



Animal Science Newsletter

March 2003

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Dates to Remember

March

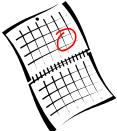
- 5-6 West Florida Livestock Show & Sale -
Gadsden County, FL
6-9 Florida 4-H Adult Horsemanship School
- Camp Welaka, FL
11-13 FCA Legislative Quarterly Meeting -
Tallahassee
15 State 4-H Hippology Contest - Orlando,
FL
18 Beef/Forage Field Day - Ocala, FL
25 Florida 4-H Foundation Auction -
Tallahassee
29 State 4-H & FFA Horse Judging Contest
- Gainesville
29 Helden Dispersal Sale - Dunnellon, FL

April

- 5 State 4-H Livestock Judging Contest -
Gainesville, FL
19 State 4-H Meat Judging Contest -
Gainesville, FL
22-24 Beef Cattle Repro Management School -
Wauchula, FL
25 Southern Cattle Company Inaugural
Angus Production Sale - Marianna, FL
30- May 2 52nd Annual Beef Cattle Short Course,
University of Florida/IFAS -
Gainesville, FL

**Prepared by Extension
Specialists in Animal
Sciences**

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- ❖ 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



Beef Management Calendar

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 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.

May

- Remove bulls.
- Harvest hay from cool season crops.
- Plant warm season perennial pastures.
- Fertilize warm season pastures.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for spittlebugs and treat if necessary.
- Apply spot-on agents for grub and louse control.
- Check dust bags.

- Vaccinate and implant with growth stimulant any later calves.
- Reimplant calves with growth stimulant at 90-120 days, when you have herd penned.
- Dispose of dead animals properly.
- Update market information and refine marketing plans.
- Remove bulls May 21 to end calving season March 1.



Livestock Summary

The USDA is reporting that the widespread drought has extended the liquidation phase of this cattle cycle for an additional year. Much of the northern and central plains and the inter-mountain west remain in severe drought with record low moisture levels.

Conditions are much improved in the southeast with the drought breaking in the early autumn. Some areas of the Florida panhandle had excessive rain in late December that damaged winter grazing.

Dry conditions expanded into the western corn belt in the fall 2002. Some locales have experienced this calamity for four years.

Stocks of all hay nationwide declined six percent from a year earlier as reported on December 1, 2002. This is the lowest level for hay inventory for this date since 1997 and the second lowest since 1993.

Hay consumption for May/December 2002 was up sharply, a byproduct of dry spring and summer grazing conditions. Stocks were down in 33 of the 48 reporting States as a result of the weather induced extension of the hay feeding period in the northern and central Great Plains, Southeast, and inter-mountain west.

The consequences are that hay-forage conditions in the beef sector are very tight despite the reduced beef cattle inventories and improved small grain grazing condition. Increased supplemental feeding because of the season's severity has increased supply concerns.

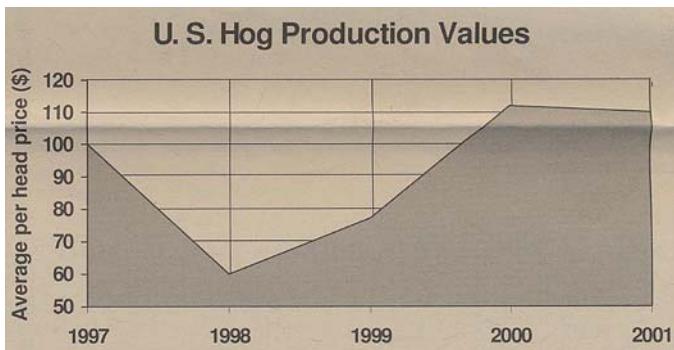
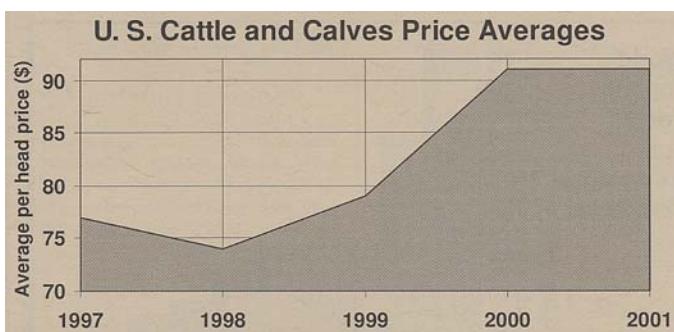
U.S. feeder cattle exports to Canada have been sharply reduced. Drought and a second year of poor grain crops are the cause. Instead, more Canadian feeder cattle were shipped to U.S. feedlots for finishing. Offsetting the Canadian action, Mexican stocker-feeder cattle imports were curtailed.

