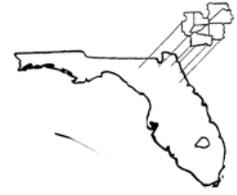


Volume II, No. 4

# Northeast Florida Beef & Forage Group

Newsletter



October, 2003

Dear Producers:

It's that time of year already when producers start thinking about their winter forage and supplementation programs. All of the decisions that have to be made this time of year: Do I plant rye this year? Do I supplement my cattle with commodities? Do I buy heifers or raise my replacements? What new fall forages are out there, and When should I plant?

As a group of extension agents, we hope that this newsletter will answer those questions and more. I also want to personally invite you to our "Selecting & Developing Replacement Heifers Workshop" on October 21 at 6:30 pm in Gainesville and on November 4, 2003 in Baldwin.

Again, we hope that this newsletter will be of educational value to you, and if you have any questions about your pastures, fall forages, or supplementation, please feel free to contact your local extension agent.

Sincerely,

Cindy Sanders, Co-Chairman  
Northeast Florida Beef & Forage Group

## COOL-SEASON WILDLIFE FOOD PLOT SUGGESTIONS FOR DEER HUNTERS & WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS

**Jacque Breman, Extension Director  
Union County**

This is the month to plant winter annual cool-season Wildlife Food Plots. You can stop by the Extension Office and get free copies of the following Fact Sheets or log on the related sites and print them off on your personal computer at home:



Wildlife Forages for North Florida -  
Part I: Cool Season Food Plots.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AG140>

A Walk on the Wild Side: Cool Season Forage Recommendations for Wildlife Food Plots in North Florida.

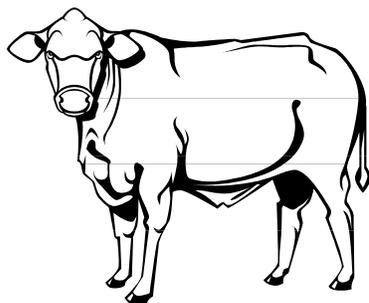
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AG139>

These Suggestions Might be Helpful:

- Ideal plot size = 1 to 2 acres.
- Plot shape is better if long instead of square (more edge the better).

*(Continued on next page)*

- Plant one acre for every 100 acres of forest land (1:100).
- Locate plots in areas that are already open or partially open (deer already used to the area being open).
- Examples of good locations: Old logging decks, woods roads, beetle-killed areas, fire breaks, right-of-ways.
- Plant a variety of crops to prolong food supply, mixes are better than a single plant.
- If you are going to plant clovers and haven't limed in three years, apply one ton of Dolomite per acre and harrow it in now. For those of you who have the time to do it right, call me to pull a soil sample, wait the two weeks for the test results, then lime and fertilize accordingly.
- Be sure to drag or pack plot area after you has broadcast seed on harrowed soil (especially important to lightly pack /drag soil if you planted clovers to keep seedling from drying out on soil surface). You can make a drag using old chain-like fence wire.
- Once small grains are up, apply fertilizer (without a soil test, you probably can get by with about 400 pounds per acre of a 10-10-10 analysis fertilizer with all of the minor elements).



You can make small grain and clover mix yourself by using oats and wheat as an early attractant or supplemental wildlife feed source:

**Seed Mix to Plant One Acre**

**64 pounds Oats**  
 +  
**60 pounds Wheat**  
 +  
**14 pounds inoculated Crimson clover**  
 +  
**6 pounds inoculated Red clover**



(See Forage Update 2003 for varieties recommended by the University of Florida-IFAS for our area)

On wet soils you might want to try the following mix:

**Seed Mix to Plant One Acre**

**30 pounds Italian Ryegrass**  
 +  
**4 pounds inoculated White clover**

(see Forage Update 2003 for varieties recommended by the University of Florida-IFAS for our area)

**REPLACEMENT HEIFER SELECTION**  
**Cindy Sanders - Livestock Agent**  
**Alachua County**

During the early fall cattlemen must make decisions on which heifer calves to keep or buy for herd replacements. Some cattlemen fail to apply adequate selection pressure to prospective herd replacements at weaning and after weaning. These heifers will become the backbone of your cow herd, therefore it is important to have specific criteria to base your selection on when selecting heifers. If you are buying your heifers from an outside source, it is important to maintain the same criteria, and ask the owner some history about the heifers.

