UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA Cooperative Extension Service

Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences

Marion County Extension Service
2232 NE Jacksonville Road
Ocala, Florida, 34470
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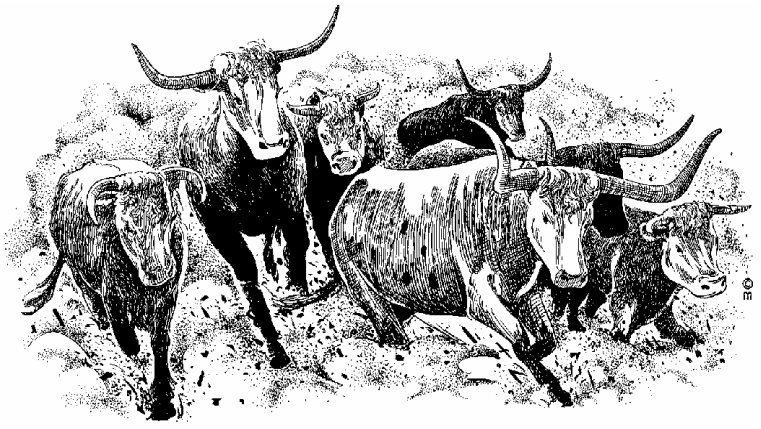

MARION COUNTY LIVESTOCK NEWS

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Equine Education Courses

Marion County Extension will offer 2 Equine Care and Technology courses, **Basic and Advanced**, beginning Monday, **January 27th, 2003.**

Basic topics include: anatomy and conformation, equine nutrition, herd/health and first aid, handling horses and restraint, breeding, foaling, as well as barn management and farm safety.

Advanced Course This course is designed to expand the knowledge of equine industry professionals. Classes for this course change each year and have included such topics as advanced reproduction, animal welfare, horse farm economics, genetics, ethology-the study of equine behavior, performance horse lameness, advanced equine nutrition, and preventative medicine, etc.

Each course consists of nine sessions. Classes will meet at Central Florida Community College beginning Monday night January 27th, 2003, from 6-9 p.m. The Community College is located on SR 200 in Ocala. Cost for each class is $55.00.

For more information contact Mark Shuffitt at (352) 620-3440, or the Continuing Education Department of Central Florida Community College at (352) 237-2111.

Equine Forum

Thursday
January 23rd, 2003
7:00-9:00 p.m.

Marion County Agriculture Center
2232 NE Jacksonville Road
Ocala, Florida

TOPIC:

Foal Diseases

SPEAKERS:
Dana Zimmel (DVM), UF Extension Veterinarian
Mark Shuffitt, Marion County Extension

For more information call (352) 620-3440.

20th Annual
Florida Cattlemen's Institute
&
Allied Trade Show

January 16, 2003
Osceola County Agricultural Center
Highway 192 East of Kissimmee

"A Generation Of Education"

TOPICS

Where Are We Now
Mr. Randy Blach, Executive VP, Cattle-Fax,

Chute Side Issues (How to Maintain Production Quality)
Dr. Todd Thrift, Ani. Sci., University of Florida

Trade Show Break

Environmental Assessment
Ms. Lesa Call, OFAER Program Manager

Awards Presentation

Lunch – Provided by Trade Show Vendors

Producer/Specialist Panel
Bio-solids Application to Pastureland
- Dr. Gerald Kidder, Soil & Water Science, UF
- Dr. George O'Connor, Soil & Water Science, UF
- Mr. Hal Schmidt, consulting engineer, Hartman Assoc
- Dr. Philip Kane, Bio-solids, FDEP Central District
- Mr. J. B. Starkey, Jr., Anclote River Ranch
- Mr. Don LeFils, LeFils Ranch, Volusia County

Trade Show Break

Risk Management
Dr. Michael Fanning, Vice President, Agri-Logic, Inc.

