Calendar of Events– Save the dates!

March
25. Forage Management Basics Program Session. Columbia County
29. Meat Sheep Alliance Spring Meeting. Fair Meadow Farm, Ocala, FL

April
5. Forage Management Basics Field Day. Live Oak, FL
11. FAMU Goat Field Day. Quincy, FL
17. Columbia County Cattlemen’s Association Educational Program. Mason City Community Center. Lake City, FL
22. Timber Marketing Program. Lake City, FL
25. NFBFG. Beef Cattle Management Basics Program. Columbia Livestock Market. Lake City, FL
30. Beef Cattle Short Course. Gainesville, FL

May
1-2. Beef Cattle Short Course. Gainesville, FL
9-10. Small Scale Dairy Cattle Production Short Course. Live Oak, FL
28. Corn Silage Field Day. Citra, FL

If you need more information about any of the programs listed in this Calendar of Events refer to the flyers in the back of this newsletter or call the Columbia Co. Extension Office at 752-5384.

Dear Producers,

I would like to invite you to take advantage of educational programs outlined in this newsletter. Please remember you will need to manage forage production during these difficult times to remain profitable. Some resources or strategies may include soil testing, implementing a rotational grazing system or improving quality of product through timely management. For the most part, no single strategy will save a distressed operation but a combination of strategies which follow may turn a bad situation around. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Elena Toro
Livestock/Natural Resources Agent
The cost of many agricultural inputs in the last year has increased in many cases by more than 200%. The cost of fertilizer is expected to rise even more in the next couple of weeks. It is extremely important that pastures and hayfields be fertilized based on soil test results. A standard soil fertility test costs only $7.00 at the University of Florida Soils Testing Lab and will give a pH value, amount of lime to apply if needed, Phosphorus (P), Potassium (K), Calcium (Ca) and Magnesium (Mg) levels.

In this article we will discuss the importance of liming and review important concepts you need to be aware of before buying liming materials.

Liming is done to improve the performance of plants in an acid soil. Soil acidity affects the plant root environment, which ultimately affects plant growth and development in the pasture.

The soil pH is a measure of the degree of acidity or alkalinity of the soil. A soil pH of 7.0 is neutral, lower than 7.0 acidic and above 7.0 basic or alkaline. The target pH for most forage crops like cool season grasses and small grains (rye, ryegrass, oats) is slightly acidic (pH=6.0). The target pH for Bahiagrass and Bermudagrass is 5.5.

If the soil pH is not in the desirable range, soil nutrients will not be available for the plant to absorb them. In many cases, raising the pH of the soil to the desirable pH for the plants in the pasture will make nutrients available at less cost than by applying inorganic fertilizer. However, only apply lime when your soil test recommendation calls for it—otherwise you may be affecting good soil conditions.

Overliming causes the soil pH to increase beyond the range of optimum plant performance. Reduced plant growth is usually associated with deficiencies of micronutrients such as Mn, Fe, zinc (Zn), or copper (Cu), which become less available as soil pH increases. For example, raising soil pH above 6.4 causes Mn deficiency in many plant species in Florida. Overliming may be doubly costly -- it costs to buy and apply the lime, and it may cost in terms of reduced plant performance.

### What Factors Influence Aglime Quality?

The two principal factors influencing aglime quality are: its acid-neutralizing capacity and the fineness to which it is ground.

Acid-neutralizing capacity is usually measured as the calcium carbonate equivalence (CCE). The CCE is defined as the acid-neutralizing capacity of a liming material expressed as percent by weight of pure CaCO₃. Thus, pure calcite or pure aragonite have a CCE of 100%.

The fineness to which aglime is ground determines in large part the rate at which it will react in soil. As particle size decreases, aglime dissolves more rapidly and changes pH over a shorter period of time. Particle size is such an important aspect of aglime quality that particle size specifications are part of most aglime laws. It might be noted here that limestone crushed for road-building is far too coarse to be effective in lowering agricultural soil pH, even if applied at several times the recommended aglime rate per acre.

A “standard liming material” is defined in the Florida Commercial Fertilizer Law as aglime having a minimum neutralizing value of 90% CCE. Thus, one ton of standard liming material is 2000 pounds of material having a minimum CCE of 90%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liming Material</th>
<th>Typical CCE (%)</th>
<th>Tons required to be equivalent to 1 ton of CaCO₃</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calcite (pure)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcitic limestone</td>
<td>75 to 100</td>
<td>1.3 to 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolomitic limestone</td>
<td>75 to 108</td>
<td>1.3 to 0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aragonite</td>
<td>95 to 100</td>
<td>1.1 to 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrated lime</td>
<td>120 to 136</td>
<td>0.8 to 0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/SS/SS16100.pdf
Beef Cattle Management Calendar

**March**
- Fertilize pasture to stimulate early growth and get fertilizer incorporated in grass roots while there is still good soil moisture.
- Prepare land for summer crops.
- Check and fill mineral feeder.
- Observe bulls for condition and success. Rotate and rest if needed.
- Deworm cows as needed.
- Make sure calves are healthy and making good weight gains.
- Hang forced-use dust bags by April 1st for external parasite control or use insecticide impregnated ear tags.
- Identify, vaccinate, implant, and work late calves.
- Put bulls out March 1st for calving season to start December 9.
- Remove bulls March 22nd to end calving season January 1.

