



UNIVERSITY OF  
FLORIDA

Cooperative Extension Service

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

# Okaloosa Field and Livestock Report

Okaloosa County Extension Service

5479 Old Bethel Road

Crestview, Florida 32536-5513

Issue 118

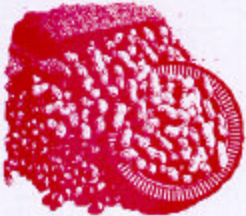
January 2003

## January – February 2003

### Dates to Remember

- February 4, 11, 18, 25** Master Wildlifer Program  
Crestview Extension Office  
6:00-9:00 PM
- February 17** Crop Production Meeting  
Crestview Extension Office  
6:30 P.M.
- February 25-28** Hunter's Education Course  
Crestview Extension Office  
6:00-9:00 PM
- March 6** Florida Panhandle Peanut Short Course  
Jackson County Agriculture Center

**Okaloosa Extension Web Site**  
<http://okaloosa.ifas.ufl.edu/>





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**BEEF CATTLE MANAGEMENT CALENDAR**

**November**

- ☒ Apply lime for summer crops.
- ☒ Check for lice and treat if necessary.
- ☒ Control weeds in cool season pastures.
- ☒ Begin grazing winter clover pastures when approximately 6 inches high. Rye should be 12-18 inches high.
- ☒ Check mineral feeders.
- ☒ Put bulls out for October calving season.
- ☒ Make up breeding herd lists if using single sire herds.
- ☒ Watch for calf scours.
- ☒ Give bulls extra feed and care so they will be in condition for breeding season.
- ☒ Make sure cow herd has access to adequate fresh water.
- ☒ Buy only performance tested bulls with superior records.
- ☒ Get taxes filed.
- ☒ Discuss herd health with you veterinarian and outline a program for the year. Review herd health program with your veterinarian regularly.
- ☒ Carry a pocket notebook to record heat, breeding abnormalities, discharges, abortions, retained placentas, difficult calvings and other data.
- ☒ Observe cow herd for calving difficulties.
- ☒ Watch for grass tetany on winter pastures.
- ☒ Increase magnesium levels in mineral mixes if grass tetany has been previous problem (if you are not already using a high magnesium mineral).
- ☒ Examine bulls for breeding soundness and semen quality prior to the breeding season.
- ☒ Vaccinate cows and heifers against vibriosis and leptospirosis prior to the breeding season.

**February**

- ☒ Top dress winter forages, if needed.
- ☒ Check and fill mineral feeders.
- ☒ Put bulls out with breeding herd.

- ☒ Work calves (identify, implant with growth stimulant, vaccinate, etc.).
- ☒ Make sure lactating cows are receiving an adequate level of energy.
- ☒ Watch calves for signs of respiratory diseases.
- ☒ Cull cows that failed to calve while prices are seasonally up.
- ☒ Check for lice and treat if needed.

Source: Animal Science Newsletter, January 2003



## Agricultural Land Classification Notice Change

**Don't throw out your tax benefit!** Growers and farmers in most Florida counties are now required to fill out and send in the postcard-sized green renewal cards (Form DR-499C) to retain your agricultural property tax classification. Growers will receive the agricultural land classification renewal cards in the mail in early to mid-January from your property appraiser. **You must fill it out and send it back by March 1<sup>st</sup> otherwise you may lose your**

**agricultural land classification and your tax benefit. Bottom-line: If you don't return the card, then you may pay much higher property taxes!**

In the past, the agricultural land classification application operated by automatic renewal in most Florida counties just as the Florida homestead exemption currently does. In the past, growers and farmers sent in the cards (or contacted their property appraisers) only when land ownership or use had changed. **Now the opposite is true – you must certify your land use has not changed or risk losing your agricultural land classification.**

The Florida statute reads: "...land that has received an agricultural classification from the property appraiser, the value adjustment board or a court of competent jurisdiction...is entitled to receive such classification in any subsequent year until such agricultural use of the land is abandoned or discontinued, the land is diverted to a non-agricultural use, or the land is reclassified as nonagricultural..."

