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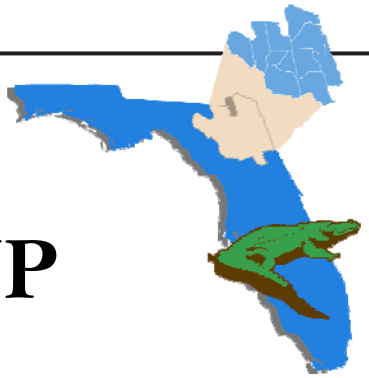
NORTHEAST FLORIDA BEEF & FORAGE GROUP



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Northeast Florida Beef & Forage Group Agents

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April 30, 2009

Dear Producers,

Spring is here and we are gearing up for some excellent workshops for you. Our newsletter this month contains a variety of articles that provide information on topics we will be covering in more detail during upcoming events. In May we will offer the last of three horse management clinics we held this spring. Please note that Hay Field Day has been scheduled for June 30th at Mark Randell Farms in Suwannee County. Refer to the flyers in this newsletter for more detailed information about each event.

If you have any questions about the articles in this issue or any other questions, please feel free to contact your local extension agent. We are here to serve you.

Elena M. Toro

Elena M. Toro,
Chair, North Florida Beef & Forage Group

Red Imported Fire Ant

The red imported fire ant is native to central South America. In the U.S. it was first introduced from Brazil into Mobile, Alabama or Pensacola, Florida between 1933 and 1945. In 2008 established infestations have been documented in 15 U.S. states.

In the southern United States, as many as 97,000 queens may be produced per acre of infested land per year.

As the worker ants are produced, they burrow out of the chamber and begin foraging for food to feed the queen and larvae.

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NORTHEAST FLORIDA BEEF AND FORAGE GROUP PRESENTS:

Equine Management Workshop

An educational program for Recreational Horse Owners,
Sponsored by Seminole Feed

May 28, 2009

5:00 - 8:15 pm

Bradford County Fairgrounds Bldg. 3
Located behind the Bradford County Extension Office, Starke, FL 32091

Registration Fee: $5.00, Sign-up by May 22, 2009

5:00 pm	Registration
5:30	Welcome and Dinner
6:00	**Equine First Aid**
	Dr. Amanda House, UF DVM
7:00	**Pasture Management**
	David Nistler, Clay County Extension
7:20	**How to take a Hay Sample**
	Tim Wilson, Bradford County Extension
7:40	**Nutritional Requirements of Horses**
	Christa Moody, Seminole Feeds
8:00	Questions and Evaluation
8:15 pm	Adjourn

RSVP Required for Dinner. Contact Tim Wilson at (904) 966-6224 by May 22, 2009.

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Estimating Dry Matter Availability in the Pasture - NFBFG Hay Field Day Demonstration

Estimating the dry matter availability in your pastures can improve your ability to make appropriate management decisions. Having an idea of how much dry matter is available can help determine how long you graze and at how high a stocking capacity the pasture might support.

If you plan to turn your pasture into hay bales, then having this estimate can help you determine if there is enough material in the field to justify the costs.

We will provide a real-world, hands-on approach to estimating the dry matter availability in your pastures. Six sample sites will be picked at random using a homemade metal ring that is 1/10,000th of an acre. Forage height at each site will be determined using a yard stick. Using electric clippers, the plant material will be removed leaving two inches for re-growth. Samples will be weighed in the field. After all samples are collected, they are processed using a microwave oven.

Since freshly cut plant material contains water, the samples must be dried to determine their dry matter weight. After the dry matter weight for

each sample site has been determined, all of the samples are averaged to provide an overview of the field. This value is then used in a mathematical formula to estimate how much dry matter material is in the field.

After completing this workshop, you should be able to implement and incorporate this management practice into your forage operation, ultimately enhancing your ability to make accurate management decisions.

Tim Wilson, Bradford County Extension
Extension Director/ Livestock Agent

Cindy Sanders, Alachua County Extension
Extension Director/ Livestock Agent

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These workers also begin construction of the large mounds that we see in pastures and yards. Mature red imported fire ant colonies may contain as many as 240,000 workers with a typical colony consisting of 80,000 workers.