**April**
- Plant warm season annual pastures.
- Plant corn for silage.
- Check and fill mineral feeder.
- Check dust bags or apply treated ear tags.
- Check for external parasites and treat if necessary.
- Observe cows for repeat breeders.
- Deworm cows as needed if not done in March.
- Vaccinate against blackleg and brucellosis after 3 months of age and before 12 months of age.
- Market cull cows and bulls.
- Update market information and refine market strategy for calves.
Goat Management Calendar- from FAMU

March

Pre-Natal Care
- Maintain BCS between 5 and 7 for does and 3 and 4 for ewes. If the BCS are too low, increase the feed.
- Check for signs of heat (i.e. red swollen vulva, mucous discharge, mounting other females). If the doe shows signs of heat she is not pregnant.
- Check for signs of abortions (bloody discharge around vulva area).
- Remove the buck/ram from the does/ewes breeding pen (March 4th).

Tips for the Month
- Prepare pastures for spring and summer grazing (soil test, fertilize based on results).
- Plan to leave a pasture area rested for the does or ewes and their offspring to graze on after kidding/lambing.
- Monitor body condition scores and FAMACHA scores at least one to two times per month.
- Always provide fresh water for your animals and good quality hay.
- Provide a trace mineral block or loose minerals for your herd/flocks daily.
- Keep and update production records.

April

Pre-Natal Care
- Maintain BCS between 5 and 7 for does and 3-4 for does.
- 6-8 weeks prior to kidding/lambing, administer C&D Tetanus toxoid to all the pregnant does and ewes to prevent overeating disease (enterotoxemia) to prevent tetanus and to pass on the immunity from the vaccine to the fetuses.
- Check for signs of heat & possible abortions.

Tips for the Month
- Monitor BCS and FAMACHA scores at least 1-2 times per month.
- If you have spring pastures, develop a rotational grazing system to reduce infectious diseases in the herd/flock and to prevent overgrazing which can lead to soil erosion.
- Keep stocking rates to 7-10 goats per 2 acres for a year-round basis. The stocking rate can be modified based on the quality and availability of forage.
- Update production records.

Ethnic Holidays
March 20th– Makwid al-Nabi (Islamic Observation)
March 21st— Good Friday
March 23rd– Easter/Western Roman Easter
April 20-27th– Passover (Jewish Holiday)

Have you visited the Florida Small Farms website lately?
http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu
FARM SERVICE AGENCY ANNOUNCES: LCP LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM

Program Overview
LCP provides benefits to livestock producers who suffered feed\grazing losses or incurred additional feed losses directly resulting from drought occurring January 1, 2005 thru December 31, 2007.

To be eligible producers must have:

• Owned or cash-leased eligible livestock on August 1, 2005 or March 1, 2006 or January 1, 2007. Producers incurring a loss in 2005, 2006 and 2007 calendar years must choose only one year for which they want to receive benefits.

• Suffered a feed loss from produced or purchased forage or feedstuffs, or incurred additional feed costs as a result of drought during the above time periods and the feed lost or additional feed cost were intended for use with eligible livestock.

For additional information contact your local Farm Service Agency, 2304SW Main Blvd, Suite 103, Lake City, FL or call 386-752-8447 Ext 2.

Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic

Service available to Columbia County Residents.

Location: North Florida PAWS facility in North Hamilton County.

For a price list and more information contact Katie Rooney at (386)938-4092 Email: northfloridapaws@windstream.net or http://www.northfloridapaws.org

Columbia County Cattlemen’s Association Program

When: Thursday, April 17, 2008
Where: Mason Community Center, Mason City
        Hwy 41/441South
Time: 6:30 pm (Get together, Dinner and Speakers)
Program: Alternative and Economically Viable Land Use for Cattle Ranches/Conservation Programs/Florida Rural Lands Stewardship Program

Registration Fee: $5.00 per person. If you plan to attend please RSVP by calling Mrs. Charlotte Parry at 755-0320 before April 14th, 2008.
Forest Stewardship Workshop:

Marketing Your Forest Products –
Tried and True and Some Things New

Date and Location: April 22, 2008; 9:00 am – 2:30 pm, Eastern Time;
Columbia County Extension Office, 164 SW Mary Ethel Lane, Lake City, FL 32025-1597 (directions on back).