The law further states: "The property appraiser must, no later than January 15 of each year, provide notice to the owner of the land that was classified agricultural in the previous year informing the owner of the requirements of this paragraph **and requiring the owner to certify that neither the ownership nor the use of the land has changed..**"

Return the cards as soon as you receive them from your property appraiser. Otherwise, the difference in your tax assessments may be huge!



## Southern feeder Cattle Survey Results

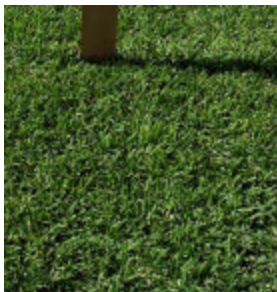
Feedyards in the High Plains were surveyed and asked to critique the quality and consistency of Southern feeder cattle and calves. Issues and problems with these cattle were quantified and insight into how the cattle can be improved was made. The survey was conducted by Slaven Associates of Cimarron, Kansas.

The survey indicated that cattle feeders are more knowledgeable of Southern feeder cattle performance and carcass characteristics than they were a decade ago. Much of this was due to the increase use of grid and formula marketing. In the last ten years, survey respondents indicated cattle improved the most in daily gains and feed efficiency. Health was rated the lowest, with little improvement in the last ten years. Forty-five percent of cattle feeders indicated that health was the same or worse than a decade ago. Eighty-eight percent of respondents indicated that Southern cattle are worse or much worse than Northern cattle for health, performance, and carcass characteristics. Clearly, cattle feeders believe Southern cattle are inferior to Northern cattle.

There was a strong indication that cattle producers should change the genetics of their herd. Most feeders believe that cattle are fed long enough to express their genetic potential for carcass quality, and changing the genetics is the only way to improve carcass traits. As expected a crossbred animal is preferred. The recommended breeding percentages were 25 to 50% exotic, 25 to 75% British breeds, and 25% or less heat adapted breeds. Based on the cattle feeders' response, virtually all breeds can be used in a planned crossbreeding program to yield a desirable feeder calf. Cattle feeders believe that genetics should be changed to improve the marbling ability of the cattle more than the overall performance. Selling on a grid is rapidly increasing, with 85% of respondents selling at least some of their cattle via a grid or formula. This survey show the importance of a planned crossbreeding program that takes into account both performance and carcass traits.

Cattle feeders are willing to pay premiums for cattle with a strong health history and a desirable breed composition. Thus, more feeder calf sales that document health history and breed composition are needed. There was a strong desire to not have any horned or bull calves leaving the Southeast. Calves coming into feedlots as bulls or with horns create a huge management problem.

The most often cited problems with Southern cattle were poor health, lack of uniformity, and poor marbling ability. The poor marbling ability of Southern as compared to Northern cattle was blamed almost solely on genetics. Southern cattle were rated highest for daily gains and feed efficiency, but were still rated lower than Northern cattle for health, performance, and carcass characteristics. Producers that are serious about making a profit need to take this information and employ necessary changes to upgrade the quality of Southern cattle.



### **Bermudagrass Establishment**

Most improved hybrid bermudagrasses can be established by planting dug sprigs from mid January through March. This is especially true for those that produce lots of rhizomes. The stargrasses, which do not produce rhizomes, and Coastcross-1 bermudagrass, which produces very few rhizomes, can be planted in the summer from tops. All of the bermudagrasses can be established by planting tops in the summer, but there may be some advantages for planting dug sprigs at the beginning of the growing season. Earlier planting may result in more complete coverage and more forage production during the establishment year. Since this is a cooler time of the year, heat damage ("scalding") is avoided. There is usually less weed competition in the spring as compared to

summer plantings. On the other hand, failure may result from a spring drought (April-May). This is especially true for peninsular Florida.

Source: Agronomy Notes, January 2003



## Cool Season Forages

Ryegrass, small grains, tall fescue, cool-season legumes, and mixtures of these forages may need extra attention in February.