Where Are We Headed
Mr. Randy Blach, Executive Vice President, Cattle-Fax, Englewood, CO

REGISTRATION

Please RSVP to your County Agent if you plan to attend!

Special thanks are extended to the Allied Trade Show Exhibitors. Without their support the Florida Cattlemen's Institute would not be possible!

Beef Cattle Management Tips

JANUARY

⇒ Buy only performance tested bulls with superior records.
⇒ **Attend Ocala Bull Sale January 14th, 2003**.
⇒ Apply lime for summer crops.
⇒ Check for lice/treat if necessary.
⇒ Control weeds in cool season pasture.
⇒ Begin grazing winter pastures when approx. 6" high. Rye should be 12"-18" high.
⇒ Check and fill mineral feeders.
⇒ Put bulls out for October breeding season.
⇒ Make breeding herd lists for single sire herds.
⇒ Observe cows: record heat, breeding abnormalities, discharges, abortions, retained placentas, difficult calvings, etc.
⇒ Observe cows for calving difficulties.
⇒ Observe calves for signs of scours.
⇒ Make sure bulls have adequate nutrition; so they will be in good condition for the breeding season.
⇒ Discuss herd health with your veterinarian and outline a program for the year.
⇒ Watch for grass tetany on winter pastures.
⇒ Increase magnesium levels in mineral mixes if grass tetany has been a previous problem.
⇒ Vaccinate cows and heifers against vibriosis and leptospiriosis prior to the breeding season.

FEBRUARY

➢ Top dress winter forages, if necessary
➢ Check and fill mineral feeders
➢ Put bulls out with breeding herd
➢ Work Calves:
    1. Identify
    2. Implant with growth stimulant
    3. Vaccinate
➢ Provide adequate nutrition to lactating cows
➢ Check calves for signs of respiratory disease
➢ Cull cows that did not calve
➢ Check for lice, treat if necessary

John Mark Shuffitt
Livestock Agent II
Marion County Extension Service

Pasture
Soil Testing & Grazing

Pastures can be grown in nearly all locations in Florida. Variations in soil and climatic conditions make some locations and sites better suited to forage production than others. Also, a particular forage species may be better adapted to a given site than other species.

The role of improved pastures in supplying forage varies from farm to farm, depending on the type of livestock operation, available facilities, quality of these facilities, and personal preference of the operator. It is possible for animals to receive a large portion of their feed from pastures; however, if this is to be achieved, careful consideration must be given to planning and carrying out a forage production and utilization program.

SITE

The pasture site provides space for livestock and permits controlled grazing. The soil on any given site can vary in its ability to support improved productive pastures. Several soil characteristics should be considered. Soils with a high organic matter content or clay content will have a higher fertilizer retention capacity and require fewer applications of fertilizer. Soil moisture holding capacity can vary depending on organic matter content, texture, depth to subsoil, and depth to water table. Very deep sandy soils that are excessively well drained, and low in organic matter, will tend to be less productive than other soils. The native soil fertility can vary from one soil to the next and should be checked when starting a new pasture program.

The three major nutrients required for growing plants are (N) nitrogen, (P) phosphorus, and (K) potassium. Nitrogen is the most important nutrient used for growing grass. Where there are good stands of legumes, nitrogen will not be needed since these plants can take nitrogen from the air and use it for their own growth and later provide nitrogen to the grass. Nutrients are recycled back onto the pasture through the manure and urine of the animals grazing the pasture. This reduces the need for fertilizer as compared to that needed by a hay crop or other crops that are harvested and removed from the land.

SOIL TESTING

Soil testing can help predict fertilizer needs but observation and records are also important. Soil tests were developed to assist in fertility management of agronomic crops. They were so successful they have been used frequently as a cure-all in situations where their use is not appropriate.

Observation of plant production response to added nutrients should be a constant task of every grower. The producer should remember the reason for which the plants are being grown and the response desired. For most producers, the cost of obtaining a response must be less than the value of increased production.

