

Lake County
Extension Service
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Volume 3 Issue 4

2008 October/November/December

Upcoming Events

October

3- Lake County Fair Steer Weigh in- Fair Grounds

3- Mo Brangus Bull Sale- Arcadia Stockyards

3 & 4- Cowboy Heritage Festival & Rodeo- Kissimmee Silver Spurs Arena

10- Weed Control Field Day- 10 a.m. Hall Ranch, San Antonio Call 352-521-4288 by 10-6-08 to attend

14-16 Agricultural Exposition- Moultrie, Georgia

17 & 18 Cracker Cattle Drive & Heritage Festival- Call Kandi @ 352-726-8080 to ride

23- Cattlemen's Round-Up Dinner- 6:30 p.m. *Herd Health & Cutting Costs* call Martha to RSVP 352-343-4101

31- Agricultural Safety Day – 8:15 a.m. Registration at Lake County Extension Office call Maggie to RSVP 352-343-4101

November

20- Lake County Fair Swine Educational Meeting – Lake County Extension Office 7:00 p.m.

December

3-5- Florida Cattlemen's Association Quarterly Meeting- Ocala, FL

9- Private Applicator Agricultural License for Restricted Use Pesticide Review & Test- Lake County Extension Office. Go to <http://cfextension.ifas.ufl> under Calendar of Events for registration form.

Planning Your Winter Feeding

I know it is only October but we must be planning what we are going to be feeding this winter when the frost hits. Most likely we will have to supplement until we start getting grass next spring. Supplemental feed costs are often the largest cost of the beef cow enterprise. Producers should plan their breeding program to calve in the winter so they can sell in the late summer to early fall. Therefore the calves get the benefit of all the grass during the summer months. Also, winter born calves are



much healthier than calves born in the summer months. Therefore, winter supplementation is necessary to have productive cattle. Remember your cow just had a 70 – 90 pound calf, she is lactating, and she needs to rebreed if she is going to stay in a yearly calving cycle. If you are really on top of things, you may want to consider supplementing prior to calving so that the cow has plenty of body condition so that she will not lose too much weight after calving and fail to cycle.

First, we need to look at the forage that is being provided. Is it stock piled Bahia, Tifton 44 Bermuda hay, Bahia hay, or rye? What amount of nutrients is it supplying? Producers can have forage tested to determine the Crude Protein and Total Digestible Nutrients which will help when buying hay <http://rcrec-ona.ifas.ufl.edu/felgform.pdf>

If your forage does not meet the cow's needs, you must have something to go along with this hay to give the cattle the extra energy and protein they need. That can come in several different forms and that is where you need to analyze the quality of the feed sources. There are several options to look into:

- Commercial Feed
- By Products (Soy Bean Hulls, Citrus Pulp etc.)
- Fortified Molasses
- Cubes

Well you may say “How do I decide which is the best?” That depends on the quality of the product and the nutritive value it provides. Crude Protein (CP) and Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN). Then you have to consider the cost of storage, feeding labor, and hauling the product. So as you can see this is a very complex process. Therefore, planning will prevent spending too much money on feed or ending up with non productive livestock that did not get the nutrients needed to maintain their body condition, feed their offspring and rebreed.

So, if we are looking at by products we need to know how much they cost and how much you can store and how are you going to haul and feed the by products.

Liquid Molasses

32% protein 5% fat 65% TDN = \$350/ton

32% protein no fat 52% TDN = \$310/ton

Cubes

20% protein (8% urea) 60% TDN = \$325/ ton

20% protein (no urea) 65% TDN = \$375/ton

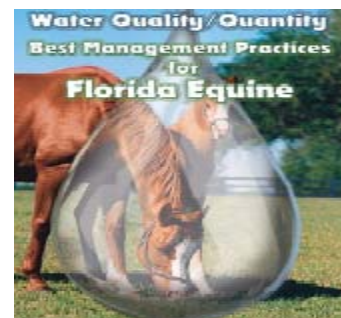
Blocks

24% protein 5% fat 65% TDN = \$480/ton

Does your Agricultural Operation Need Best Management Practices?

First, I will start out by saying “yes.” Everyone who is in agriculture needs to be concerned about their environment. Agriculturalists must be proactive in protecting their most valuable resource, which is the land that sustains everyone's agricultural operations. If it were not for the land and water, we would not be farmers or ranchers. So you may ask what are BMPs, and why do I care?

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are practical, cost-effective actions that agricultural producers can take to reduce the amount of pesticides, fertilizers, animal waste, and other pollutants entering our water resources.



BMPs are designed to benefit water quality while maintaining or even enhancing agricultural production. These BMPs can also help you to save money by using proper amounts of fertilizer and pesticides.

