



Volume 2, Issue

January – March, 2007



## Hay Producer Seminar

Do you want to produce more high quality hay and forage? If so, you need to be at the Lake County Agriculture Center on **February 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.** for a special forage presentation. Our guest speakers will be Dr. Maria Silveira and Dr. Joe Vendramini who are the new Soil and Forage Specialists at The UF/IFAS Range Cattle Research Station.

They are both excited to serve the cattle and forage producers here in Florida, so please come out for a very informative evening. There will be a dinner provided and you **must** RSVP to Martha or Maggie by February 12, 2007, to attend.



## What Does A Good Bull Cost?

One hundred twenty one bulls representing eight breeds sold for an overall average of \$2,082 at the 2006 Ocala Bull Sale. Ranchers must invest in high quality bulls if they want calves that will meet industry standards.

Your number one goal is to make money. So you want more pounds to sell. You increase this with increased reproduction and carcass weight and quality. The easiest and fastest way to improve carcass quality is with Expected Progeny

Differences (EPD's). You do this by selecting a bull that has good growth potential (weaning & yearling weight) and carcass traits (rib eye area & marbling). You can improve reproduction in the cow herd by looking at the bull's Yearling scrotal circumference (YSC) which provides a good indication of a bull's ability to produce sperm and is related to his own age at puberty as well as that of his daughters.

When selecting a breed you need to first consider the marketing implications of the calves produced. Visit the market and determine which calves are bringing the most money. Today's market is carcass quality driven. Will the calves sired by your bull yield and grade in adequate time in the feedlot without getting sick? Do a little research on the carcass quality of the breed you are interested in. Also, ask cattle buyers what breeds they prefer.

Bull Selection contributes more to genetic improvement in a beef herd than any other practice. Continued use of poor sires can result in a decline in genetic merit and, as a result, lower production. Bull breed selection should be based on a *planned* crossbreeding program designed to take advantage of the production increase caused by hybrid vigor (more pounds of BEEF).

Is your bull doing his job? A breeding soundness evaluation (BSE) is a quick and relatively inexpensive way of assessing a bull's breeding potential. A BSE should be conducted on a yearly basis by a qualified veterinarian. Bulls should be examined at least 60 days prior to the beginning of the breeding season. This allows for re-testing and replacement of bulls failing the examination. A BSE consists of four basic steps:

1. Visual assessment of the feet, legs, eyes, teeth and external genitalia;
2. Palpation of the accessory sex glands (prostate and seminal vesicles);
3. Measurement of the scrotum as well as palpation of the testis and epididymis;
4. Collection and microscopic evaluation of a semen sample.

In breeding herds there are usually bulls that are very dominant therefore; bulls should be grouped by similar age, weight or equivalent social ranking within the herd before being placed in pastures. A sub fertile dominant bull can lead to reduced pregnancy rates. Genetic merit should also be considered as a dominant bull with poor performance could have a large impact on economic returns in the cow herd.

<b>Bulls Age</b>	<b>Bull to Cow Ratio</b>
12-18 months	1:15-25
2 years	1:30-35
3-7 years	1:35-60
Aged (seven plus)	1:30-40

Bulls selected should be sexually mature, structurally sound, producing semen capable of settling cows, and whose calves will be moderate in birth weight, high in genetic potential for reproduction and growth, and desirable in composition.



## Goat Scrapie

What you must have before your goat or sheep enters commerce

### Q. Why do I have to do this?

A. It is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) goal to eradicate scrapie in the United States to minimize ongoing losses to the sheep industry. To eradicate scrapie, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) must be able to trace scrapie-infected animals back to their flock of birth or origin and exposed sheep and goats to the flocks where they moved after leaving an infected source flock.

### Q. What is scrapie?

A. Scrapie is a fatal degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats. Clinical signs include changes in behavior or temperament, scratching and rubbing against fixed objects, weight loss, and loss of coordination, lip smacking, and gait abnormalities. The presence of scrapie in the United States is a major obstacle to establishing new export markets for sheep and sheep products.

### Q. Which animals will need identification (ID) tags?

A. All breeding sheep and sheep over 18 months of age need to be officially identified before they enter into interstate commerce or change ownership. Situations requiring official ID include but are not limited to the following:

- Cull ewes and rams sold to livestock markets or dealers who are considered to be in interstate commerce. USDA recommends owners place official ID on these

animals before they leave the farm so that animals can be traced back to a specific farm if needed. Additionally, markets may charge the owner of the flock for their time to keep additional records and to apply ID if sheep are not properly identified when received.

- All sexually intact sheep of any age going to any show, demonstration, or exhibition “out-of-State,” or any “in-State” show, demonstration, or exhibition where sheep from another State might be on site.
- Breeding animals must be identified on change of ownership.
- Goats that must be identified for interstate sale or show or movement are as follows:

Sexually intact registered goats and goats used primarily for milk production or sold for breeding or exhibition. Note: Legible registration tattoos are acceptable for ID when the goats are accompanied by their registration certificate or the registration numbers and registry are listed on a certificate of veterinary inspection.