Marketing forest products involves selling timber or other products in a competitive market to get the best return on the investment and/or to meet other objectives. This process requires some planning and pre-sale preparation before advertising or talking to prospective buyers. Timber sales should be approached in a business-like manner to ensure that both the seller and buyer are satisfied with the results. This workshop series will cover the guidelines timberland owners should follow when planning and conducting a sale. We'll also explore two new forest enterprises that landowners are getting involved with now – carbon and woody biomass.

Agenda:

9:00 am Sign-in, meet and greet
9:30 Welcome and introduction: Start with your objectives, Chris Demers, UF-IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC)
9:40 How the timber market works, Dr. Alan Long, UF-IFAS SFRC
10:15 Break
10:25 State of the market and selling your timber for what it’s worth, Dave Lewis, Southern Forestry Consultants
12:15 pm Lunch (Thanks sponsors!)
1:00 The future is now: carbon and woody biomass markets, Allen Tyree and Clay Olson, UF-IFAS Cooperative Extension Service
2:00 Division of Forestry services and cost-share opportunities, Stan Shepard, Florida Division of Forestry
2:30 Conclusion, evaluations, adjourn
The UF/IFAS Columbia County Extension Office will offer two workshops on Forage Management Basics at the Extension Office in Lake City, FL this spring. In addition, there will be a Pasture Management Field Day at the North Florida Research and Education Center—Suwannee Valley in Live Oak, FL sponsored by the Northeast Florida Beef and Forage Group to demonstrate techniques, products and equipment used during pasture establishment and management.

**TOPICS**

Overview of warm season and cool season forages, proper soil preparation, pasture establishment, understanding plant growth, stocking rates, liming and fertilization, equipment needed, weed control (weed ID, demonstration plots), setting up a rotational grazing system and maximizing forage quality.

**WORKSHOP LOCATION & DATES**

Columbia County Extension Office  
164 SW Mary Ethel Lane  
Lake City, FL  
Inside the Columbia County Fairgrounds

March 18th & March 25th, 2008.  
(This is a two-part program.)  
Time: 5:30 to 8 pm.

Registration Fee: $20.00 (Meal and hand-outs will be provided).

To register call the Columbia County Extension Office at (386)-752-5384 before March 16th, 2008.

**PASTURE MANAGEMENT BASICS FIELD DAY**

April 5th, 2008. North Florida Research and Education Center—Suwannee Valley.  
7580 CR 136 Live Oak, FL  
Time: 9:00 am to 12:30 pm.  
Fee: $10.00 (Refreshments, lunch and hand-outs will be provided.)

To register call: (386)362-1725 ext.101 or (386)752-5384

In compliance with ADA requirements, participants with special needs that can be accommodated reasonably should contact Elena Toro by calling 752-5384 before March 14th, 2008 to ensure arrangements are made before the program.
Beef Cattle Management Basics
Program sponsored by the Northeast Florida Beef and Forage Group
Date: April 24, 2008
Time: 5:00pm - 8:30pm

Program

5:00 pm.  Introductions & Welcome.
5:10-6:00 pm  Selecting Bulls to meet market demands.
              Dr. Cliff Lamb, UF Beef Cattle Extension Specialist.
6:00-6:30 pm  Dinner
6:30-7:30 pm  Castration methods and shoot side manners.
              Dr. Todd Thrift, UF Beef Cattle Extension Specialist.
7:30-8:15 pm  Avoiding costly mistakes when selling feeder calves and cows.
              John Willis, Columbia Livestock Market, Elena Toro, Columbia
              Co. Livestock Agent & Tim Wilson, Bradford Co. Livestock Agent.
8:20 pm.  Adjourn

Program Location:  Columbia Livestock Market
South Hwy 41
Lake City, FL  32025

Registration:  $5.00 per person (Includes dinner and hand-outs).

Please RSVP by calling (386)752-5384 before April 20th, 2008.
For additional information about this program contact: Elena Toro
at 386-752-5384 or your county agent in Northeast Florida.

SolutionsForYourLife.com is the Web site of University of Florida Extension. We've put all of our expertise in one place, to make it easy for you to get what you need. You can explore topics in lawn and garden care, family life and consumer choices, agriculture, community development, the environment, and youth development. Above all, our site is focused on getting you timely and relevant solutions for improving your life. SolutionsForYourLife.com brings you current, science-based answers--free.

Now, with SolutionsForYourLife.com, you can access our publications and other resources from any computer. Our Web site also features timely articles, an events calendar, and a database of frequently asked questions. Our real-life success stories show how Extension benefits Floridians like you.