The following are some guidelines that should be used when selecting your herd replacements:

1. An individual record should be kept on each cow in the herd. (I realize these may not be as detailed in some commercial herds)

- a. Calving percentage
- b. Cow performance (Body condition, number of calves, etc.)
- c. Weaning weight
- d. Quality of calves at weaning

\*To make meaningful comparisons among brood cows, calves must be born within a controlled calving season.

2. Replacements should be selected from cows that have consistently produced a heavy high quality calf every year. Longevity is important.

3. If possible, look at birth dates, and select those heifers that were born early in the calving season. These heifers will tend to reach puberty at an earlier age, therefore, tend to get bred earlier, and calve early in the season.

4. Select high quality heifers at weaning time. Heifers from good milking cows, disposition, visual appraisal, high degree of fertility, and adequate growth.

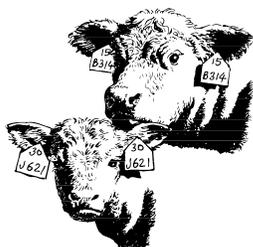
5. Heifers should be weighed and graded at about one year of age. Depending on the breed of heifer, weights will vary. However, heifers that have failed to develop and gain as this point should be culled. If breeding at 15 mos. of age to calve at 2yrs., heifers must be cycling. This varies with the type of heifer. A good rule of thumb is 65% of mature weight at breeding.

For example:

Mature Cow wt. 1000 lbs.

Wt. at breeding 650 lbs.

\*\*Final evaluation of a heifer should occur at the weaning of her first calf.



6. Selection based on visual appraisal. When selecting heifers visually, the following criteria should be considered:

#### Frame and Growth

- Growthier/earlier maturing
- Longer framed/shorter framed
- Larger outlined
- Wider based/narrower based

#### General Appearance

- Stronger Topped/weaker topped
- Smoother shouldered/coarser shouldered
- Higher volume, capacity
- Deeper ribbed
- More (width, spring, arch, shape) through (upper, middle, lower) portion of the rib
- Nicely balanced

#### Design/Structure

- Set and Flex to pasterns
- Level rumped (hooks to pins)
- Correct Leg structure (sickled, cow hocked)
- Freer moving

#### Femininity

- Head, neck, shoulders

## FEEDING REPLACEMENT HEIFERS

**Larry Varnadoe, Extension Livestock Agent,  
Nassau County**

Cattlemen in Florida should consider two important factors when deciding at what age to breed replacement heifers. First, nutritional levels of our warm-season, tropical forages are lower than those of forages grown in the cooler and/or lower rainfall areas of the United States. This means that greater supplementation is required to achieve adequate heifer growth. Second, a good many of our replacement females carry some Brahman influence in their pedigree and therefore probably will be slower to mature. These females must either be bred at a later age or must be placed on a higher plane of nutrition to achieve puberty at an early age.

A rule of thumb for heifer development is that a replacement heifer should weigh 45% of her mature weight at weaning, 65% at the beginning



of breeding season and 85% at calving. If your cow-herd averages 1000 pounds, then your heifers should weigh at least 450 lbs at weaning, 650 lbs at beginning breeding and 850 lbs at calving. A heifer weaned in mid-September at 450 lbs that will be bred in mid-March at 650 lbs will need to gain 1.1 lbs/day. In contrast, a heifer weaned in mid-September and bred to calve as a three year old, will only need to gain .37 lbs/day. To get from 650 lbs to 850 lbs, both heifers would need to gain approximately .74 lbs/day.

