



February 2003

In This Issue...

Beef Management Calendar	2
Livestock Summary.....	2
USDA Announces Plan to Expand Genetic Testing for the Interstate Movement of Scrapie-Exposed Sheep	3
USDA Marks Progress on BSE Prevention Action Steps.....	4
Process Developed by USDA Scientists Makes Swine Wastewater Environmentally Friendly.....	6
USDA Extends Comment Period for Processors on COOL Proposal	7
Is it Best to Raise or Purchase Replacement Heifers?.....	8

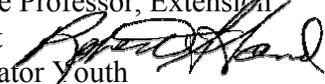


Dates to Remember

February

- 3 All Breed Bull Sale - Lakeland, FL
- 4-6 ECS Led Training Course - Kissimmee, FL
- 8 Florida State Fair Horse & Livestock Judging, Tampa both contests - FFA Preliminary, 4-H Practice
- 11 Florida Ag Hall of Fame Induction
- 11 Phosphorus Management Workshop for South Florida Beef Cattle Operations - LaBelle, FL
- 15 Walden's Black & White Sale - Brantley, AL
- 21 SE Youth Fair / Neal McCoy Concert - Ocala, FL
- 21-25 Alachua County Youth Fair & Livestock Show - Gainesville

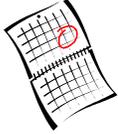
Prepared by Extension Specialists in Animal Sciences

- ❖ F.G. Hembry, Professor, Department Chairman
- ❖ E.L. Johnson, Associate Professor, Extension Equine Specialist
- ❖ T.T. Marshall, Professor, Beef Cattle Management
- ❖ R.O. Myer, Professor, Animal Nutritionist, Marianna
- ❖ R.S. Sand, Associate Professor, Extension Livestock Specialist 
- ❖ W. Taylor, Coordinator Youth Education/Training
- ❖ S.H. TenBroeck, Associate Professor, Extension Youth Specialist
- ❖ T.A. Thrift, Assistant Professor, Beef Cattle Nutrition

March

- 11-13 FCA Legislative Quarterly Meeting - Tallahassee
- 15 State 4-H Hippology Contest - Orlando, FL
- 25 Florida 4-H Foundation Auction - Tallahassee
- 29 State 4-H & FFA Horse Judging Contest - Gainesville





Beef Management Calendar

February

- Top dress winter forages, if needed.
- Check and fill mineral feeders.
- Put bulls out with breeding herd.
- 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

- 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 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.



Livestock Summary

Prospects for reduced beef supplies and higher cattle prices in 2003 depend, to a large extent, on forage and grazing conditions in spring and summer 2003. "Normal" conditions would encourage producers to retain animals for breeding rather than feeding for slaughter.

The USDA is predicting cow slaughter to drop sharply in 2003 with improving forage conditions. The current El Nino weather system will play a major role in the forage and grazing conditions development.

Nationally, cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.7 million head on November 1, 2000. The inventory was 9 percent below both November 1, 2001 and November 1, 2000.

Placements in feedlots during October totaled 2.39 million, 12 percent below 2001 and 16 percent below 2000. Net placements were 2.30 million. During October, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 809,000; 600-699 pounds were 638,000; 700-799 pounds were 521,000; and 800 pounds and greater were 420,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during October totaled 1.98 million, 4 percent above 2001 and 3 percent above 2000.

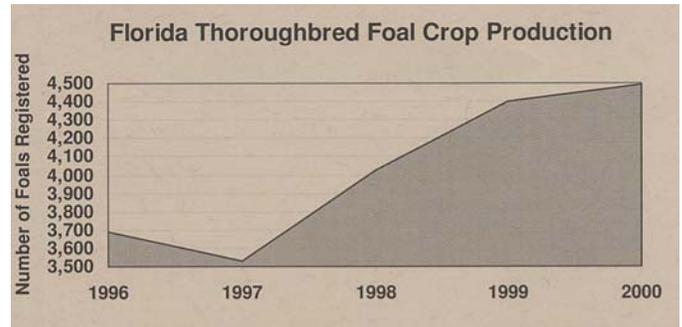
For the seven dominant states with feedlots having capacity of 1,000 or more cattle on feed totaled 9.3 million as of cattle on feed November 1, 2002, down 9 percent from both the previous year and November 1, 2000. Placements in feedlots during October totaled 2.01 million, 13 percent below 2001 and 16 percent below 2000.