Overall, cattle-on-feed inventories remain down seven to nine percent from a year earlier. More stocker cattle are on wheat pasture, but feedlot placement in November rose above the low levels of a year earlier. On the balance, feedlot placements were well below the five year average.

The cattle inventory decline began in 1996 and likely will not show any hint of female retention for expansion until summer. Even this renewal date would not begin to expand the inventory until 2005 if cow and heifer slaughter rates holds steady.

If the late January 2003 freeze is the last for region this season and if the western drought eases Florida's cow-calf operators will see better prospect for higher prices and better demand.

Livestock Trends



Source: The Florida Agri-Journal
Researched by Les Harrison
Development Rep. I, Div. of Marketing
Release - February 5, 2003

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Cows Fatten up on Potato Chips, Pretzels

If the black cattle at the Herr family farm seem eager at the trough, they have good reason. No mundane meal of corn and hay here. This feed is spiced with a snack food-lover's smorgasbord: potato chips, cheese curls and pretzels.

Blessed bovine elsewhere in Pennsylvania get even sweeter treats: chocolate balls and Frosted Mini-Wheats.

While cattle have been eating human food byproducts for years, more farmers this winter are filling the trough with snack food goodies, a money-saving solution to high corn prices caused by last summer's drought.

Industry experts say that because feeding livestock discarded human food saves money and helps the environment, Bessie will be munching on potato chips more often in the future.

"It's a win-win situation," said Harold Harpster, a professor of animal science at Penn State University. "It takes this food product out of the landfills and puts it into use feeding these livestock."

In Hawaii some cattle get the leftovers from a pineapple processing plant. Kansas cattle feast on sunflower seed hulls. In Nebraska and California they eat sugar beet pulp.

In Pennsylvania, cattle food is sometimes even more like people food. The Hershey's plant provides chocolate, a Kellogg's plant provides cereal and the Herr's snack food plant provides the chips.

The discarded foods are fine nutritionally, farmers are quick to point out. Potatoes are the main ingredient for chips, wheat for pretzels. The reasons they're discarded vary: the chips are overcooked or the cereal too old. Often the cattle snacks are swept off the factory floor.

Jim Herr bought his cattle farm 18 years ago primarily to have a place to discard snack food plant leftovers from his family's business. The thousands of gallons of water used to wash potatoes now hydrate the hay crop, for instance.

The daily diet for his 650 cattle is heavily supplemented by the nearby snack food plant. The cattle eat 15 pounds of potato peelings, 15 pounds of corn, eight pounds of hay and four pounds of "steer party mix" chips, popcorn, pretzels and cheese curls. It's all mixed together in a blender the size of a large van.

That mixture is nutritionally analyzed by a lab several times a year. Farm manager Dennis Byrne says he can tell how much his steer like it by how fast they get to the trough.

"There's a lot of science to how the cattle are going to be fed, but there's also an art. You have to create a blend the cattle will go after," Byrne said. "They eat better than we do because we control their diet. They eat what they should eat."

Most farm animals eat human food at some point in their lives, farmers say, although the practice is most common with cattle because of their tough digestive systems.