The key to weight gain and ultimately maturity is nutrition. For those heifers that will be bred to calve as 3 year olds, moderate quality forage (hay and/or pasture) fed free choice plus .3 to .4 lbs/day of a natural protein source (soybean meal or cotton seed meal) along with a free choice complete mineral supplement should be sufficient to provide the desired weight gains. Heifers that will calve at two years have considerably higher nutritional requirements as they must achieve the same final weight, but in twelve months less time. To gain the 1.1 lbs/day necessary to get from 450-650 lbs will require 1.3 lbs of crude protein and 7.7 lbs of TDN/day. Sample rations to meet these requirements:

1. High quality Bermuda grass hay or pasture fed free choice + 1.5 lbs cracked corn/day.
2. Low quality Bermuda grass hay or pasture fed free choice + 3 lbs whole cotton seed /day.

The requirements necessary to gain the .75 lbs/day to get from 650-850 are 1.4 lbs CP and 8.4 lbs TDN/day. Sample rations to meet these requirements:

1. High quality Bermuda grass hay or pasture fed free choice
2. Low quality Bermuda grass hay or pasture fed free choice + 2.5 lbs whole cotton seed/day.

When pasture is the primary forage, concentrate levels will need to be adjusted as availability of forage fluctuates due to cool weather or drought. A complete mineral supplement fed free choice should be available with all rations.

With all factors being fairly equal, a heifer that calves at two years of age should produce an extra calf in her lifetime over a heifer that calves at three. The major point to consider is whether the calf is worth more than the cost of the feed necessary to get that heifer mature enough to breed at 15 months and calve at 24 months.

***Northeast Florida Beef & Forage  
Group Presents:***

## **Selecting & Developing Beef Replacement Heifers**

**Tuesday, November 4, 2003**

**6:30 pm**

**at Double W Ranch**

**Meal Sponsored by Duval County  
Cattleman's Association**

### **Topics:**

- \* Heifer Evaluation & Selection**
- \* Heifer Development**
- \* Grazing Management**
- \* Buying vs. Raising Replacements**

**Please RSVP by October 27, 2003 to:  
David Nistler, Agriculture Agent  
at the Duval County Extension Office  
904-387-8850**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

**Travel Highway 90 4 miles east of Baldwin. Watch for Otis Rd. on left just past store. Turn North onto Otis Rd. Go approximately 4 miles to Double W sign on the right. Follow dirt road back to barns and cow pens**

**ESTABLISHMENT TIPS FOR COOL  
SEASON ANNUAL FORAGES**  
**Mike Sweat, Extension Director**  
**Baker County**

As you receive this newsletter you should be well on your way to establishing cool season annual forages for livestock. Recent rainfall has provided sufficient moisture for seed germination and cooler temperatures should make ideal initial growing conditions.

Winter legumes and small grains make excellent forages. They are frost tolerant and will supply highly nutritious feed during the winter and spring months. Planting cool-season forages on a clean well prepared seedbed is recommended to produce earlier and more total production compared to overseeding on grass sod. If overseeding is the only option, mow or graze as close as possible and disk bahiagrass sod to expose the seed to the soil. For bermudagrass, a pasture drill or no-till drill may be used without disking for good results. Rainfall in the first month after overseeding is very important to success.

The most efficient use of limited cool season forages would be as a protein and energy supplement through the use of "limit grazing" (allowing the animals to graze for only a limited amount of time at each event). Another option would be to increase the access by younger animals that need a higher-quality forage through "creep grazing".

Remember to always take a soil sample to determine your soil pH and fertilizer recommendations before establishment. The target pH for cool season annual grasses is 6.0. For cool season legumes including clover we recommend a pH of 6.5.

