

Okeechobee Livestock Letter

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UP COMING EVENTS

December 1997		
4-5	FCA Quarterly	Ocala
6	Hereford Bull Sale	Wauchula
8-10	Master Hoof Care Program	Gainesville
15	Charolais Bull Sale	Arcadia
17	Fall Beef Forum	Okeechobee
29	Slaughter Cow and Bull Sale	Arcadia Livestock Market
January 1998		
13	Ocala Bull Sale	SE Livestock Pavillion, Ocala
13-14	Land & Resource Mgmt School	Arcadia
15-16	Ruminant Nutrition Symposium	Gainesville
22	Florida Cattlemen's Institute	Kissimmee

Raising Dairy Calves

The recent calf raising program held at the Extension Office provided some good information and reminders of the importance of proper care of the newborn calf. This little creature is an important asset to the dairy. We should occasionally revisit our standards for care now and then. A few highlights follow:

- If not breathing, do not shake by the rear legs or pound on the chest. Instead, rotate your finger up the nostril about 2 inches to stimulate the nerve that initiates breathing.
- Tie or clip the navel about 2 inches from the body no closer. (If string is used, it should be soaked in alcohol)
- Soak the navel stump in 7% tincture of iodine (household iodine is not adequate). Ideally, milk colostrum immediately, feeding (tubing if necessary), 4-5% of the birth weight within 30 minutes of birth.
- Within 24 hours, the calf should get 12-15% of its birth weight in three feedings
- True colostrum comes only from the first milking. The next 4-5 days is transitional milk.
- The percentage of immunoglobulin in colostrum from mature cows may be more than twice that in the colostrum of first-calf heifers.
- Cows who have lived the longest on the dairy will likely provide the colostrum with the best protection for the calf over that of a two year old or newly purchased cow.
- A calf loses its ability to absorb immunoglobulin within 24 hours after birth. Most absorption will take place in the first 4 hours.
- Don't assume the calf and dam have taken care of this in the middle of the night. They most likely haven't.
- The passive immunity imparted to the calf from colostrum will usually last about 2 months, long enough for the calf to begin producing its own antibodies.
- The calf may continue to benefit from the protection of immunoglobulin in the intestinal tract as long as it is fed milk containing immunoglobulin.

Dairy Business Analysis Program

Dr. Mike DeLorenzo, IFAS Dairy and Poultry Sciences Department; Russ Giesy, Multi-County Dairy Agent and Pat Miller, Okeechobee County Extension Agent, returned 1996 year end business analysis to several Okeechobee County dairies the third week of November. Participants were pleased with their reports, finding the various comparisons interesting.

The final summary will be available soon. Below are some preliminary numbers:

Receipts per cwt. Milk Sold			
Ave. All Dairies	1995	1996	Change
Milk Sales	\$15.30	\$18.40	\$3.10
Cow Sales	.83	.85	.02
Calf Sales	.11	.16	.05
Other Livestock	.08	.09	.01
Gov't Rcpts	.02	.12	.10
Crops	.18	.05	-.13
Custom Work	.00	.06	.06
Gas Tax Refund	.03	.00	-.03
Total Operating Receipts	16.76	19.92	3.16

Expenses per cwt. Milk Sold			
Ave. All Dairies	1995	1996	Change
Personnel	\$2.74	\$2.50	\$-.24
Feed	7.49	8.92	1.43
Crops	.25	.29	.04
Machinery	.78	.82	.04
Livestock	1.93	2.24	.31
Marketing	1.19	1.01	-.18
Real Estate	.48	.46	-.02
Other	1.64	1.22	-.42

Total Operating Expenses	16.51	17.46	.95
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After the first of the year (around tax time), we will be contacting the participating dairies for 1997 data.

Anyone who would like to participate, who haven't thus far is encouraged to do so. Just let Pat know your interest. We are certain you would find the resulting information of interest.

The process the first time around is a little time consuming, but well worth it.

Virtually everyone who has participated have found the information comparing your business with others most interesting.

Consider giving it a try. The program has proven valuable industry wide in nailing down the real cost of milk production in Florida. The more data we have, the more accurate the outcome.

It's painless and **free**.

Master Hoof Care Technician Program

Back in May, several dairies sent their hoof trimming personnel to a hoof trimming training and demonstration program. We have two follow-up items for you.

1. It took considerable doing, but Pat has copies of Dr. VanAmstel's publication available at your request. It might be useful for review.

2. December 8-10, Dr. Shearer, Dr. VanAmstel and others are conducting a follow-up program for your hoof care personnel. They have developed a Master Hoof Care Technician Training Program. Dave Bray and Jan Shearer are leading this effort.

While this is the first of this kind of program, they intend to repeat it next year. For now, the program is being advertised on limited basis for our Okeechobee folks that participated previously.