In most cases adopting BMPs is voluntary for landowners to implement however in some more sensitive areas like the Lake Okeechobee Watershed BMPs are required. In the areas where it is voluntary implementing BMP's benefits both the farmers and the environment, and demonstrates Agriculture's commitment to water resource protection.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs); target levels for specific pollutants in impaired water bodies. They are also developing Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) for many of these TMDLs. Agricultural BMPs are required by law in areas of the state where FDEP develops a BMAP that includes agriculture.

In Lake County the major concerns are related to Phosphorus loading on our lakes and nitrate loading to ground water. If landowners review the BMP Manual for their crop type, assess which BMPs they can or would like to implement in their operation and sends a completed **Notice of Intent (NOI)** to implement the recommended BMP's, they will automatically be presumed to be in compliance with State Water Quality Standards. If you are interested in writing BMP's for your operation please visit:

<http://www.floridaagwaterpolicy.com/BestManagementPractices.html> There may also be cost share programs available thru Florida Department of Agriculture and your water management district if you plan on implementing practices that would improve water quality management on your farm.

Cattlemen's Round Up Dinner

All cattle producers please come to the Lake County Extension Office on October 23, 2008 at 6:30 pm to learn what you can do to help your cattle produce better calves. In these hard times we need to do everything possible to increase production. We will have speakers on cattle health and cutting operation costs. Please call Martha and RSVP 352-343-4101. Deadline for RSVP is October 16, 2008.



Using Poultry Litter as Pasture Fertilizer

Poultry Litter can be used as an alternate source of pasture fertilizer. Here are some of the factors you need to consider when applying poultry litter as a source of fertilizer.

- Cost
- Pasture Nutrient Needs
- Nutrient Run Off

From past analysis of under-cage manure, it has been found that a ton of Poultry Litter contains approximately: **46.6 pounds of Nitrogen per ton • 84 pounds of Phosphorus per ton • 60.8 pounds of Potassium per ton** Poultry litter also contains calcium, magnesium, sulfur, and some micronutrients.

However, nutrient values of litter can vary 30 to 50% depending on type of bird, feed and moisture content, and the clean-out technique and schedule of individual operations.

An additional benefit of poultry litter is that the manure and bedding material help it to build-up the organic matter of the soil. Therefore, improving the soil structure, water-holding capacity, aeration, pH buffering, cation exchange capacity, and microbial activity.

Poultry Litter can increase pH because of the amounts of calcium carbonate found in poultry feed. Therefore you must monitor soil pH if you make repeat applications so that you do not get Bahia grass decline because of high pH.

When making the decision you need to consider:

- 1) What nutrients (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium) does soil need based on soil test?
<http://soilslab.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf%20files/SS18600.pdf>
- 2) What is the nutrient value of the litter being considered for application? Sampling form can be found at North Florida Research and Education Center- Suwannee Valley http://nfrec-sv.ifas.ufl.edu/sample_form.htm
- 3) What is the cost of material and spreading for commercial fertilizer that will meet soil needs?
- 4) What is the per acre cost to have poultry litter delivered and spread to meet crop nutrient needs?
- 5) Compare the cost per acre of using poultry litter with cost of using commercial fertilizer.

Also if soil has adequate Phosphorus make sure you are not applying unnecessary nutrients that can harm water sources. Also, be considerate of neighbors any time you are fertilizing with organic fertilizers.

Information obtained from sample taken by Cal-Main Foods, Inc. and analyzed by Clemson University and Poultry Litter as a Fertilizer and Soil Amendment, Virginia Cooperative Extension. (January 2002)

2008 Agricultural Safety Day

8:15-8:30	Registration
8:30-8:35	Intro- Make sure you signed in w/ address; Bathroom locations, refreshments, agenda, lunch arrangements
8:35-9:20	Tractor and Equipment Safety- Martha Thomas, UF/IFAS Lake County Extension
9:20-10:10	Pesticide safety and activity- Ryan Atwood, UF/IFAS Lake County Extension
10:10-10:25	Break
10:25-11:05	Calibration of Spray Equipment- Dr. Richard Tyson, UF/IFAS Seminole County Extension
11:05-11:35	Farm Safety Jeopardy- Dr. Juanita Popenoe, UF/IFAS Lake County Extension
11:35-12:00	Heat Stress and Skin Cancer Awareness- Julie England, UF/IFAS Lake County Extension
12:00-1:00	Lunch

Update on New Releases of Bahiagrass

Dr. Ann Blount, Forage Breeding North FL REC Marianna, FL

UF-Riata is a novel diploid bahiagrass developed for fall and early spring forage production for the southeastern U.S. It has improved forage growth under short-daylengths and during the cool season. This new bahiagrass was developed by the University of Florida, the USDA -ARS Coastal Plain Experiment Station and the