These fire ants will invade home lawns, pastures, golf courses, and other recreational areas. There are many methods of treating individual mounds as well as broadcast treatments in pastures. The biological controls consist of the introduction of parasitoid flies from South America. These flies decapitate worker ants invade fire ant colonies and replaces the queen to take control of the colony.

The following products have agricultural use sites listed on the label. Agricultural use sites are areas where crops for human consumption or animals intended for human consumption are actually raised - cropland, bearing orchards, grazed pastures, hay pastures, etc.

Always check product package label for specific use sites. Read individual product labels carefully!

- AmdroPro: grazed and hayed pastures
- Conserve-containing products: crops and gardens, individual mound treatment in pastures. Read individual product labels carefully!
- EsteemExtinguish: almost any agricultural or other site

Sources: http://fireant.tamu.edu/broadcastbait/products/#ag, http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN352

Cindy Sanders, Alachua County Extension
Extension Director/ Livestock Agent

Alternative Fertilizer and Liming Materials

Looking for alternative fertilizers and liming materials? First you should get a soil sample so you know what is needed for your crop. This can be done through your local Extension office. Alternative fertilizers and liming materials should also be tested to make comparisons with standard materials.

By having this information you can accurately compare costs. Also you will need to look at application issues such as moisture content of the material (clumps) and can I spread the material or will I have to hire someone to spread it. Excess phosphorus can result in water quality issues if applying poultry litter to meet the nitrogen requirements for the crop.

Load by load shipments of materials can vary greatly. Bottom line as one wise man told me, use the tools in the tool box. Have your soil and alternative materials tested. Also shop around; prices vary according to when the supplier bought his last shipment.

Dan Fenneman, Madison County Extension
Agriculture Agent

Cow/Calf BMP Manual

On May 14 2009 the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) in cooperation with the Florida Cattlemen's Association and the University of Florida-IFAS will formally introduce the recently adopted Cow/Calf Best Management Practices (BMP's) manual to producers across North Florida. This event will take place at the Jackson County Extension Office from 6:30 to 8:00 pm EST and will be broadcast via videoconference to numerous Extension offices across North Florida. The intent of this meeting is to provide producers with key information on the use of the manual, enrollment process, soil testing, and forage production as it relates to water quality.

BMP's or Best Management Practices are practices or combinations of practices that based on research, field-testing, and expert review are determined to be the most effective and practicable means for improving water quality. The Cow/Calf BMP manual outlines practices for nutrient management, water sources, integrated pest management, prescribed grazing, prescribed burns, handling animal mortality and erosion control measures among others.

The practices outlined in the Cow/Calf BMP manual are intended for use statewide on beef cow/calf operations and other cattle operations. However, depending on the site-specific conditions or geographical location of the ranch, not all of the BMPs may be applicable to every site. On the other hand, the manual does not apply to concentrated animal feeding operations, which generally require a permit. Producers will find that many practices are "common sense" recommendations that are already being implemented on their farms. After all, the manual was written by concerned Florida cattlemen that felt that with growing state regulatory pressure on water quality it was better to work with regulatory agencies on a document that made sense for Florida's cattle industry.

Mike Milicevic, member of the Steering Committee and General Manager of Lykes Bros. Ranch has said "A BMP can't be called a BMP if it's not economical and technically feasible for the producer. That's the main guideline. If it's going to put us out of business trying to comply with water quality, it's not a BMP".

The Cow/Calf BMP manual can be downloaded at www.floridaagwaterpolicy.com . Hard copies will also be available during local cattlemen association meetings were the manual will be presented.

The May 14th, state-wide video conferences will be held in Baker, Bradford, and Columbia Counties. Other county sites are being scheduled for later in the year.

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Check with your local cattlemen association or livestock agent for additional dates.

In addition, the NFBFG will hold two meetings to discuss up-and- coming regulations that will affect cattle producers in Northeast Florida. A presentation on the Cow/Calf BMP Manual will be made during these meetings. These meetings will be held in late summer in Bradford and Duval Counties. Look for information in our next newsletter.