Marketings from the seven states during October totaled 1.71 million, 4 percent above both 2001 and 2000. Beef production in the October to December quarter was forecast to be about one percent over a year earlier. Declining fed cattle numbers should help hold prices.

The mild winter of 2001/02 contributed to unusually good weight gains, particularly in comparison to the poor feeding conditions in 2000/01. Slaughter weights and numbers were both above year-earlier levels in October 2002. Weights broke in late October as the muddy conditions affected gains and resulted in some weight loss.

Improved weather conditions and cattle adjusting to winter feeding conditions will result in compensatory gains and potentially improved marketings.

Florida's cow-calf operators are entering a period of stronger demand for their calf crop. Weather, the economy, and other external factors will influence the intensity, but demand for feeder animals will drive prices upward.



SOURCE: The Florida Agri-Journal
 Researched by Les Harrison
 Development Rep. I
 Division of Marketing
 Release – January 6, 2003

-RSS-



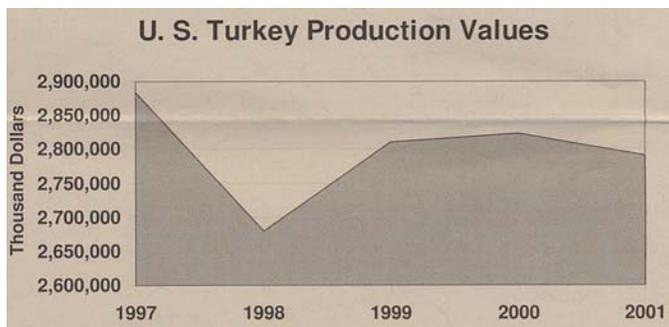
USDA Announces Plan to Expand Genetic Testing for the Interstate Movement of Scrapie Exposed Sheep

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has announced that it is expanding the use of genetic testing for determining which scrapie-exposed animals can move in interstate commerce.

Up to now, reclassifying exposed animals for movement based upon genotype has been limited to states that had signed pilot project agreements with APHIS. Now, all states will be able to use flock cleanup plans based on genetic testing.

The plans will allow owners to retain or sell exposed animals from infected or source flocks without restriction if they have met certain criteria and if genetic testing confirms that these animals are scrapie resistant. Genetic resistance is found by testing an animal's DNA to determine the amino acid that it codes at two specific locations, codon 136 and codon 171.

Livestock Trends



The plan calls for all sexually intact sheep not being moved directly to slaughter to be genotyped for scrapie resistance. Genetically susceptible exposed female animals and in rare cases, genetically less susceptible exposed female sheep will be removed under indemnity or permanently restricted to the premises. More specific information can be found at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/naahps/scrapie>.

All animals in the flock will be officially identified and entered in the scrapie national generic database. Animals that are retained will have their genotype confirmed and the genetically susceptible exposed animals and the genetically less susceptible exposed sheep must be identified with a microchip electronic identification device.

To comply with conditions of the genetics-based cleanup, a post exposure management and monitoring plan will be required.

The monitoring plan requires the following:

- ❖ Official identification of sexually intact animals that are sold or acquired;
- ❖ A record of any persons from whom sexually intact animals are acquired or to whom they are sold;
- ❖ Reporting of any deaths of mature animals and animals showing clinical signs and;
- ❖ Annual inspections.

All female genetically susceptible exposed animals, all those who test positive and the female offspring of positive animals must be removed from the flock. Flocks that remove all susceptible female animals will not be considered exposed flocks once they have completed the flock cleanup plan. Flocks not removing all susceptible female animals will still be considered exposed. Accordingly, until the monitoring plan is completed, these flocks will have restrictions placed on susceptible animals in the flock and such animals born or brought into the flock.

Note to stakeholders: Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Access the APHIS home page by pointing your web browser to <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>. For additional information on this topic, contact Madelaine Fletcher at (301)734-6125 or madelaine.fletcher@aphis.usda.gov.

