

Okaloosa County Extension

5479 Old Bethel Rd.

Crestview, Florida 32536-5512

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Calendar of Events



December 2006

Dec. 1, 2006-Jan. 31, 2007

FDACS Livestock Assistance Grant Program
Call (850) 689-5850 for information

12 Walton County Energy Expo
Call (850) 892-8172 for more information
Walton County Extension Office—DeFuniak Springs

13 Right-Of-Way and Invasive Weed Control
See Flyer
Crestview Extension Office
7:30 a.m.—2:10 p.m.

January 2007

8 Panhandle Cattleman's Association Meeting
Crestview Extension Office
7:00 p.m.
Members & Prospective Members



Beef Management Calendar

December

- Begin grazing small grain pastures (if ready).
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
- Deworm cows and heifers prior to winter feeding season.
- Observe regularly for calving difficulties.
- Rotate calving pastures to prevent diseases.
- Watch for scours in calves.

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- Investigate health of bulls before you buy.
- Have dead animals posted by a veterinarian or diagnostic laboratory.
- Complete review of management plan and update for next year. Check replacement heifers to be sure they will be ready to breed 3 - 4 weeks prior to the main cow herd.

January

- 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 your 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.

Source: Department of Animal Science, University of Florida

Beef Management: Castration

Source: Tim Wilson, Extension Animal Scientist-Beef Cattle, Livestock Newsletters, September/October, AS-1



Improving marketability, preventing males from breeding, reducing aggression and improving meat quality are just a few of the reasons producers incorporate castration into their operations. Often cattlemen discuss the premium they receive from selling steers rather than bulls at market. However, the truth is that producers who market their calves as steers rather than bulls are not receiving a premium, but are not being discounted.

Is castration worth it? A study conducted by Oklahoma State reports that is an evaluation of over 26,000 head of cattle sold in 18 sale barns, bulls were reduced in price by \$3.56 and \$2.24 per hundred pounds compared to steers during 1997 and 1999 respectively. These reductions could be seen as a 550 pound bull being reduced in price by \$20 and \$12 when compared to a 550 pound steer. The reduction in price for bulls was presumed lower due to the subsequent decreased performance expected after castration.

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The Okaloosa County Extension program provides research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. For persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations, please contact the Okaloosa County Extension Office at least 5 days prior to the program so that proper consideration may be given to the request.

Research from Texas A&M University reports that weaned intact bull calves that were shipped in load lots and castrated upon arrival had a 13.5% reduction in daily gain and a 10.3% reduction in season long gain. When the effects of castration were combined with the effects of morbidity, productivity decreased 24.8% compared to steers. Their conclusions from this study indicated that healthy steers were valued at \$22 more than healthy bulls and \$48 more than morbid bulls.

When to castrate - Castrating calves at a younger age versus at weaning or older has been proven to be less stressful. If possible, producers are encouraged to castrate during the spring or fall to reduce infection and disease. However, some calves are not born in conjunction with these time frames and must be castrated as soon as possible. The earlier a bull is castrated, the sooner he will overcome the stresses of this process and continue to grow.

Weight Gains - Producers who are concerned with weight gains after castration may consider using growth promoting implants. Research from the Georgia, Colorado, Oklahoma and South Dakota have all reported that calves that are implanted with an implant when castration is done at an early age can achieve similar if not better weight gains compared to calves that are castrated at weaning.

Castration can be a useful management tool that can increase the overall profitability of your calf crop. To take full advantage of this tool at the local stock barn, producers may want to sell steer calves in groups and emphasize that they have been castrated and healed. Otherwise, buyers may pay bull calf prices for steers that have been properly managed. If you have any questions regarding castration or any other management practice, please feel free to contact your county extension agent or contact me at (706) 624-1403.



Winter Feeding Tips

Source: Johnny Rossi, Livestock Newsletter, September/October, AS-1

Grouping cows and heifers - Grouping cattle according to nutritional needs will reduce feed costs and improve performance. Females should be separated into at least two groups: 1) first calf heifers/replacement heifers/thin cows; and 2) mature cows in a body condition score of 5 or greater. The heifers and thin cows often need 0.5 to 0.75% of body weight of supplement per day to maintain body condition score above a five. Mature cows in a BCS of 5 or greater generally need 0.5% of body weight or less per day. If winter pasture is the supplement of choice, mature cows often require 2 to 3 hours per day of grazing compared with 4 to 6 hours for heifers and thin cows.

Limit hay feeding losses - The best way to eliminate waste is to store hay under a cover. Expect losses of 20 to 30% for hay that is stored outside for six months prior to feeding. Hay feeding method can greatly reduce hay losses this winter. Feeding hay in rings results in losses of 5 to 6% compared with losses of 10 to 15% when using trailers or rolling out a one day supply. Using rings can save 10 to \$15 per cow over a 150 day feeding period.