Elena M Toro, Suwannee County Extension
Agriculture Agent

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Early Summer Climate Outlook

Earlier this year climate forecasters determined our region to be in a La Niña weather condition. However, recent data has changed this forecast as the Pacific Ocean has returned to Neutral signaling the end of La Niña. Ocean temperatures have warmed in the past month near the Pacific equator and the atmosphere over the region is now behaving more like neutral conditions. All sea-surface temperature data have now risen above the threshold commonly used to designate La Niña events.

According to AgroClimate, http://agroclimate.org/, normal patterns should set in for the southeast, through our spring and summer months. These normal patterns do not imply that seasonal weather will be on average, but that we can anticipate a normal variation of weather to be a factor for the next several months.

During la Niña years, Florida generally encounters fewer low-pressure systems in the fall and winter, and as a result much drier and warmer than average conditions overall. La Niña conditions may also lead to increased chances of drought and wildfires, and also a greater chance of freezing weather.

In recent years, detailed reports and information on regional climate shifts for the southeastern United States have become easier to find. For producers in Florida, we have a couple of tools to help determine climate risk:

Florida Automated Weather Network (FAWN)
Provides current weather observations through a system of statewide automated weather monitoring stations to a variety of users throughout the state of Florida. Visitors to the FAWN Website are also able to access archived data, which can be viewed in the form of tables and graphic presentations. (http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu/).

AgroClimate
A web based product from the Southeast Climate Consortium (http://www.agroclimate.org/) that is used to provide the latest seasonal climate forecasts and tools (http://agroclimate.org/tools/) to help producers understand and plan for potential climate variations in the Southeastern United States. In addition, the website has detailed information on ENSO conditions and a Climate Risk Tool (http://agroclimate.org/tools/climateRisk/index.php), which allows the user to search average rain fall totals based on monthly distributions, probabilities of distribution and exceedance, and the past 5 years of archived data. These totals can all be sorted based on climatic conditions (i.e. El Niño vs. La Niña).

Sources: http://agroclimate.org,
http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu

David Nistler, Clay County Extension
Agriculture, Small Farm,
Natural Resource Agent

NORTHEAST FLORIDA BEEF AND FORAGE GROUP PRESENTS:

2009 HAY FIELD DAY

JUNE 30, 2009

Mark Randell Farms

Wellborn, FL

9:00 am

Registration Fee: $5.00 Per person*

To register contact your local county agent in Northeast Florida or the Suwannee County Extension office at (386) 362-2771 before June 26th, 2009.

Driving Directions:

16645 CR 137
Wellborn, FL

From Jacksonville: Take I-10 to Exit 292 toward Wellborn. Go South on CR 137 for 9.7 miles. Farm is on the right.

From Lake City: Take Hwy 90 west towards Live Oak. Turn left (South) on CR 137 for 5.4 miles. Farm will be on the right.

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Session Topics

- Efficient Use of Fertilizers
- Weed Control Update
- Marketing Hay
- Summer Legumes: Production and Weed Control
- Climate Forecasting for Forage Producers
- Calculating Dry Matter Forage in Your Pasture

CEU's & CCA's will be available

Program

8:15 - 9:00 am	Registration
9:00 - 9:05 am	Welcome and Introductions
9:05 - 9:30 am	Weed Control Update
9:30 - 9:55 am	Hay Marketing
10:00 - 10:25 am	Session 1
10:30 - 10:55 am	Session 2
11:00 - 11:25 am	Session 3
11:30 - 11:55 am	Session 4
12:00 -12:45 pm	Lunch
1:00 - 3:00 pm	Field Demonstrations
3:00 pm	Adjourn

NFBFG
1025 West Macclenny Avenue
Macclenny, FL 32063

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We're on the web:
http://nfbfg.ifas.ufl.edu

MARK YOUR CALENDERS !

May 28th, 2009 - Equine Management Workshop, Starke FL.

June 30th, 2009 - NFBFG Regional Hay Field Day, Wellborn FL.

See Inside for details

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