SOURCE: National Institute for Animal Agriculture
<http://www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie/Scrapie.htm>
Release – December 12, 2002

-RSS-



USDA Marks Progress on BSE Prevention Action Steps

Triples Number of Tests for BSE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture more than tripled the number of cattle it tested for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) during the last fiscal year and has made significant steps on other prevention measures aimed at keeping the disease from entering the United States.

"We remain vigilant at strengthening programs to keep BSE out of this country," said Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman. "Our surveillance level far exceeds international testing standards and is just one component of a multi-faceted regulatory and compliance system that is keeping the United States free of BSE."

In fiscal year 2002, USDA tested 19,990 cattle for BSE using a targeted surveillance approach designed to test the highest risk animals, including downer animals (animals that are non-ambulatory at slaughter), animals that die on the farm, older animals and animals exhibiting signs of neurological distress. During FY 2001, USDA tested 5,272.

Both figures are significantly higher than the standards set by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE), the standard setting organization for animal health for 162 member nations. Under the international standard, a BSE-free country like the United States would be required to test only 433 head of cattle per year. The USDA is now testing 41 times that amount.

In addition to surveillance, OIE guidelines also require a risk analysis and management strategy, an education and awareness program and compulsory notification requirements in order for a country to claim that it is BSE free. The United States exceeds these criteria in all categories.

In November 2001, Harvard University published a landmark three-year risk analysis on BSE, representing the most comprehensive risk assessment ever done on BSE. The detailed assessment showed that the occurrence of BSE in the United States is highly unlikely.

In response to the report, USDA announced a series of actions it would take, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to strengthen BSE prevention programs in an effort to maintain the government's vigilance against the disease. The following is an update on those actions:

Peer Review of Harvard Risk Assessment to ensure Scientific Integrity: Following publishing of the Harvard risk assessment, USDA identified several independent scientists to conduct independent analysis on the report. The group of scientists expects to complete their work by June 2003.

Double the Number of BSE Tests: As stated above, the USDA has exceeded that goal by conducting nearly 20,000 tests in FY 2002, more than tripling the number of tests over the previous year.

Publish a Policy Options Paper Outlining Additional Regulatory Actions: In January 2002, FSIS published a Current Thinking Paper on BSE policy measures to consider public comments on future regulatory and policy recommendations. This

included actions regarding advanced meat recovery (AMR) systems and prohibiting the use of vertebral column from certain categories of cattle.

In June 2002, FSIS announced proposed revisions to existing directives to strengthen AMR systems. A rule was finalized in December 2002, instructing inspectors at beef establishments using vertebral columns as source materials in AMR systems to take routine regulatory samples to verify that spinal cord is not present in AMR product. If spinal cord tissue is present, then the product does not meet FSIS labeling and inspection requirements for meat.

FSIS expects to issue a Notice in the Federal Register by August 2003 to solicit additional comments on a proposed rule on meat derived from AMR systems. FSIS will seek these additional on a recently completed survey regarding AMR systems using beef vertebral columns as source material. The proposed rule will clarify that vertebral column should not be used as a source material unless the establishment has effective process control measures in place to ensure that central nervous system tissue is not present in meat derived from AMR systems. A final rule is expected on AMR by December 2003.

Rule to Prohibit Use of Certain Stunning Devices: FSIS is working to complete a direct final rule by March 2003 prohibiting the use of air-injection stunning devices used to immobilize cattle during slaughter. In this rulemaking, FSIS will address the risk posed by stunning devices that may inadvertently force visible pieces of brain and spinal cord tissue, known as macro-emboli, into the circulatory system of stunned cattle.

Publish an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) to consider regulatory options for disposal of dead stock on farms and ranches: FSIS expects to issue a Notice in the Federal Register in February 2003 directing people who deal with dead, dying, disease and downer animals that they are required to register with FSIS. The Notice is being issued to assist with traceback if BSE were detected and to assist FDA in enforcing its feed ban. In February 2003, APHIS also plans to issue an ANPR to consider additional regulatory

options for the disposal of dead stock on farms and ranches. Such cattle are considered an important potential pathway for the spread of BSE in the animal feed chain.

"We've exceeded OIE surveillance standards for the last seven years and have doubled surveillance every year since 1999," said Veneman. "We continue to examine our BSE programs and examine additional measures to ensure strong regulatory and compliance systems."