Harpster and the farmers say the quality of the beef or milk isn't affected. Byrne notes the Herr

cattle grade out in the top 8 percent of all beef as Certified Angus Beef.

Livestock eating human food is most common in the east, where more food processing plants are located, Harpster said. He expects the practice to widen as food processors face increasing environmental pressures and farmers face increasing economic ones.

Shelia Stannard, a spokeswoman for the American Angus Association, agrees.

"I'd say it's going to continue the upward trend," Stannard said. "The cattle might as well eat something that we're not going to eat."

Dwight Hess, a farmer near Marietta, feeds his cattle cereals from a local Kellogg's plant, and even chocolate and peanut butter sources of needed fats and protein.

"It's senseless, putting a very high quality human grade food product into a landfill," he said. "We're producing a premium product and I'm proud of what we do."

The Herr cattle get the steer party mix no matter what the corn prices are, but Byrne said during a year of high prices corn now costs about twice as much as in other years his farm enjoys a marketplace advantage. His competitors know it. Byrne said he's gotten a lot of calls this winter from other farmers wanting to buy excess party mix. They're calling at the right time his stocks are up from increased Super Bowl production. The party mix now sits in a pile 6 feet high and 30 feet deep in his barn. Stannard notes that farmers have always been good recyclers. She says using human food for livestock is just another way to conserve.

"This year's been especially tough on cattle farmers, so anything they can do to find a cheaper feed source, they're going to do," she said.

SOURCE: FASS Track
<http://www.fass.org/fasstrack/>
Release – February 5, 2003

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2003 BIF 35th Annual Meeting

May 28-31, 2003
Lexington, KY
Hyatt Downtown

The 2003 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Annual Meeting and Convention is scheduled for May 28-31, 2003, at the Hyatt Downtown in Lexington, KY. It is being sponsored by the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association, and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Rooms at the Hyatt Downtown are available under the BIF room block. Call (859) 253-1234 for rooms.

To obtain registration materials, contact the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association, 176 Pasadena Drive, Lexington, KY 40503; or Darrh Bullock, University of Kentucky, 804 WP Garrigus Bldg., Lexington, KY 40506-0215 or (859) 257-7514. Registration materials will be available online at <http://www.beefimprovement.org> and <http://www.bifconference.com>.

For more information, contact Jim Akers at the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association at (859) 278-0899.

The tentative schedule includes:

Wednesday, May 28

5:00 pm Welcome Reception
7:30 pm NAABA Symposium

Thursday, May 29

8:00 am Welcome
8:15 am Surviving Environmental Challenges
Moderator: Dr. Tom Jenkins, USDA-MARC

- Beef Production in Adverse Environments - Dr. Carl Huvland, University of Georgia

- Clinical Mode of Action and Genomic Potential in Fescue - Dr. Richard Browning

9:45 am	Break
	• Management of Beef Production in an Adverse Environment
	• Questions and Summation
Noon	BIF Recognition Luncheon
2:00 pm	Round Table Discussion
	• Emerging Technologies
	• Selection Decisions
	• Cow Herd Efficiency
Evening	Kentucky Night Out

Friday, May 30

8:00 am Traits to Dollars

Moderator: Mr. Craig Huffines, American Hereford Association

- Panel Discussion: What will the target be?
 - Rick Carlson, PM Beef Group
 - Glenn Dolezal, Excel
 - John Tobe, Laura's Lean Beef
 - Joe Bill Meng, Creekstone Farms

9:00 am	Questions and Discussion
9:30 am	Break
	• Available Tools for Making Genetic Change - Dr. Tom Fields, Colorado State University
	• How Best to Achieve Genetic Change - Dr. Dorian Garrick, Colorado State University
11:30 am	Questions and Summation
Noon	BIF Awards Luncheon
2:00 pm	Round Table Discussion
	• Producer Application
	• Genetic Prediction
	• Live Animal, Carcass, and Endpoint
Evening	Night on the Town, Dinner on your own

Saturday, May 31

Kentucky Tours- An option of tours will be available that will showcase Kentucky's beef industry and heritage.