Forage test - Testing forages for nutrient content can reduce feed costs by supplementing only the nutrients that are deficient in the forage, maintaining acceptable performance, and planning ahead for purchasing supplements. A nutrient analysis will determine the crude protein, total digestible nutrients and relative forage quality (indicator of digestibility) of hay. These numbers can

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be used to determine what supplement if any is required. A forage test including nitrates only costs \$10 per sample. A lactating cow requires about 11% protein, 58 to 60% TDN, whereas, a dry cow needs only 8% protein and 55% TDN. Your county extension agent can help formulate a balanced ration.

Monitor hay intake - A rule of thumb to use for hay intake is a dry cow will eat about 1.9 to 2% of body weight in hay daily and a lactating cow will eat about 2.4 to 2.5% of body weight daily. Cows will quickly increase or decrease hay consumption when different quality hays are fed. A quick drop in consumption is a good indicator that lower quality hay is being fed and supplementation is required.

Monitor body condition - Cows must be in a body condition score of 5 or greater for high rebreeding rates to occur. Constantly monitor body condition to ensure cows are in the proper body condition at the start of the breeding season. If cows are less than a BCS of 5 at the start of the breeding season, lower pregnancy rates and longer calving intervals are almost certain. Forage testing and BCS go hand-in-hand. Balancing a ration based on a forage test gives an excellent starting point for winter supplementation. Adjust ration if needed to keep BCS at 5 to 6.

Winter pasture grazing - Winter annual pastures are very high protein highly digestible forages. Limit grazing approximately 3 hours per day will provide about 30% of the nutrients a cow needs each day. A problem with using winter annuals is that there will likely be little or no grazing at some point during the winter. The best quality hay should be fed at this time, along with supplement if needed.

FDACS Announces Livestock Assistance Program

Florida has been allocated \$149,705 in federal funding to implement a Livestock Assistance Grant Program. The funding will assist agricultural producers in their recovery from last spring and summer's drought.



USDA identified eight Florida counties for the program, using the U.S. Drought Monitors from March 7 to August 31, 2006, as the basis for the selection. Any counties that were classified as being in D-3 or D-4 drought during that timeframe were included. The counties are: Bay, Escambia, Holmes, Jackson, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton and Washington.

Commercial farmers or ranchers with beef cattle, farmed bison, dairy cattle, sheep, or goats that suffered forage production losses are eligible for assistance.

To receive funding, eligible producers will need to complete a self-certification application that provides the maximum number of eligible livestock that were on site between March 7 and August 31, 2006. This application also has a section that requires producers to estimate livestock-related expenses incurred because of decreased forage supplies related to the 2006 drought. These expenses could include loss of forage production, costs of supplemental feed, cost of relocating cattle to new feed sources, increased feed transportation costs, and emergency water supply needs. Producers will not receive more relief than their losses. Payments are subject to tax.

Producers must complete the application for assistance so that it is received by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by 5:00 p.m. January 31, 2007, or be postmarked by that date. Applications and other information about the program will be available December 1, 2006, from a number of sources, including:

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- Online at <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/ai/> under Announcements, "Livestock Assistance Grant Program."
- University of Florida IFAS Extension offices located in qualified counties in Florida.
- Industry organizations: Florida Farm Bureau, Florida Cattlemen's Association, Southeast Milk Incorporated, Florida Dairy Goat Association, Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida, and Florida Meat Goat Association.
- Farm Service Agency offices located in qualified counties in Florida.

Complete applications should be mailed to, and any questions directed to:

Florida Department of Agriculture
 Division of Animal Industry
 Attn: Livestock Assistance Grant Program
 407 S. Calhoun St., Mail Stop M7
 Mayo Building, Room 323
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800

Telephone:

(850) 410-0900
 Fax: (850) 410-0915



The Okaloosa Extension office will offer pesticide training on December 13th in Crestview. This would be a good time to come and earn six CEUs toward renewal of your Private Applicator Ag license. We will offer the complete program for \$10.00. If you need only CORE CEUs you may attend the first two hours starting at 8:00 a.m. at no cost. Please register by calling (850) 689-5850.

Remember to renew the Private Applicator Ag license you must earn 4 CORE and 4 Category CEUs over the four year license period. If your license expires you must pass the exam to become licensed.

Wheat Varieties for 2006/2007

Source: David Wright, Extension Agronomist, University of Florida and Ron Barnett

Small grain prices are expected to be up some this coming year due to the lower than expected yields in some parts of the world.

This was an extremely dry year in Florida with lower than normal yields. More small grain acreage will be planted due to potential profits from some of the better yielding varieties. Yield data can be found online at www.griffin.uga.edu/swvt. Some of the better yielding wheat varieties for Florida are AGS 2000, which may need a fungicide, Pioneer 26R61, USG 3209, and a new one AGS 2060. The older varieties should be watched closely for disease and sprayed if needed.