Since 1989, the U.S. government has taken a series of preventive actions to protect against this animal disease. This includes USDA prohibitions on the import of live ruminants, such as cattle, sheep, goats and most ruminant products from countries that have or are considered to be at risk for having BSE. In 1997, the Food and Drug Administration prohibited the use of most mammalian protein in the manufacture of animal feed intended for cows and other ruminants to stop the way the disease is thought to spread.

Under USDA regulation, BSE is a notifiable disease in the United States, meaning if veterinarians suspect the disease they must immediately notify the federal or state animal health authorities of their suspicion. USDA continues to educate U.S. cattle producers, veterinarians, industry groups and the general public on BSE through numerous briefings and press conferences. Fact sheets, a videotape on BSE and information packets are distributed widely to veterinarians, extension offices, universities and industry groups. USDA also maintains an extensive BSE Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov

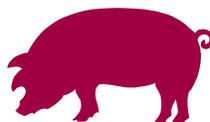
BSE is a chronic, degenerative neurological disorder of cattle belonging to a family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. BSE has never been detected in U.S. cattle. Since 1989, USDA has taken a series of preventive actions to protect against this animal disease. This includes banning the import of live ruminants, such as cattle, sheep and goats, and most ruminant products from the United Kingdom and other countries having BSE. The ban was extended to Europe in 1997. To stop the way the disease is thought to spread, in 1997, FDA prohibited the use

of most mammalian protein in the manufacture of animal feed intended for cows and other ruminants.

For more information about BSE and the many efforts being taken to prevent its entry and spread into the United States, visit <http://www.usda.gov/>.

SOURCE: Alisa Harrison, (202) 720-4623
Jerry Redding, (202) 720-6959
USDA
<http://www.usda.gov/>
Washington D.C.
Release – January 15, 2003

-RSS-



Process Developed by USDA Scientists Makes Swine Wastewater Environmentally Friendly

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that USDA scientists have developed a process that can remove phosphorus from swine production wastewater and turn it into a solid, marketable fertilizer, while converting the leftover effluent into a liquid crop fertilizer that is more environmentally friendly than manure.

"This technology is a good example of how agricultural research can provide benefits to everyone through environmental protection and improvement," said Veneman. "This research provides an opportunity to help farmers better protect the environment and enhance the soil they use for planting."

The process was developed by soil scientists Matias Vanotti, Ariel Szogi and Patrick Hunt at the Coastal Plains Soil, Water and Plant Research Center, operated by USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Florence, S.C. ARS is the chief scientific research agency of USDA.

The new process has several positive implications. Removing phosphorus from

wastewater can cut down on any excess phosphorus that may run off into streams and rivers. Excess amounts of phosphorus can lead to oxygen depletion in water bodies.

During processing, hydrated lime precipitates most of the phosphorus in the wastewater as a solid and converts it into a marketable phosphate fertilizer. This phosphorus could be a boon to the fertilizer industry, because world reserves of the nutrient are limited. Another benefit is that the high pH achieved by the process destroys disease-causing pathogens present in the leftover liquid.

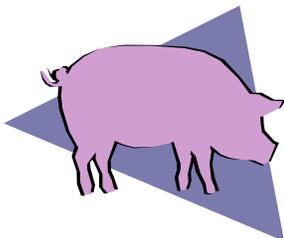
Meanwhile, the effluent contains a nitrogen-to-phosphorus ratio greater than 12 to 1-ideal for crop irrigation, which requires an 8-to-1 ratio. Regular manure offers a nitrogen-to-phosphorus ratio of 4 to 1. This higher nitrogen-phosphorus ratio translates into less excess phosphorus on land on which the treated wastewater is applied.

The scientists had previously succeeded in separating ammonia nitrogen from wastewater, a necessary step in completing the new process.

A patent application has been submitted for the combined nitrogen- and phosphorus-removal processes, which will be tested through next summer at a full-scale demonstration facility that opened earlier this month in Duplin County, N.C.

SOURCE: Alisa Harrison (202) 720-4623
Luis A. Pons (301) 504-1628
USDA
<http://www.usda.gov/>
Washington D.C.
Release – January 24, 2003

-RSS-



USDA Extends Comment Period for Processors on COOL Proposal

Got an opinion on Country of Origin Labeling? It's not too late to share it.

