



# Northeast Florida Beef and Forage Group



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January 2, 2007

Happy New Year – After a very successful and busy 2006, our Northeast Florida Beef and Forage Group, is looking forward to gearing up for 2007. Last year, we made some changes to our newsletter that proved to be well received. We will keep those changes into the future. We are continually looking to make

our newsletter the best it can be. Your input is very important to us. If you have any suggestions for our newsletter, please speak with your county agent.

As a group of extension agents, it is our hope that this newsletter will help provide solutions and resources to situations that affect your various livestock enterprises. If you have any questions about the

articles in this quarter’s newsletter, or any other questions, please feel free to contact your local Extension Agent. We are looking forward to seeing you at our 2007 events.

Sincerely,

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

## STRATEGIES TO GET THE EARLIEST GROWTH FROM BAHIAGRASS PASTURES

JACQUE BREMAN, UNION COUNTY EXTENSION

Because we are short of hay and winter pasture (rye-Italian ryegrass-oats), we need to encourage early bahiagrass growth as much as possible.

**Burning bahiagrass pastures in late February** can help stimulate early spring growth, by removing litter, recycling nutrients and destroying over-wintering insect

and disease pests. Safe burning requires harrowing a fire lane completely around your pasture, inside your fence line. Your **County Forester** can help you burn your pasture. There are fees for FDACS – Division of Forestry assistance. Be sure to get a **Burn Authorization before burning your pasture.** The phone number

to call for a **Burn Authorization**, for your county, is printed on the inside cover of your telephone book.

We usually have bahiagrass “green-up” in mid-March, when soil temperatures warm up. To stimulate early growth, **mid-March is the time to fertilize bahiagrass.** In the “ideal world”, you would be

## STRATEGIES... BAHIAGRASS...

(CONT.)

applying the nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium) recommended by the University of Florida Soil Test Lab, based on a soil sample taken earlier in the year. Without the benefit of a soil test, we can only recommend one of the nitrogen options. **To stimulate the most grass growth, 80 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre (this is equivalent to applying**

**235 pounds of ammonium nitrate per acre) is recommended.**

Some times, when spring night temperatures remain cool, bahiagrass may turn yellow after applying nitrogen. The yellow leaf color is the result of slow root growth during cool temperatures. Roots are not able to take up enough iron to keep the new flush of leaves green. This is a short-

lived phenomenon. As soon as temperatures warm up, the bahiagrass leaves turn green (usually after a week of warm temperatures).

Sources: Tucker, J. FDACS-Division of Forestry – Bradford/UnionHanlon, E.A. R. Mulavarapu and I.V. Ezenwa. 2006. Development of bahiagrass fertilization recommendations: 1990-2005. SL-237. Soil & Water Department, IFAS, University of Florida.

## WEED CONTROL IN WINTER PASTURES

STEVEN GAUL, NASSAU COUNTY EXTENSION

*“Weeds have a hard time invading a pasture when there is well established sod.”*

Pasture maintenance is just as important during the winter months as it is when the weeds are really growing in the summertime. The first thing one can do is make sure that the crop, whether it be bahiagrass or bermudagrass, is healthy. Weeds have a hard time invading a pasture when there is well established sod. This would be a good time of year to test the soil if that has not been done for several years. Soil amendments can then be added to adjust the pH and fertility of the soil. Another way to reduce the amount of weeds in your pasture is to remove seed sources from nearby pastures, road right of ways, and fence rows. Do not overgraze the pastures, espe-

cially with the dry weather we have been experiencing. If weeds do become established in your pasture, there are a couple of options. The cheapest method of control is mowing. By timing the mowing just prior to weed flower production you can eliminate many of the annual broadleaf weeds from the pasture. Of course the other option is to use herbicides to gain control over the weeds. First, you must identify the weed or weeds that you are treating. There are many chemicals available and you must be sure that the chemical you choose has your weeds on the labels. A couple of chemicals that can be used effectively on dormant bermudagrass or bahiagrass are

paraquat and glyphosate. These can be sprayed as pre-emergent treatments in mid to late winter prior to grass greenup. Be sure and read the herbicide labels for proper amounts, grazing restrictions and recommended surfactants. More is not necessarily better when spraying herbicides. In fact, you can injure the pasture grasses if too much is used. Weeds you may encounter this time of year include thistles, geraniums, wild radish and curly docks. By using a combination of mechanical and chemical treatments you can make the most out of your pastures this winter.

## WINTER HAY SQUEEZE

DAVID NISTLER, CLAY COUNTY EXTENSION

Due to rainfall shortages, this year's forage production was the worst that many producers care to remember. According to FAWN (Florida Automated Weather Network), precipitation composites for Northeast Florida were: 37.12" in Alachua, 27.63" in Hastings, 38.23" in Live Oak, and 31.36" in Macclenny, all significantly below annual averages.

Needless to say this year's drought has had and will have a significant impact on hay availability and price. Most livestock producers started feeding what limited hay they had several weeks ago. Many hay producers have either sold what they have or have limited supply left. It isn't a big leap to believe that when local hay suppliers import northern hay, that prices will go up even farther than they are now.