Accurate production records are needed to evaluate soil fertility and the responses to applied fertilizer. If a production response to a nutrient is not being obtained, that nutrient is not limiting growth and may not be needed on that field. Records allow projection of trends and can help avoid problems.

Soil testing consists of three parts: sample taking, laboratory testing and interpretations based on field correlation. The sample must be representative of the field. This is the most error-prone part of soil testing because soil is variable and people are not always careful. The sample is very small in comparison to the volume it represents. Taking 20 cores from 20 acres represents about one millionth of the surface area.

The methods used by the lab must be appropriate and the analyses must be done properly. Reputable labs have trained personnel who control analytical quality and assure reliable results.

Interpretation of test results is what makes soil fertility testing relevant and a tool for plant nutrition management. Beware of the testing lab that doesn't interpret its results.

Soil samples can be tested and subsequent fertilization recommendations can be provided by the Extension Soil Testing Lab of the University of Florida. If the soil is acidic (low pH), the acidic condition can be corrected by liming. If the soil is deficient in certain nutrients required for plant growth, these can be supplied by the addition of fertilizer that contains the needed nutrients. But nothing practical can be done about the "natural" moisture holding capability of the soil or its "fertilizer retention capacity."

GRAZING

Rotational grazing can be one of the most valuable management practices employed. It calls for 2 to 10 pastures which can be grazed in sequential order. This allows the forage to recover in a given pasture while another pasture is being grazed. It also helps prevent "sand spots." Be sure to allow adequate time for rejuvenation of pasture approximately 3 – 4 weeks.

Stocking rate should be approximately 2 to 2 1/2 acres of pasture for each horse. This may vary to some degree, depending on location, type of grass, and size of the horse. In general, when the stocking rate nears one acre per horse, exercise becomes the main use of the pasture and its use as a source of feed becomes secondary. **Avoid "overstocking" too many horses on too few acres for too long a period of time.** This results in destruction of the pasture grass and encroachment of weeds.

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DIRT ROADS

Paul Harvey

What's mainly wrong with society today is that too many Dirt Roads have been paved.

There's not a problem in America today, crime, drugs, education, divorce, delinquency that wouldn't be remedied, if we just had more Dirt Roads, because Dirt Roads give character.

People that live at the end of Dirt Roads learn early on that life is a bumpy ride.

That it can jar you right down to your teeth sometimes, but it's worth it, if at the end is home…a loving spouse, happy kids and a dog.

We wouldn't have near the trouble with our educational system if our kids got their exercise walking a Dirt Road with other kids, from whom they learn how to get along.

There was less crime in our streets before they were paved. And there were no drive by shootings. Our values were better when our roads were worse!

Criminals didn't walk two dusty miles to rob or rape, if they knew they'd be welcomed by 5 barking dogs and a double barrel shotgun.

People did not worship their cars more than their kids, and motorists were more courteous, they didn't tailgate by riding the bumper or the guy in front would choke you with dust & bust your windshield with rocks.

Dirt Roads taught patience. They were environmentally friendly, you didn't hop in your car for a quart of milk, you walked to the barn for your milk. For your mail, you walked to the mail box.

What if it rained and the Dirt Road got washed out? That was the best part. You stayed home and had some family time, roasted marshmallows and popped popcorn, had pony rides on Daddy's shoulders and learned how to make prettier quilts than anybody.

At the end of Dirt Roads, you soon learned that bad words tasted like soap.

Most paved roads lead to trouble, Dirt Roads more likely lead to a fishing creek or a swimming hole.

At the end of our Dirt Road, the only time we even locked our car was in August, because if we didn't some neighbor would fill it with too much zucchini.

At the end of our Dirt Road, there was always extra springtime income, from when city dudes would get stuck, you'd have to hitch up a team and pull them out.

Usually, you got a dollar…always you got a new friend…at the end of a Dirt Road!