

Newsletter

April 2007



Dates to Remember

April

5	Georgia Expo Simmental Sale - Perry, GA
6	Georgia Expo Commercial Heifer Sale - Perry, GA
13	Goat Field Day - Quincy, FL
14	Circle B Black Bull and Female Sale (Simmental/Sim-Angus/Angus) - Uniontown, AL
14	State 4-H & FFA Horse Judging Contest - Gainesville, FL
19-21	NCBA Region II Meeting - Orlando / Kissimmee, FL
21	State 4-H & FFA Horse Judging Contest - Gainesville, FL

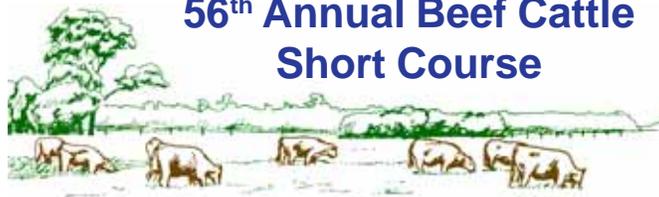
May

1	44 th Annual FL Dairy Production Conference - Gainesville, FL
2-4	56 th Annual FL Beef Cattle Short Course - Gainesville, FL
5	Cattlemen's Choice Simmental Sale - Colbert, GA
5	Rogers Bar HR 2007 Cream of the Crop Charolais Female Sale - Collins, MS
19	Heart of Florida Annual Club Calf Sale - Alachua, FL
25	Subtropical Ag Research Center Field Day - Brooksville, FL

In This Issue...

Some Facts & Myths Regarding Higher Corn Prices	1
Winter Forage/Wildlife Field Day	2
Goat Field Day	3
Unwanted Horses Being Abandoned In Kentucky	3

56th Annual Beef Cattle Short Course



Please visit <http://www.animal.ufl.edu/extension/beef/BCSC.shtml> for more information or to register.

Some Facts & Myths Regarding Higher Corn Prices

Everyone's speculating that higher corn prices will fuel a drive to make cattle bigger on grass, with an end-result of fewer days on feed. The reasoning is quite simple — cost of gain will be significantly cheaper in grazing programs than in the feedyard.

But the supply of feeder cattle hasn't changed. If one decreases days and accelerates the rate of turnover, then what already was an overcapacity situation in the feeding industry will increase. The result is there will be a need to import additional feeder cattle from Canada and Mexico, which will further stoke the whole trade debate.

It also likely means feedyards, which are battling to keep full, will actually add support to the calf and feeder market. The trend for a number of years has been to move cattle to the yard at lighter weights and then feed them longer. This trend enabled feedyards to behave as if they were in an expansion environment, despite numbers remaining constant (more days on feed and bigger outweights).

This year, the number of calves available to be placed is virtually unchanged, but the shift in placement weights (going higher) will have the effect of making inventories of placeable cattle appear smaller, even while numbers remain constant.

Continued on page 4...

Winter Forage/Wildlife Field day

NORTH FLORIDA RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER/SUWANNEE VALLEY

PROGRAM

- 5:00 pm Introductions & welcome
- 5:05-5:35 pm "The Label Is Law...even for forage producers."
Larry Halsey, Jefferson County CED.
CEU's will be available.

Station 1:

- Overview on BMPs as related to forages/fertilization. Overseeded strips are bermuda, bahia (fertilized/not fertilized, and poultry litter). Joel Love, SRWMD
- Presentation on ryegrass, oats, triticale, clover and alfalfa variety comparisons and importance of variety selection. Dr. Ann Blount, Forage Breeder, UF Agronomy Dept.