Last week I went online to search for hay prices. I found Texas/Louisiana Coastal/Alicia top quality square bales at \$7.75 - \$8.25 (50 pound bales), Coastal square bales at \$10.75 (65-85+ pound bales), 5X5 Coastal / Alicia horse quality round bales at \$125.00 (1100-1200 pound rolls). According to

the December 7th, 2006, USDA Market News, Southeast Weekly Hay Report, movement of hay has been moderate with good demand continuing for light to moderate supplies with prices firm. Winter grazing has improved but needs rain. Grazing and hay supplies are not expected to be sufficient to carry cattle into spring in some areas. The Southwest Weekly Hay Report lists prices at: Bahia grass, domestic cattle, small round, per roll (9-13% CP) \$60.00; Bahia grass, horse, small square, per bale (9-13% CP) \$7.00; Bermudagrass, domestic cattle, small round, per roll (9-13% CP) \$35.00-\$40.00; Bermudagrass, horse, large round, per roll (9-13% CP) \$45.00; Bermudagrass, horse, small round, per roll (13%+ CP) \$45.00-

\$50.00; Bermudagrass, horse, small square, per bale (13%+ CP) \$4.00-\$6.00.

Several lists of hay producers and suppliers are available either online or through your local Extension Agent. Alachua County Extension maintains a directory for hay at: <http://alachua.ifas.ufl.edu/directories.htm>; Jackson County Extension's hay directory is at: <http://jackson.ifas.ufl.edu/livestock.htm>; Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has an online list at: <http://www.florida-agriculture.com/livestock/haysuppliers.htm>. If you are a hay producer and are not currently on one or all of these lists, be sure to contact the listing office for these directories.



*“Grazing and hay supplies are not expected to be sufficient to carry cattle into spring in some areas.”*

## DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF BULLS

### SCOTT KERR, SUWANNEE COUNTY EXTENSION

Maintaining your bull in peak condition prior to the onset of breeding season is extremely important. The single-most important factor in the breeding herd is the total pounds of calf weaned per cow maintained, or your calf crop. A poor bull will cause a negative effect in the overall calf crop percentage, and a bull will perform poorly if he is not fed properly. Ironically, the proper feeding and management of both young and mature bulls is often neglected, even though it is so important in obtaining optimal breeding performance and longevity. Feeding too much, combined with too little exercise, will likely result in reduced fertility as well as cost you money. Reduced fertility and poor libido can often be traced back to the bull's early care and feeding. Bulls should be fed to maintain a thrifty, vigorous condition at all times. The importance of having bulls in proper condition upon the start of the breeding season cannot be over-



*“Feeding too much, combined with too little exercise, will likely result in reduced fertility as well as cost you money.”*

emphasized. Here are a few tips to remember:

- During the fall and winter mature bulls should be conditioned for breeding. Start feeding mature bulls hay or silage, plus one pound of protein supplement, before they start to lose weight.
- Bulls that are raised on high-energy diets should be acclimated to pasture prior to the breeding season.
- Commercial bulls in the Southeast are primarily developed by maximizing the use of forage grazing with limited use of concentrate feeds.
- Weaned bulls that

have not been creep-fed need to be placed on feed gradually until they learn to eat concentrate feeds.

- Adequacy of the diet and the progress of bulls on feed should be checked by weighing the bulls at monthly intervals.
- For more information regarding the development and management of bulls, please contact your local Extension Agent and ask for publication number AS27, authored by J.W. Le-master and R. S. Sand.



# Northeast Florida Beef and Forage Group



## Upcoming Events for 2007

For more information please  
contact your local Extension Office:

**Alachua- Cindy Sanders**

**352-955-2402**

**Baker- Mike Sweat**

**904-259-3520**

**Bradford- Wendy Burton**

**904-966-6224**

**Clay- David Nistler**

**904-284-6355**

**Columbia- Elena Toro**

**386-752-5384**

**Nassau- Steven Gaul**

**904-879-1019**

**Suwannee- Scott Kerr**

**386-362-2771**

**Union- Jacque Breman**

**386-496-2321**

Month	Topic	County
Feb/March	Equine- for Beginners	Baker County
	Equine- Advanced	Alachua County
March	Spring Pasture	Columbia County
April/May	Beef	Columbia/ Nassau
July	10th Annual Hay Field Day	Alachua
August	Small Ruminant	Suwannee
August	Small Farm/Livestock Production	Clay
Aug/Sept	Wildlife Management Habitats	Baker/ Bradford

Look for more information in the quarterly  
Northeast Florida Beef and Forage Group  
Newsletters and at our website!  
<http://nfbfg.ifas.ufl.edu>



**Baker County Extension Service**  
1025 West Macclenny Avenue  
Macclenny, FL 32063

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

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).

**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>.

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Please return it to our office or mail it to:

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1025 West Macclenny Avenue  
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