



Northeast Florida Beef and Forage Group



April 4, 2007

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter. Our upcoming programs are listed on the back page. Please be sure and call to register for each program before the deadline.

In order to continue receiving our newsletter, please complete the form included on page 5 and return to the Baker County Extension Office address listed. It is very important that you return it within the next 15 days. If you have already returned your form, thank you.

Sincerely,

David B. Nistler
Chairman, North Florida
Beef & Forage Group

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INSECT MANAGEMENT IN PASTURES & HAYFIELDS

MIKE SWEAT, BAKER COUNTY EXTENSION

Three of the most important pests of pasture and forage grasses are spittlebugs, caterpillars, and mole crickets. Two-lined spittlebug adults have the characteristic leafhopper shape and are dark brown to black with red legs and eyes. They get their name from the conspicuous two red to orange lines across its wings. They produce a white, frothy mass that hides them as they feed

and is usually the first sign of infestation. Destroy thatch and the egg stage by burning fields each year. Chemical control is not economical. Caterpillars in forage grasses are usually striped grass loopers or armyworms.

Armyworms can be identified by the inverted "Y" on the front of its head. Adult armyworms migrate

to north Florida from the south in early spring and lay their eggs on tender new growth. Their life cycle requires 30-35 days during which the larvae feed for 14-16 days through 6 instars. Small armyworm larvae give grass a 'lacy' appearance which develops into a brownish cast; large larvae frequently consume entire blades of grass.

(continued on page 2)

INSECT MANAGEMENT IN PASTURES & HAYFIELDS

Continued

The striped grasshopper damage is similar to the fall armyworm and like the fall armyworm, female moths prefer to lay their eggs on tender new growth. They can be distinguished from the fall armyworm by the presence of many fine lines on its head and two pairs of abdominal prolegs. The adults migrate to north Florida from south FL in mid-summer where the eggs are laid and larvae pupate in spindle-shaped cocoons fastened to grass blades. Both the striped grasshoppers and armyworms should be controlled when they are young. For specific pesticide recommendations, contact your local Extension Office or visit <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IG061>.

Two species of mole crickets, the tawny and southern mole cricket cause damage to forages and pastures. Generally, the damage is most evident in bahiagrass. The presence of mole crickets is usually first evident with the occurrence of their tunnels near the surface of the soil. Their burrowing loosens the soil and resembles tiny mole tunnels. Adults are approximately 1 1/2 inches in length and are reddish to dark brown in color. The forewings are shorter than the abdomen, and the front legs are flattened for

digging. Mole Cricket egg laying may begin in March but most are laid during May and June. Mated females dig a few inches into the soil and construct an egg chamber. Females construct 3 to 5 egg chambers and lay an average of 35 eggs in each. Eggs hatch in about 20 days, and the nymphs feed on plant roots until the fall when most reach adulthood. Most feeding occurs at night following a rainfall. Damage occurs as a result of root feeding and appears as areas of wilted, dead plants. Large populations can kill extensive areas of pastures.

Mole cricket control involves biological agents such as *Steinernema scapterisci*, a nematode which provides effective control of mole crickets. This nematode is currently being produced commercially under the trade name Nematac. Another promising biological control agent is the red-eyed Brazilian fly (*Ormia depleta*) which was released in Florida in 1988, and is now established in at least 30 counties. Chemical control of mole crickets is not considered practical.



Fall armyworm larva feeding on a grass blade



Chinch bug adults



Tawny mole cricket



Two-lined spittlebug



Striped grasshopper

For control of Spittlebugs, destroy thatch and the egg stage by burning fields each year.

On The Fence

BRAD BURBAUGH, DUVAL COUNTY EXTENSION



Fencing. Just mentioning the word brings about an assortment of emotional thoughts for most livestock producers. There are no “right” fence styles or types for all operations or situations; it is a matter of preference. Fencing costs are one of the most expensive aspects of cattle production. Therefore, economic concerns are usually the number one consideration when building, replacing or mending fences.

Urbanization is reducing grassland and may require that beef producers use pastures more efficiently in the future. A rotational grazing method is one management tool that can be used to increase the efficiency of forage and animal production. The best way to implement rotational grazing is by building paddocks within your perimeter fence. These paddocks will produce more forage and have greater herbage accumulation than under continuous grazing.

Before you set the first corner post, take time to cover a few non-fence building issues. Contact your local zoning office and find out setback requirements. You may be subject to new regulations, even if you are replacing an old existing fence. The type of fence constructed greatly impacts the cost per foot as well as cost of the fence. This article will compare pros and cons as well as the cost of building woven wire, barbed wire, and high-tensile electric wire.

Woven Wire Fence

Requires a brace that uses two 8-inch diameter posts and a 4-inch diameter cross brace at each end. Posts between the braces are steel “T” posts alternated with 4-inch diameter pressure treated wood posts. All posts are spaced 12-feet apart with one strand of barbed wire at the top.

Barbed Wire Fence

Materials for the barbed wire fence are very similar to the woven wire except strands of barbed wire are substituted for the woven wire.