That's because the Department of Agriculture is extending the comment period for its Country of Origin Labeling proposal from to February 21, according to a news release.

The notice is a request for approval of information collection for "Interim Voluntary Country of Origin Labeling of Beef, Lamb, Pork, Fish, Perishable Commodities, and Peanuts Under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946." The notice of the request was published in the November 21, 2002, Federal Register. The comment period has been extended in response to requests from several industry trade organizations for additional time in order to file comments.

Comments should be mailed to:

Country of Origin Labeling Program
Agricultural Marketing Service
USDA STOP 0249
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20250-0249

Alternatively, comments may be faxed to (202) 720-3499 or sent by e-mail to cool@usda.gov.

Details of the change in comment period appeared in the January 22 Federal Register. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Comments will be available for inspection from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service Web site at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/>.

SOURCE: Dan Murphy
www.meatingplace.com
Release – January 27, 2003

-RSS-

Is It Best to Raise or Purchase Replacement Heifers?¹

One of the most difficult practices in cow-calf production is raising replacement heifers.

This is particularly true for cattlemen with small herds and limited resources. They must purchase feed, a primary cost, in bags, blocks, or small lots of liquid supplement delivered to a lick tank. It is also difficult to maintain heifers in separate herds, essential for any heifer breeding/raising program. In contrast, large cow-calf operations can purchase feed and other supplies in bulk lots at sizable cost savings. Large land holdings also allow the management of heifers and young cows in separate herds with minimal problems.

The primary question is cost. Using bagged feed it will cost about \$300 in feed, pasture, veterinary, breeding, interest, and miscellaneous supplies to raise a heifer calf from weaning to a bred heifer at 20 months of age. Thus, a heifer calf valued at \$400 to \$500 at weaning is worth \$700 to \$800 as a 20 month old bred heifer.

Most Florida heifers are bred at two years of age to calve at three. The cost of raising a heifer from weaning to breeding at two years of age is similar to that of yearlings because she is grown slower on less expensive pasture forage and not fed expensive supplements. The problem is that two-year-old heifers are maintained an additional year before calving with an interest cost of \$50. Also, she is grazing pasture that could be used by producing brood cows.

Another important consideration on raising or purchasing replacement heifers is genetics. Cattlemen with small herds do not or can not purchase bulls with superior genetics due to cost. The quickest and often the best way to obtain good genetics is to purchase good replacement heifers. The \$300 cost of raising your own replacement heifer would go a long way toward paying the premium required to purchase genetically superior animals.

Commercial cattlemen have long recognized the superiority of F-1 females. She will produce a 50 to 100 lb heavier calf at weaning and produce 2 to 3 more calves in her life time. These females are difficult to produce, but at times can be found on the market.

Another advantage of purchasing replacement heifers is that a terminal cross breeding program (all heifers calves sold as feeders) can be used with the brood cow herd. Some feedlots are paying premiums for feeder calves with the ability to make fast and efficient gains. Many Florida cattlemen are presently using Charolais bulls to produce this kind of calf.

In general, commercial cattlemen with small herds (100 brood cows or less) should strongly consider the opportunity to purchase replacement heifers. The Florida Cattlemen's Association and the South Florida Beef/Forage Program jointly sponsor a replacement heifer sale every October. Combinations of open, bred, yearlings, and two-year-old heifers are offered.

Heifers in the above sale are bringing premiums, but they are well worth the cost in terms of future production. Replacement heifer sales are a win-win situation for Florida cattlemen. Sellers can develop programs to specifically raise replacement heifers or have an opportunity to sell heifers normally slated for the feedlot. Buyers have the opportunity to purchase good heifers with the genetics to produce calves that are in demand by feeders and packers.

SOURCE: Findlay Pate
Professor, Beef Cattle Nutrition
Range Cattle REC, Ona
Published in The Peace River Farmer
and Rancher
Release – January 2003

-RSS-

¹Colorado State University offers a detailed but easy to use spreadsheet for calculating and comparing production costs and breakeven prices for purchased versus raised heifers. The user can modify various figures within the spreadsheet to reflect their own goals, operating procedures, input costs, and cattle prices. The spreadsheet is available on line at <http://ansci.colostate.edu>. Under "Beef Cattle," click on "Software and Interactive Programs."