You should have received a flyer concerning the program from Dave. If you haven't, let Pat know. Registration deadline is December 1!

So what's different between this and what we did here? **Much more detail!** This program is intensive training. Successful conclusion of the program, including passing written and practical tests will garner a certificate for

the participant. Successful participants will be **Certified Hoof Care Technicians**. Not only will they be performing their jobs correctly but will be capable of teaching others to do the same.

Fall Beef Forum

On December 17 we will be holding a Fall Beef Forum at the Extension office beginning at 9:00 AM. Lunch is sponsored by Schering-Plough Animal Health. Please make your reservations by Monday, December 15 in order for us to plan for lunch.

The Forum will focus on supplementation programs, preparing for the breeding season, and a discussion and live animal demonstration on the use of ultrasound to measure carcass traits. See the enclosed flyer for more detail.

FL Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show

The 15th annual FL Cattlemen's Institute is scheduled for January 22, 1998 at the Kissimmee Valley Agricultural Center in Kissimmee. This year's theme is *Building Performance for the Market*. A highlight this year will be Mark Gardiner, Gardiner Angus Ranch, Ashland, KS. The Gardiner's are known world-wide for their superior genetics. We also hope to have a large cattle exhibit this year. The cattle tent will be outside at the entrance to the trade show. See the attached brochure for the full program agenda.

The host hotel again will be the Howard Johnson Kissimmee Lodge, 2323 East Hwy 192, (407) 846-4900. Room rates are \$26.00 per night. Please make your reservations by January 8 and mention the Florida Cattlemen's Institute.

Please call the Extension office by Tuesday, January 20 to RSVP in order for us to plan for lunch. Last year we served over 700 lunches so it is very important that we get an accurate count of those who will be attending.

Land and Resource Management School

The South Florida Beef-Forage Program is planning another producer school, Land & Resource Management School, for January 13-14 1998 in Arcadia.

.The emphasis of this school is on managing the land to its fullest extent while sustaining range and environmental resources. This year we will focus on alternative income sources, specifically wildlife & exotic game options and ecotourism/recreation options. More details on this school will follow shortly.

South Florida Beef/Forage Program Website

The South Florida Beef-Forage Program has developed a website for cattlemen. Producers will be able to access a calendar of events for the Florida Cattle industry, download relevant publication review programs sponsored by the South Florida Beef-Forage Program, subscribe to a cattle discussion group, review profiles of those counties involved in the program, and link to other agricultural websites. There are also links to other UF/IFAS departments and research centers.

The Website address is <http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~sfbfp.html>.

Coyote Research

The Southwest Florida Research & Education Center, UF/IFAS, Immokalee, is conducting research to study the ecology and potential effects of increasing coyote populations on both agriculture and wildlife. They are attempting to collect coyote carcasses to obtain data on their diet, ecology, and to generate information on coyote predation of livestock.

If you find a coyote carcass, please put it on ice or in a freezer as soon as possible. Contact Mark Kistler at the Extension office for pickup. He will then contact the research center to schedule pickup from your ranch.

Weed Field Day Results

On October 29, we held a very informative Weed Field Day at Lanier Ranch (Sloane-Ray Dairy). The research results discussed dealt with tropical soda apple and dogfennel.

Broadcast spray application of Weedmaster (2 qt/A), Remedy (1 qt./A), Banvel (2q./A), Velpar (1qt/A) resulted in 100% control of Tropical Soda Apple (mother plants) up to 150 days after treatment. Chemical costs were estimated to be \$13.00/A for Weedmaster, \$20.00/A for Remedy, \$39.00/A for Banvel and \$17.00/A for Velpar.

Herbicides were also applied using the Burch Wet Blade. This new technology allows you to apply herbicides to vegetation through the action of mowing blades. Herbicide is delivered from flow-thru cells to an area underneath the cutting blade. The cut stem is all that comes in contact with the herbicide which is directly applied into the wound at the moment of cutting. Burch Wet Blade application of Weedmaster (2qt/A) resulted in 95% control of TSA at 150 days after treatment with a chemical cost of \$13.00/A, Banvel (2qt/A) resulted in 94% control of TSA at 150 days after treatment with a chemical cost of \$39.00/A, Velpar (1qt./A) resulted in 95% control at 150 days after treatment with a chemical cost of \$17.00/A.

One thing to remember is that this is only one year's data. This study will continue and more reliable results will be reported. If you plan on using any of these treatments, please call Mark Kistler to discuss these results further. Also, always read the herbicide label. The label is the law!

Other research discussed included using biocontrol agents to control TSA, evaluation of different herbicide treatment and application methods for controlling dogfennel.

FL Automated Weather Network

Federal mandates in February 1996, prevented the National Weather Service from providing specialized frost and freeze warnings for agriculture in Florida. This resulted in a \$300 million loss to agriculture.