(Refer to Planting Chart on Back)

- Upon request, for individuals with documented print related disabilities, this publication is available in alternative format. Contact the Baker County Extension Service for more information.
- For individuals with disabilities requiring special accommodations, please contact the Alachua County Extension Service at least 5 working days prior to the program in order for proper consideration to be given to the request.
- For TDD service, call the Florida Relay Service Center at: 1-800-955-8771

**Northeast Florida Beef & Forage  
Group Presents:**

## **Selecting & Developing Beef Replacement Heifers**

**Tuesday, October 21, 2003**

**6:30 pm**

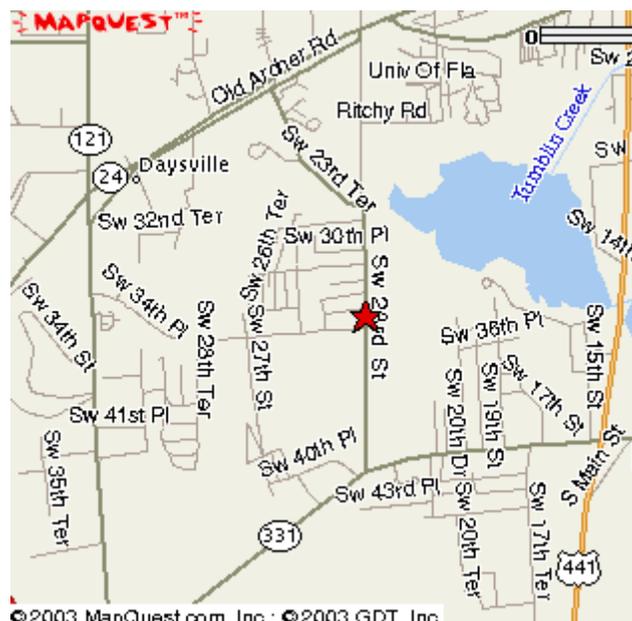
**University of Florida-Beef  
Teaching Unit**

**Meal Sponsored by Columbia Livestock  
Market**

**Topics:**

- \* Heifer Evaluation & Selection
- \* Heifer Development
- \* Grazing Management
- \* Buying vs. Raising Replacements

**Please RSVP by October 17, 2003  
to Cindy Sanders, Livestock Agent  
at the Alachua County Extension Office  
352-955-2402**



Northeast Florida Beef & Forage Group  
 1025 West Macclenny Avenue  
 Macclenny, FL 32063

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

*In This Issue of the*  
 Northeast Florida Beef &  
 Forage Group Newsletter  
 Visit our Website at <http://nfbfg.ifas.ufl.edu>

**Fall Forage Planting Dates & Rates**

Seed Propagated Crops <sup>1</sup>	Planting Dates <sup>2</sup>	Seeding Rates (1 lb/A Broadcast)	Seeding Depth (inch)
Alfalfa	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	12-20	¼-½
Clover, Arrowleaf	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	8-10	0-½
Clover, Berseem	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	16-20	¼-½
Clover, Crimson	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	20-26	¼-½
Clover, Red	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	6-12	¼-½
Clover, Subterranean	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	18-22	¼-½
Clover, White	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	3-4	0-¼
Fescue, Tall	Nov. 1 - Dec. 15	16-20	¼-½
Oats for forage	Sept. 15 - Nov. 15	96-128 (3-4 bu)	1-2
Pea, Austrian Winter	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	45-60	½-1
Rye for forage	Oct. 15 - Nov. 15	84-112 (1.5-2 bu)	1-2
Ryegrass, Italian (annual)	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	20-30	0-½
Sweetclover	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	12-15	¼-½
Turnips	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	5-6	¼-½
Vetch, hairy	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15	20-30	1-2
Wheat for forage	Oct. 15 - Nov. 15	90-120 (1.5 - 2 bu)	1-2

<sup>1</sup> Always check seed quality. Seed germination should be 80% or higher for best results.

<sup>2</sup> Planting date range: in general, cool season forage crops in north Florida can be planted in the early part of the planting date range and in south Florida, the latter part of the planting date range.