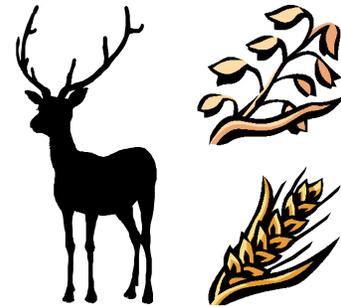
Station 2:

- Forage species selection, uses and management. Kevin Campbell, Madison County Extension and David Nistler, Clay County Extension
- Forage quality and disease issues. Yoana Newman, UF Agronomy Department & Elena Toro, Columbia County Extension
- Wildlife Food Plots design and layout. William Sheftall, Leon County Extension

Station 3:

- Forage for Wildlife Food Plots and management. Scott Kerr, Suwannee County Extension & Chris Vann, Lafayette County Extension

Chili dinner after last presentation.



DATE: APRIL 12, 2007

TIME: 5:00-8:00 PM

LOCATION: North Florida
Research and Education
Center/Suwannee valley
(See driving directions below)

To RSVP please call
Karen Hancock at
(386)362-1725 ext. 101
before April 9th, 2007

Program Fee: \$5.00 includes
light meal & packet

NORTH FLORIDA RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER/SUWANNEE VALLEY

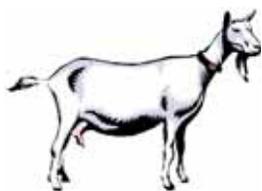
Address:
Suwannee Valley
7580 County Road 136
Live Oak, FL 32060

Phone: 386-362-1725

E-mail: khancock@ifas.ufl.edu

From Jacksonville: Take I-10 West to I-75 go north to County Road 136; go west on County Road 136 (Exit 439) approximately 6 miles to the facility. (The Center is on the left at the corner of CR 417 and CR 136).

From Tallahassee: Take I-10 East to the 2nd Live Oak Exit (#283) (US Hwy 129); go south on US Hwy 129 to Duval St.; go left (east) on Duval St (also known as CR 136); approximately 6 miles to the facility. (The Center is on the right at the corner of CR 417 and CR 136).



Goat Field Day

Florida A&M University will hold a **Goat Field Day** on **Friday, April 13, 2007**, beginning at 9:00 AM. The Goat

Field Day will be held at the FAMU Research and Extension Center, 4259 Bainbridge Highway, Quincy, FL 32352.

The focus of this year's field day will be on Herd Health. The field day will include workshops on topics such as common goat parasites, pregnancy toxemia, caseous lymphadenitis, and regulatory issues. As part of the afternoon sessions, two forums chaired by producers and professionals will take place in order to identify issues and challenges facing local producers and to begin the dialogue for a strategic plan to address these issues. **Lunch will be provided and will include various value-added goat meat products produced at University of Florida and Florida A&M University to raise awareness about the marketing opportunities that exist for goat meat.**

More information about the Goat Field Day can be found online at <http://www.famu.edu/herds>. If you have additional questions, please call Dr. Ray Mobley at (850) 599-3546. Please join us for what is sure to be an educational, enriching, and enjoyable day.

Additionally, the Master Goat Producer Certification Course will be taking place soon!!! If you have any questions or want more information about this event, please contact Ms. Angela Jakes at (850) 875-8557 or by email at angela.mckenziejakes@famu.edu.



Unwanted Horses Being Abandoned In Kentucky

While the concept of processing unwanted horses for food is an emotional issue, the dark

side of such a policy is on display in Kentucky and other states, the *Associated Press* reports.

Kentucky, the horse capital of the world, is being overrun with thousands of horses no one wants, as are other parts of the U.S. With the opposition to horse slaughter having led to the closure of horse-processing facilities, auctions are glutted with horses, and many rescue organizations have run out of room.

An Illinois State Legislature bill that would prohibit movement of horses into Illinois for purposes of slaughter for human consumption could be a final nail. Illinois is the only state where continued horse slaughter isn't threatened following a Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in mid January that ruled as valid a 1949 Texas law banning horse slaughter for human consumption.

That ruling concerned two of the nation's three horse slaughter plants — Dallas Crown Inc. at Kaufman, TX, and Beltex Corp. in Fort Worth. Spokesmen for the Texas plants say options are being weighed, including an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The third plant, which is unaffected by that ruling, is Cavel International, Inc., in DeKalb, IL. The three plants, which USDA says harvested 100,000 horses last year, produce horsemeat for the European Union and other countries.