SOURCE: Beef Improvement Federation
<http://www.beefimprovement.org>

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UF Expert: United States Can't Stop Terrorism Aimed at Agriculture

The United States can't stop terrorists from using biological weapons to target its farms, crops or cattle, according to a University of Florida expert. Marjorie Hoy, a UF professor who participated in a study on bioterrorism funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said the study concluded U.S. borders are too leaky to prevent a biological attack against agricultural targets.

"Nationally, less than two percent of all incoming goods are inspected, and new invasive pests are accidentally introduced every year," she said. "Compared to nuclear weapons, biological weapons are relatively cheap and easy, and it's likely someone who really wanted to use them could do it and we couldn't prevent it."

Hoy, an entomologist with UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, said even a small attack could cause significant disruption.

"If this were a perfect world, and we immediately detected, responded to and eradicated an attack, there would still be severe psychological and economic impacts - a ripple effect like we saw after September 11," she said. "It could cause people to be very concerned about their food supply, and it could cause a great deal of economic damage by affecting international trade as well as trade between states."

Even if there is no evidence hostile foreign agents have previously deployed pests or diseases against U.S. agricultural targets, the threat of such an attack is very real, Hoy said.

"The former Soviet Union had a whole array of animal and plant diseases that were manufactured, stockpiled and genetically engineered to be more virulent, and Iraq is thought to have a number of threat agents that could be directed against agriculture," she said. "And bioterrorism is not limited to foreign nationals - people in this country could do it too."



Marjorie Hoy, a University of Florida professor who participated in a U.S. Department of Agriculture bioterrorism study last year, says the United States can't stop terrorists from using biological weapons to target its farms, crops or cattle. Hoy, an entomologist with UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, said the study recommends government agencies establish an effective communications system to enhance responses and inform the public in the event of an attack. She also said farmers, home gardeners and other citizens should report unusual pests, animal diseases or plant diseases to proper authorities.

Because preventing an attack would be difficult, it is very important government agencies quickly detect and respond to bioterrorism, Hoy said.

"Time is of the essence in discovering the pest," she said. "Having a plan in place and the resources to carry out an eradication program is crucial."

The study, which was written by a committee of experts assembled by the National Academies' National Research Council in the spring of 2001,

also recommended establishing an effective communications system.

"Currently there are problems with communication between multiple local, state and federal agencies," she said. "We need secure communications between agencies and the ability to transmit a message coherently, clearly and effectively."

A clear, authoritative message is key to reducing fear and panic in the event of a bioterrorist attack, Hoy said.

"Our committee concluded it was very important a single agency be given responsibility for transmitting complete, believable information to the public in a variety of media," she said. "We don't need 42 different people saying 42 different things or people that don't really know what they're talking about answering questions."

Manuscripts of the committee's report, Countering Agricultural Bioterrorism, became available from the National Academies Press Sept. 2002. The USDA has withheld full publication of the report while it reviews security issues, Hoy said.

One of Hoy's personal conclusions is that farmers, home gardeners and other U.S. citizens need to be alert to a bioterrorist attack. They need to report unusual pests or diseases to proper authorities, she said.

"The appropriate agency will vary from location to location," Hoy said. "In the case of animal diseases, it could be a veterinarian. In the case of insects or plant diseases, local agricultural extension agents, a local college or the state agriculture department should be contacted."

The public should also know there are two options for responding to an attack: eradicate the pest if possible, or, as in the case of the West Nile virus, learn to live with it, she said.