Any other sexually intact goats that have resided on the same premises as sheep.

For more information go to:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet\\_faq\\_notice/faq\\_ahidshgt.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet_faq_notice/faq_ahidshgt.html)

Get tags from Martha Wagaman Animal Health Programs

352-333-3120 ext. 259 or [Martha.L.Wagaman@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Martha.L.Wagaman@aphis.usda.gov)

## 2007 Important Dates

<http://cfextension.ifas.ufl.edu/>

### Florida Beef Ambassador Contest

Open to youth 13 to 20 years old, who want to present information about beef's nutrition, safety and convenience to consumers and facts about the beef check off program to producers. Cash awards, scholarships and travel throughout the state and possibly the nation are just a few of the rewards:

**District contest entry deadline is March 1<sup>st</sup>.** For more information and to register, contact:

Bridget Carlisle  
PO Box 278  
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043  
Fax 904-529-9776  
Phone: 904-284-6355  
[bccarlis@ufl.edu](mailto:bccarlis@ufl.edu)

### **January**

9<sup>th</sup> Ocala Bull Sale: 12:00 p.m. Southeastern Livestock Pavilion  
17<sup>th</sup> Soil and Water Tree Give Away at the Lake County Agricultural Center  
18<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show: 8:00 a.m. Trade Show  
Opens. "Get 'em Bred Institute at the Osecola Heritage Park, Kissimmee, FL  
20<sup>th</sup> Bull Test Sale: 12:30 p.m. in Marianna at the NFREC Beef Research Unit

### **February**

2<sup>nd</sup> All Breed Bull Sale: 1:00 p.m. at the Cattleman's Livestock Auction Market in  
Lakeland, FL  
10<sup>th</sup> Lake County Cattlemen's Annual Meeting: At The Lake County Agricultural Center  
15<sup>th</sup> Forage Producer's Seminar: 6:30 p.m. Lake County Agricultural Center at RSVP is  
required!  
17<sup>th</sup> Natural Horsemanship Training: Class will be from 1-4 p.m. Come and join us for  
the second in a series of seminars designed to educate and inform horse enthusiasts of  
all ranges. There is an opportunity to bring your horse to Mount Dora. Call to register!!

### **March**

8<sup>th</sup> Herd Health Management: 7:00 p.m. For all Cattle Producers at the Lake County  
Agricultural Center  
15<sup>th</sup> Junior Cattlemen's Workshop: 6:30 p.m. at the Lake County Agricultural Center  
17<sup>th</sup> Junior Cattlemen's Cattle Working Day  
22<sup>nd</sup> Poisonous Plants for Horses: 6:30 p.m. at the Lake County Agricultural Center

## **Beef Management Calendar**

### **January**

- Apply lime for summer crops.
- Check for lice and treat if necessary.

- Control weeds in cool season pastures.
- Begin grazing winter clover pastures when approximately 6 inches high. Rye should be 12-18 inches high.
- Check mineral feeders.
- Put bulls out for October calving season.
- Make up breeding herd lists if using single sire herds.
- Watch for calf scours.
- Give bulls extra feed and care so they will be in condition for breeding season.
- Make sure cow herd has access to adequate fresh water.
- Buy only performance tested bulls with superior records.
- Get taxes filed.
- Discuss herd health with your veterinarian and outline a program for the year.
- Review herd health program with your veterinarian regularly.
- Carry a pocket notebook to record heat, breeding abnormalities, discharges, abortions, retained placentas, difficult calving and other data.
- Observe cow herd for calving difficulties.
- Watch for grass tetany on winter pastures.
- Increase magnesium levels in mineral mixes if grass tetany has been previous problem (if you are not already using a high magnesium mineral).
- Examine bulls for breeding soundness and semen quality prior to the breeding season.
- Vaccinate cows and heifers against vibriosis and leptospirosis prior to the breeding season.

## February

- Top dress winter forages, if needed.
- Check and fill mineral feeders.
- Put bulls out for November calving season.
- Work calves (identify, implant with growth stimulant, vaccinate, etc.).
- Make sure lactating cows are receiving an adequate level of energy.
- Watch calves for signs of respiratory diseases.
- Cull cows that failed to calve while prices are seasonally up.
- Check for lice and treat if needed.

## 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.
- Begin grazing warm season permanent pastures.
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> for external parasite control or use insecticide impregnated ear tags.

- Identify, vaccinate, implant, and work late calves.
- Put bulls out March 1<sup>st</sup> for calving season to start December 9th.
- Remove bulls March 22<sup>nd</sup> to end calving season January 1.
- Market cull cows and bulls.
- Update market information and refine market strategy for calves.

I hope you have enjoyed this quarterly newsletter and found the information contained in it both helpful and informative!

**Martha Thomas**

Extension Agent

Lake County Extension