Former U.S. Rep. Charlie Stenholm of Texas, now an agriculture consultant in Washington, D.C., recently acknowledged the emotionalism of the horse-slaughter issue to attendees of the Texas Ag Forum. But he says 80% of the horse industry supports the practice, and denying horse owners the option of taking unwanted horses to a processing plant restricts property rights.

"The best way to end a horse's life is humanely, with a veterinarian present," Stenholm said. That's mandated in processing plants, he says.

"Any horse owner who does not choose to receive a value for (unwanted) horses don't have to," he said. "But it's a property rights issue similar to water rights."

Providing coverage for *BEEF* sister publication *Southwest Farm Press*, Ron Smith says Stenholm believes that if horse owners prefer to consider their animals as pets, they would forfeit the tax deductions they receive for farm animals.

"The Humane Society and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals have a different opinion. But if they

care about the welfare of horses, what do they recommend we do with more than 100,000 horses if we don't maintain a market of last resort?" Stenholm asks. Many wild horses end up on feedlots, ranches and care facilities, at taxpayer expense. "Can we afford that?"

He says people don't like to think about what it's like for an animal to die a natural death in the wild, which is "often gruesome." Stenholm says it's important to the horse industry, which counts more than 9 million horses at a value of more than \$9 billion, that the Texas law (banning processing) be repealed.

"Horse owners have the best interest of their animals in mind," he said. "We should return the option of selling to a processing plant. This is an emotional issue."

Ann Swinker, Pennsylvania State University professor of equine science, says that, according to the Unwanted Horse Coalition, there are an estimated 120,000 head of unwanted horses in the U.S. today. Of these unwanted horses:

About 30,000 horses are exported to Canada annually for processing.

- Nearly 65,000 are processed in U.S. annually.
- Around 4,000 are exported to Mexico for processing.
- 2,000 unadoptable feral horses are in Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-funded sanctuaries.
- 6,000 feral horses are in BLM adoption pipelines.
- Others are abandoned, neglected or abused.

Meanwhile, it's estimated there are 8,000-10,000 spaces available for unwanted horses at horse rescues and retirement farms across the U.S.

SOURCE: Joe Roybal
<http://beef-mag.com/>
 Release - March 23, 2007



Corn Prices

Continued from page 1...

And while we're on the subject of corn prices, let's address some prevailing myths:

■ **Higher corn prices means lower cattle weights.** There's some truth to this — the incentive to produce fat will decrease, or there will be more of an economic incentive to identify that optimal body composition point where feed efficiency begins to rapidly decline.

However, pounds remain the primary economic driver in the cow-calf, feeding and packing industries. Fixed overhead costs need to be spread over as many pounds as possible. This changes dramatically if the cost of putting on that pound is less than what the pound is worth.

That said, there's still ample incentive to make cattle bigger if they're worth \$90/cwt. and cost of gain (COG) is at \$70. The winter storm has removed a lot of tonnage from the system, but the math isn't there to encourage lighter weights.

Certainly as COG approaches price levels, there's more incentive to market cattle at their proper biological endpoint, but it's incorrect to assume the incentive for pounds has changed.

■ **Higher corn prices benefit beef over poultry and pork.** The logic of this argument is also sound. The reasoning is beef production only uses grain for half of its production cycle, while poultry and pork use corn for a much greater part of the life cycle. But beef production is at such a disadvantage in feed efficiency and feed conversion compared to poultry and pork that the relative changes in costs of production don't dramatically change the relative competitiveness between the proteins.

■ **Higher corn prices will drive a shift to grass-fed beef.** Grass-fed beef is potentially a great niche market. However, the world prefers high-quality corn-fed beef, and that's where the U.S. beef industry has a competitive advantage.

Grass-fed beef from an industry standpoint isn't an option; it's neither price competitive nor the product of choice. A shift to a grass-fed program could be great for individual operations, but a disaster if the entire industry were to shift in that direction.

SOURCE: Troy Marshall
<http://beef-mag.com/>
 Release - March 2, 2007