**Nitrogen** – The cool season grasses will need additional nitrogen for sustained vigorous growth.

Apply an additional 50 to 65 lb./A of N. Two hundred lb. of ammonium nitrate contains approximately 67 lb. of N. Ammonium sulphate is 21% nitrogen and 24% sulphur. Three hundred pounds per acre would apply 63 lb. of N. If possible, apply the N after a grazing cycle when the grass has been grazed down and apply later in the day when the dew has dried.

On flatwoods soil where ryegrass is commonly grown, nitrogen can be lost through the process of denitrification. This is the process, where under flooded conditions, certain bacteria convert nitrate to nitrogen gas and the nitrogen goes out of the soil into the air. Plants will turn a light yellow in color, which is an indicator of nitrogen deficiency. This usually occurs as yellow spots in the pasture that have poor growth. These spots will occur in depressions or swells where water accumulates and stands or where the soil stays completely saturated for several days.

**Grazing Management** – Cross fencing and rotational grazing (stocking) provide the opportunity to prevent overgrazing. Allow pastures to grow 6 to 10" tall and then graze. When the cool season forages have been grazed down to a 2 to 3" stubble height, the animals should be moved to a new pasture. Overgrazing slows the rate of recovery and reduces future growth. Cross fencing of a large pasture with an electric fence can provide the subdivisions needed for rotational grazing. Rotational grazing (stocking) promotes uniform grazing and maximum use of the forage. If acreage is limited or growth reduced, use the practice of "Limit Grazing". Limit grazing is the practice of moving the cattle in and out of the cool season pasture each day. Allowing them to graze for two hours or less will conserve forage; yet permit the animals to obtain some protein and energy to supplement their diet.

Source: Agronomy Notes, January 2003



## Liming Pastures

January and February may be an opportune time to lime pastures, if soil testing indicates that lime is needed. This is especially true for those areas that are to be renovated and replanted in the spring or summer since it provides an opportunity for the lime to be incorporated. Lime should be incorporated into the soil whenever possible since lime reacts with the soil with which it contacts. Surface applied lime neutralizes the soil acidity of the surface soil, but has little immediate effect on the soil pH

below the top inch or so. Most pastures probably do not need to be limed. Tropical grasses in general do not require a high pH. Bahiagrass grows well at a pH of 5.0 to 5.5. The cool season legumes and grasses do require a higher pH and where these are grown, liming may be needed more frequently than is required on our permanent grass pastures. Also, Bermudagrass hay fields where high rates of nitrogen fertilizer are applied may require more frequent liming. Do not apply lime to pastures unless it is needed as indicated by soil testing. To do so, will be a waste of lime and money.

Be aware that applying lime to a pasture sod, forms a thin layer of soil at the surface that has a high pH. The high pH at the soil surface may bring about volatilization of ammonia when ammonium fertilizers, such as urea-ammonium nitrate solutions, come in contact with it. Therefore, do not put out lime and nitrogen at the same time. For late winter-spring applications, apply the nitrogen first and allow enough time for a rain to move it into the soil before applying the lime.

Source: Agronomy Notes, January 2003



### Soil Test Depth For Long Term Strip Till and No-till Fields

We normally recommend using two depths of soil tests for fields that have not had deep tillage for a number of years. A soil sample that is from the top 2 inches to make sure pH and calcium levels are not too high or low and a normal 6 inch deep sample to determine total amounts of nutrients available in the root zone. We saw several fields of strip tilled peanuts this year that had severe bronzing due to manganese deficiency because the pH in the top 2 inches was 7 or higher while the normal 6 inch soil sample showed everything to be in the normal range. Some of these high pH fields had a lower yield by as much as 1500 lbs./A. This condition could have been over come by use of sulfur materials to lower the surface pH or by use of manganese sulfate as a foliar spray on peanuts. Other crops need to be monitored as well since manganese deficiencies are very common on row crops in Florida.

