weight.

Again, obtain a sale weight on calves in as short a time as possible after removal from the cow or feed. This is true for calves sold at the ranch or the auction market. Remember, buyers are well aware of shrink and also use it to their advantage.

Article provided by the Range Cattle REC Newsletter, Dr. Findlay Pate, Author

Beef Cattle E-mail Update

The use of e-mail to communicate has been expanding greatly in the past few years. I would like to form an e-mail list of cattle producers in DeSoto County in order to provide those of you with Internet access current and up to date Beef Cattle information. It will be especially useful information in an emergency such as a screw worm. If you would like to participate in this list by e-mailing your e-mail address to jselph@ifas.ufl.edu or by calling the Extension Office at (863) 993-4846.

This list will only be used in our office to provide you with the most up-to date information. This list will not be a junk mail list and will not be given out for others use.

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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