USDA-ARS Subtropical Agricultural Research Station (STARS)-Brooksville, Florida. This bahiagrass exhibits lower photoperiod sensitivity, improved leaf tissue cold tolerance, and increased forage production during the cool season compared to the standard bahiagrass cultivars Argentine and Pensacola. Multi-location variety trials show UF-Riata is similar in total season yield to Tifton 9, with an improvement in seedling vigor and leaf tissue cold tolerance that promotes late fall-season growth and early spring-season growth. UF-Riata seasonal forage yields have been greater than 25% compared with Argentine and Pensacola, and 5-10% compared with Tifton 9 in north Florida. UF-Riata is well adapted throughout the southern Coastal Plains and Peninsular Florida. UF-Riata will be sold by variety name and only as a class of certified seed. It will be marketed by Ragan-Massey Seed and should be commercially available in 2009.

TifQuik is a novel diploid bahiagrass population developed by the USDA-ARS Coastal Plain Experiment Station for rapid seed germination for the southeastern U.S. The population exhibits less hard seed dormancy, very rapid establishment, excellent seedling vigor and high forage yield compared to the standard bahiagrass cultivars Argentine and Pensacola and Tifton 9. TifQuik has been tested in a number of locations as part of a multi-state effort between USDA-ARS scientists in Georgia and at the University of Florida. This cultivar has shown superiority at early establishment and an aggressive seedling vigor that should allow the cultivar to gain rapid acceptance in bahiagrass growing regions of the southern Coastal Plain of the U.S. TifQuik will be sold by variety name and only as a class of certified seed. TifQuik will be available from the Georgia Seed Development Commission and should be commercially available in 2009. Management of these new cultivars is similar to that of Tifton 9. UF-Riata and TifQuik are not tolerant of severe overgrazing. While Argentine and Pensacola bahiagrass are tolerant to overgrazing, constant defoliation of Tifton 9, UFRiata and TifQuik will result in some stand loss and subsequent weed encroachment. Care must be given in the grazing management of these new cultivars to adequately rest the pasture and allow for regrowth to a 6 inch height between grazing events. Rotational grazing is a good approach since it allows bahiagrass pastures to recover from livestock grazing and provides other benefits, as well. Hay production from both these two new cultivars typically results in higher seasonal tonnage than from Argentine and Pensacola. Hay harvests can be made several times throughout the growing season. Forage should not be allowed to grow rank since digestibility decreases and infections from several fungal leaf diseases may harm the health of the stand. Should weather conditions prevent timely hay harvests, then options for grazing, mowing or ensiling the forage should be considered. **It is important to purchase certified seed of UF-Riata and TifQuik from a reliable seed source. This insures the purity of the cultivar, high percent germination and freedom from weed seed.**

Beef Cattle Management Calendar

October

- Plant small grain pastures.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for external parasites, especially lice, and treat if needed.
- Check for spittlebugs and grassloopers and treat, if needed.
- Watch condition of cow herd; maintain adequate nutrition.
- Isolate any additions to the herd for 30 to 60 days and observe for signs of disease; retest for brucellosis and leptospirosis.
- Be sure you have adequate handling facilities, and they are in good working order.
- If you are raising bulls for the commercial market, October thru December is the main bull-buying season for cattlemen in south Florida and now is the time to have your promotion program fully activated.

November

- Have soils tested.
- Observe cows daily to detect calving difficulty.
- Use mineral with high level of magnesium if grass tetany has been a problem in the past.
- Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
- Maintain adequate nutrient level for cow herd.
- Calve in well-drained pastures.
- Survey pastures for poisonous plants.
- Start summarizing your annual records, both production and financial-then you will have time to make adjustments for tax purposes.
- Re-evaluate winter feeding program and feed supplies.
- Get breeding soundness exams on bull battery so you have time to find replacements if some fail.
- Implement bull conditioning program.
- Review plans and arrangements for the upcoming breeding season.
- Check progress of developing replacement heifers - are they going to meet your target weight by the start of the breeding season?

December

- Begin grazing small grain pastures (if ready).
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
- Deworm cows and heifers prior to winter feeding season.
- Observe regularly for calving difficulties.
- Rotate calving pastures to prevent diseases.
- Watch for scours in calves.
- Investigate health of bulls before you buy.
- Have dead animals posted by a veterinarian or diagnostic laboratory.
- Complete review of management plan and update for next year. Check replacement heifers to be sure they will be ready to breed 3 - 4 weeks prior to the main cow herd.

Martha Thomas

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