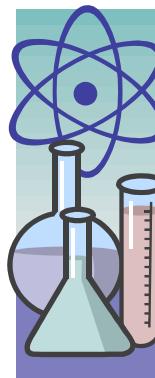
"Eradication might involve culling a herd of animals, or cutting and burning crops. There would be a call for quarantines to prevent the pests from moving into new areas," Hoy said. "If people don't

help by complying, the pest can become permanently established, causing the loss of jobs and long-term economic damage to our society. And then it costs everybody."

SOURCE: Dr. Marjorie Hoy
Entomology & Nematology
University of Florida
(352) 392-1901, ext. 153
mahoy@mail.ifas.ufl.edu

By : Patrick Hughes
ICS, University of Florida,
Gainesville, FL
(352) 392-1773
Release – January 21, 2003

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Congress OK's 2003-04 Funds for Food-Safety, Livestock Marketing Research

A \$500,000 increase in funding for listeria and E. coli O157:H7 research was approved last week with the Congressional passage of the fiscal 2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill, according to a news release.

Congress also agreed to fund a comprehensive study on the impact of restricting livestock procurement practices, as well as maintain funding for the Market Access Program, hide-skin and leather research and the Partnership for Food Safety.

The following projects were included:

- USDA's Agricultural Research Service will receive a \$350,000 increase in annual funding for research to control listeria in ready-to-eat meat and poultry products and E. coli O157:H7 in raw products; the total annual ARS appropriation is \$2.34 million. Rep. Jim Walsh (R-N.Y.) requested the additional funding, with

approval from Rep. Henry Bonilla (R-Texas), House Agriculture Appropriations subcommittee chairman.

- USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service will receive a \$100,000 increase in annual funding for research projects to control and prevent these pathogens in raw and ready-to-eat meat products; the total annual appropriation for CSREES is \$900,000.
- Agricultural Research Service's Eastern Regional Research Center in Wyndmor, Pa., will receive \$800,000 in funding for hide-skin and leather research.
- USDA's Grain, Packers and Stockyards Administration will receive \$4.5 million to conduct "a study of the issues surrounding a ban on Packer Ownership, particularly as to the economic impacts on the United States as a whole, and on individual states."
- USDA's Market Access Program will receive \$110 million in funding to promote U.S. exports of agricultural products, including the U.S. Meat Export Federation and the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council.
- The Partnership for Food Safety will receive \$500,000 in funding to educate consumers about food-safety and food-security matters.

SOURCE: Dan Murphy
<http://www.meatingplace.com>
Release – February 21, 2003

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First Cloned Sheep Euthanized

Dolly the sheep, who gained world notoriety six years ago as the first mammal cloned from an adult cell, was

euthanized after being diagnosed with lung cancer.

The Roslyn Institute, the Scottish research center that created her, announced her death Friday (Feb. 14). Dr. Harry Griffin said a post-mortem had yet to be performed, and that the decision to kill the sheep was made after a veterinary examination found the progressive lung disease.

"Sheep can live to 11 or 12 years of age and lung infections are common in older sheep, particularly those housed inside," Griffin said in a written statement. "A full post-mortem is being conducted and we will report any significant findings."

Dolly was a sheep created totally by design - even her name was picked specifically to be appealing. It came about during the latter stages of labor when Dolly was born. Stockmen involved in the delivery thought of the fact that the cell used came from a mammary gland and arrived at Dolly Parton, the country and western singer.

Dolly's birth prompted a long-running argument over the ethics of cloning, reaching further levels with the latest allegations of human cloning. Researchers had previously cloned sheep from fetal and embryonic cells, but until Dolly it was unknown whether an adult cell could reprogram itself to develop into a new being.

The Dolly breakthrough heightened speculation that human cloning inevitably would become possible.

Dolly mated on two occasions with a Welsh mountain ram called David. She first gave birth to Bonnie in April 1998 and then to three more lambs in 1999.

But in January last year her condition caused concern when she was diagnosed with a form of arthritis.

SOURCE: Daniel Yovich
<http://www.meatingplace.com>
Release – February 17, 2003

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