As a result, Florida agriculture organizations, Bob Graham and the Florida Legislature teamed up to secure \$125,000 to initiate the "Florida Automated Weather Network".

For the price of a phone call to Gainesville, growers will be able to access the user friendly voice-synthesized information system to obtain real-time weather data from this system 24 hours a day. Growers will get specific weather data directly from stations located in or near their local production areas.

On December 15, weather data will be available by telephone from Gainesville (352) 846-3100 or the following Internet website: <http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu>. The entire 15 station system will not be functional until January 1.

Each solar-powered weather station will measure temperature, wind speed and direction, rainfall, relative humidity, barometric pressure, leaf wetness and solar radiation at two, six and thirty feet.

Weather data will be recorded continuously and transmitted to the main computer in Gainesville at 15 minute intervals.

Junk Science

I could not resist passing this item along. Almost a year ago, Mary Ann Gosa, Natural Resources Specialist with the Florida Farm Bureau related in a program I attended a story about a researcher who attempted to prove that the American public was being dupped by persons citing "junk science" to alarm people about environmental issues.

The crux of the story was he mailed letters to a large number of persons explaining that a fictitious company was manufacturing a diabolical chemical that could cause excessive sweating and vomiting, was a major component of acid rain, caused severe burns in its gaseous state, could cause death if inhaled excessively, decreased automobile break effectiveness and more. The name of the chemical was di-hydroxy oxide.

Recently, you may have noticed similar trial carried out by a student for a science fair project in Idaho. Both found a large majority of people ready and willing to bar this terrible chemical.

Episodes like these and the recent editorial in the Gainesville newspaper demonstrate the problems we have. I admit that I too am relating third party hear-say and cannot document my sources other than the Okeechobee News and Gainesville Sun, but it is a fascinating story and if true or not exemplifies the falsehoods we must face and challenge in agriculture today.

We must be prepared to battle these factions who are willing to stretch the truth and often create their own.
(P.S., another way to spell di-hydroxy oxide: is H₂O)

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FLORIDA DHIA GEOGRAPHIC COMPARISON, JULY 1997

Item	North	Middle	South
No. of Herds	69	18	32
No. of Cows	381	850	653
% in Milk	81.8	83.2	83.3
Milk lbs.- All Cows	38.2	42.7	37.5
Milk lbs.- Milking Cows	46.5	51.1	45.0
Concentrate Fed. lbs	25.9	33.6	35.3
Concentrate Cost	2.19	2.46	2.67
Total Feed Cost	2.94	3.55	3.57
Value of Milk..\$	5.68	6.58	5.87
Value above Feed Cost	2.80	3.15	2.75
Feed Cost per cwt Milk	7.82	8.36	8.82
Rolling Herd avg.- Milk lbs.	16507	18718	16067
% Left Herd	35.7	32.3	39.9
Avg. Days in Milk	207	219	225

Test period persistency	100	97	100
Avg. Age - 1st Lactation	25.7	25.6	25.7
Peak Milk - 1st Lactation	63.8	71.8	64.7
ME Milk - 1st Lactation	18403	19186	17864
Avg. Sire PTA\$ - 1st Lactation	115	116	108
Avg. Age - 2nd Lactation	39.1	39.6	40.5
Peak Milk - 2nd Lactation	77.7	84.6	79.0
ME Milk - 2nd Lactation	18705	19632	18380
Avg. Sire PTA\$ - 2nd Lactation	99	105	106
Avg. Age - 3+ Lactation	67.1	66.2	65.3
Peak Milk - 3+ Lactation	83.5	89.7	81.3
ME Milk - 3+ Lactation	18084	18942	17190
Avg Sire PTA\$ - 3+ Lactation	58	72	75
% Open	23.8	18.3	17.7
% Open VWP-100 Days @ 1st Serv	43.3	48.1	54.5
% Open over 100 Days @ 1st Serv	33.0	33.7	27.8
Avg Days Dry	73	72	76
Avg. PTA\$ for Service Sires	105	133	136
Avg. Days to 1st Breeding	94	99	92
% Heats Observed	35.8	44.2	43.0
Proj. Calving Interval	14.5	14.8	14.9
Avg. Days Open	160	169	172
% Successful - All Services	49.6	35.1	37.6
W Successful - First Service	52.7	37.0	37.3
Standardized 150-Day Milk lbs.	56.2	61.2	55.6
SCCS<4	42	47	40

SCCS=4	19	17	16
SCCS=5	14	14	17
SCCS=6	11	9	12
SCCS>6	14	12	14
Average SCC Score	4.0	3.8	4.1
T.D. Bulk Tank Deviation	3.1	0.4	1.7
Yr. Bulk Tank Deviation %	2.6	1.1	0.9

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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