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Estimated Effectiveness of Herbicides on Common Weeds in Florida Small Grains¹

WEEDS	Herbicides							
	2,4-D	Banvel	Buctril	Hoelon	MCPA	Sencor	Harmony Extra	Express
Wild mustard	G	E	G	P	G	G-E	E	E
Wild radish	G	G	F-G	P	G	G	E	E
Henbit	F-G	G	F-G	P	P-F	E	G	-
Evening primrose	G	G	G	P	E	G	E	F
Shepherds purse	G	G	E	P	G-E	E	E	-
Wild garlic	F	G	P	P	P	-	G-E	P
Common ragweed	G	G-E	E	P	F-G	G	P-F	-
Pigweeds	E	E	E	P	G-E	G	E	-
Thistles	G	G	G	P	G	-	F-G	-
Dandelion	E	E	E	P	E	-	-	-
Plantains	E	E	E	P	E	-	E	-
Curly dock	E	E	F-G	P	P	-	E	G
Dogfennel	G	E	E	P	F	-	E	-
Horsenettle	F	G	F	P	G	-	-	-
Horseweed	F	F	P	P	F	-	G	-
Goldenrod	F	F	P	-	G	-	-	-
Annual ryegrass	P	P	P	E	P	F-G	P	P

¹Estimated effectiveness based on herbicide rates recommended in this report. Effectiveness may vary depending on factors such as herbicide, time of application, soil type, and weather conditions.

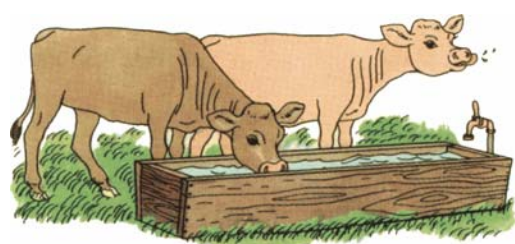
Weed Control Symbols: E = 90-100% control; G = 80-89% control; F = 60-79% control; P = Less than 60% control; - = insufficient observations



New Herbicide Resistant Cotton Coming

Source: Jason Ferrell, Extension Agronomist, University of Florida

Due to the development of glyphosate resistant weeds in the cotton belt, Monsanto is moving forward with dicamba-resistant cotton. This technology is several years away from release, but it will likely give highly effective and reliable control to glyphosate-resistant weeds such as Palmer pigweed, cocklebur, ragweed and horseweed. This technology is expected to be coupled with BollGuard and Roundup Ready.



Corn Supplies

Source: David Wright, Extension Agronomist, University of Florida

It is expected that corn stockpiles will be depleted in the U.S. by 2008 due to the high amount being used in ethanol production. With ethanol plants that are coming online, almost 20% of the 2006 crop will be used for ethanol production and this number is expected to rise to 30% of the 2007 crop. Since Florida has not produced large acreages of corn since the late 1970's, we will either need to produce more corn or expect to pay higher prices to import it from the Midwest. It is expected that corn acreage will need to increase close to 10% over the next few years to meet the feed and biofuels demands for corn even though the crop will be the third largest on record. High oil prices will continue to drive the U.S. to a more "green" fuel that is produced from agricultural products and corn is the main ingredient with other crops like soybean not far behind.



Fall Soil Test

Source: David Wright, Extension Agronomist, University of Florida, Agronomy Notes, Vol. 30:10, October 2006

Soil tests taken immediately after harvest of crops in the fall can be used to determine fertility requirements as nematode levels to develop a plan of action for the coming year. If soil pH needs adjusting, fall is a good time of the year to apply needed lime since it takes several months to change pH. Most of the fertilizer should still be applied in the spring prior to planting the crop. Knowing nematode levels can also help growers to determine what crop should be planted in certain fields as well as what variety or nematicides should be used. This may make the difference between making a good yield and losing money on the crop.



Cimarron® Is Replaced By Cimarron Plus®

Source: Jason Ferrell, Extension Agronomist, University of Florida, Agronomy Notes, Vol. 30:10, October 2006

Florida hay producers used Ally Herbicide for many years to control 'Pensacola' bahiagrass in bermudagrass. However, approximately 2 years ago DuPont decided to change the product name from Ally to Cimarron. The product was still metsulfuron-methyl (60%) and everything remained the same; the only difference was the new name.

Since then, DuPont has decided to phase out Cimarron. This herbicide will be replaced with Cimarron Plus. Cimarron Plus has two active ingredients: metsulfuron-methyl (48%) and chlorsulfuron (15%). Considering that the amount of metsulfuronmethyl per ounce of material has been reduced from 60% to 48%, it will now be necessary to convert old Cimarron use rates to the new Cimarron Plus rates. This can be done by multiplying the Cimarron rates by 1.25. For example, if you wish to control 'Pensacola' bahiagrass and you have traditionally used Cimarron at 0.3 oz/A, you will now need to use Cimarron Plus at 0.375 oz/A.

It is currently unknown what additional weeds will be controlled by the addition of chlorsulfuron. However, Cimarron Plus is safe for use on bermudagrass hay fields and has a 0 day restriction for grazing and haying.