Source: Agronomy Notes, January 2003



### Farmers Could Fact Tax Problems With Crop Disaster

**DROUGHT, HURRICANES, WET WEATHER, etc.** What else could possibly go wrong? **TAXES!** How can taxes be a problem when crops have been reduced by 40 to 100 percent and there is barely enough income to pay production costs? There are several ways taxes can create problems for the unwary.

In 1995 and 1998 when hurricanes and drought hit, most crops were reduced by 40 to 60 percent. Some farmers in their haste to settle accounts with lenders and suppliers sold their crop at harvest without any tax management. These unfortunate farmers realized later their mistake. What was their mistake? They sold practically two crops in one year. The carry over from the prior year combined with the sell of the damaged crop produced a lot of taxable income to be offset by only one year's expenses.

Carry over of last year's crop and/or prepaid expenses for this production year contributes to taxable income for this year in one way or another. Last year's crop sold this year is simply taxable income this year. Prepaying expenses last year for this year's crop in essence moved last year's tax liability to this year. These in themselves may not cause a tax liability problem but combined with this year's crop sales, crop insurance money, and possible government money you could be looking at a high tax liability. Postponing the receipt of money from crop sales, crop insurance, and any government money is usually not an option since this money is needed to pay lenders and vendors for production expenses for this year's crop.

**So what is the solution?** Here are a few suggestions that may help: 1) If you do receive crop insurance money in this calendar year for THIS YEAR'S losses you can postpone the reporting of that income to next year even though you receive the money this year. Be advised however, that if you receive the crop insurance money for this year's losses in next calendar year you have to report the income that year. 2) If you receive any government disaster money (NOT program payments or LDP money) in this calendar year for THIS YEAR'S disaster you can postpone the reporting of that income to next year even though you receive the money this year. The same thing applies to the government disaster money as it does to crop insurance in that if you receive the money next year for this year's disaster you have to report the income that year. 3) If you do generate a high tax liability you may need to borrow money to prepay some expenses or borrow to pay taxes. Borrowing money to pay taxes is usually not a good idea but neither is going to jail. Borrowing to prepay expenses for the next year's crop is a better alternative, but additional interest expense for taking the loan out early reduces profit the next year. The bottom line is, if there is not enough money to go around, don't create additional debt with a tax liability.

Since natural disasters can't be controlled or predicted we need to focus on tax management, therefore my strongest suggestion is to consult with your tax advisor before December 31<sup>st</sup> to avoid any surprises at tax time.



### **Bollgard II Available in 2003**

Monsanto announced that it has received full United States regulatory clearance for its Bollgard II cotton. The announcement means that US cotton farmers will have access to cottonseed containing this technology for the 2003 planting season. Bollgard II is the second generation cotton developed by Monsanto and contains two genes, which express insect toxins in the cotton plant. Its predecessor, Bollgard, contained a single gene, which expressed an insect toxin.

Bollgard II is expected to provide growers with a broader range of insect control. The additional insects controlled by Bollgard II include the armyworm complex and the loopers. In addition, it will provide an additional assurance of delayed insect resistance to the technology.

As part of the registration conditions, EPA will require the same insect resistance management programs that growers follow for Bollgard cotton. Monsanto and the National Cotton Council have agreed to continue to stress the importance of insect resistance management for the

transgenic cottons to growers. USDA and the Food and Drug Administration confirmed the food, feed and environmental safety of this technology in 2002.

The clearance of Bollgard II in the US follows the successful completion of regulatory reviews by the Australian government. In September, Australia's Office of Gene Technology Regulator approved the commercial use of Bollgard II in cotton growing regions of New South Wales and South Queensland. Monsanto's original Bollgard was first marketed in 1996 and is being sold commercially in the United States, China, Mexico, Australia, Argentina, Columbia, South Africa and Indonesia. An estimated 16.8 million acres of Bollgard cotton were planted in 2001. This is a 28% increase from 2000.

Source: NFREC Newsletter, Volume 5, Issue 2, January 20, 2003, Richard Sprenkel

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