High-Tensile Electrified Wire Fence

Uses five strands of 12.5-gauge high-tensile wire with three charged and two grounded wires. The bracing uses three 8-inch diameter posts and two 4-inch diameter cross braces on each end. With the exception of brace posts, steel “T” posts spaced 25 feet apart are used. One-quarter of the cost of an electric energizer is included in the cost per foot estimate on the basis that such a unit would be used to energize at least a mile of fence.

**Based on a 1,320 ft. fence*

TYPE	PROS	CONS	ONGOING MAINTENANCE	COST PER FOOT*
Woven Wire	Strong, secure and relatively attractive	Highest initial cost, most maintenance required	Replacing and resetting staples, re-tensioning corners	\$1.71
Barbed Wire	Lighter and less expensive, greater physical deterrent	Aggressive appearance, can be dangerous.	Re-tensioning and mending breaks	\$1.50
High-Tensile Electric Wire	Easy installation and maintenance, attractive appearance	Requires access to electricity, can be a fire hazard	Re-tensioning wires, re-installing wire anchors, re-tightening corner braces, checking electric chargers and ground rods	\$0.89

If you would like more detailed information contact the author of this article, Brad Burbaugh by email at Burbaugh@coj.net or 904.387.8850

References: *Grazing Methods on Forage and Cattle Production*, Florida Cattlemen & Livestock Journal

Handbook of Florida Fence and Property Law, University of Florida Extension Service

Fencing Systems, University of Minnesota Extension Service

BAHIAGRASS ESTABLISHMENT CINDY SANDERS, ALACHUA COUNTY EXTENSION

This is the time of year that I get a lot of calls and questions dealing with establishment of Bahiagrass. Bahiagrass being the most common and easiest to establish, can be planted March 15 – September 15.

Recommended cultivars are Pensacola and Tifton 9 for grazing. To establish these grasses we need moisture. April and May are usually too dry to plant a new pasture or hay field, especially in peninsular Florida. But, by mid June the summer rains usually start and the risk of drought decreases.

First, I would recommend taking a soil sample now, and sending in to the IFAS soils lab to establish fertilizer recommendations. If liming is required, lime as soon as possible. Lime will take about 4 months to break down and raise the pH, if your pH is low. Recommended pH for Bahiagrass is 5-6. For new plantings of Bahiagrass, apply 30 lb/A nitrogen, all of the Potash, and half of the Potassium recommended on your soil test report as soon as the plants have emerged.

During the dry period of April/May, start preparing

the land for planting by plowing and/or disking, plus dragging to smooth and level the land. Be prepared to obtain seed or planting material and plant when the summer rains start. I have already heard of some high seed prices, as a result of the drought we had last summer.

The optimum temperature range for bahiagrass seed germination is 85 – 95 degrees. Therefore, summer may be the ideal time to plant. The frequent rains that occur during June, July, and August make this period a particularly good time for pasture establishment. Always plant into a moist seed bed. One final disking (harrowing) just before planting will destroy any weeds that have germinated. If the ground is very soft, it probably should be packed with a land roller before planting. This will prevent planting equipment (drills, sprig planters) from planting the seed or sprigs too deep.

Planting rates for Pensacola are 12 to 15 lb/A, but can be up to 40 lb/A. Planting rates for Tifton 9 are 12 to 15 lb/A., both at a depth of ¼ to ½ inch. Don't forget to use a land



roller or cultipacker to pack or firm the seed bed after planting. Then, for best results, cattle or horses need to be taken off the land until establishment (3 months) has taken place.

First, take a soil sample to establish fertilizer recommendations

If lime is required, lime as soon as possible.

SECOND NOTICE**IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED!**

Extension mailing lists must be revised each year. If you would like to remain on the Beef Forage Newsletter mailing list, please complete the form below and mail or bring it to our office. You can also renew by visiting our website at <http://nfbfg.ifas.ufl.edu>. If you have already returned your form, please disregard this notice.

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Extension programs are open to all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, handicap, or national origin. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in any activity, should contact the Baker County Cooperative Extension Service at 1025 West Macclenny Avenue, Macclenny, FL 32063 or telephone (904) 259-3520 no later than seven (7) days prior to the event. Hearing impaired persons can access the foregoing telephone by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

UPCOMING NFBFG PROGRAMS

Horse Management Workshop for Beginners

Monday, April 16th at 6:00pm to 8:45pm

Baker County Agricultural Center in Macclenny, Florida.

Class instruction in Fence Design & Construction, Pasture Establishment & Maintenance, Identification of Toxic Weeds & Poisonous Plants, Horse Nutrition, Hay Quality.

Cost is \$5 for meal and materials. Please RSVP by April 12th by calling (904) 259-3520.

Horse Management Workshop

Tuesday, May 15th

For more information contact the Alachua County Extension Service at (352) 955-2402

Cattle Management Workshop

Thursday, May 24th at 5:30pm to 8pm

Nassau County Extension Office in Callahan, Florida

This program will focus on Cow/Calf Operations, Herd Health, and Animal Identification.

Cost: \$5 meal and materials. Please RSVP by Monday, May 21st by calling (904) 879-1019