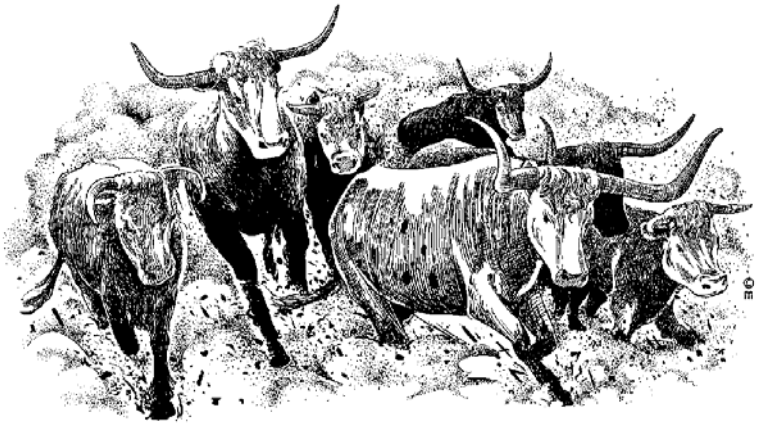


Marion County Extension Service
2232 NE Jacksonville Road
Ocala, Florida, 34470
(352) 620-3440



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MARION COUNTY LIVESTOCK NEWS

APRIL 2006

Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome (MRLS) Confirmed in Florida

MARCH 29, 2006

The University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine has confirmed one case of MRLS and has two other cases that are suspect. All three cases occurred in Alachua County this spring.

Two cases were septic foals that received treatment in the UFCVM intensive care unit but were subsequently euthanized. The third case was a late-term abortion.

Diagnosis of MRLS was confirmed by UF pathologist Dr. John Roberts who worked at the University of Kentucky Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center during the Kentucky MRLS outbreak of 2001-2002.

MRLS has not been previously reported in Florida. The Kentucky outbreak suffered severe economic losses estimated to be near \$336-500 million and a loss of 30 percent of the estimated foal crop for 2002.

MRLS has been linked to the consumption of Eastern Tent caterpillars. Eastern tent caterpillars prefer wild cherry, apple and crabapple. The clinical syndromes include early pregnancy loss, late-term abortions, foals born weak and septic, pericarditis, uveitis, laminitis and oral ulceration.

Mare Owners: Take Action

At this time, we strongly recommend that all abortions and foal deaths receive a post-mortem evaluation. Inspection of pastures for the presence of cherry trees and caterpillars is critical. The only way to protect the pregnant mare is to remove her from contact with the caterpillars. Early pregnancy loss can be detected by ultrasonographic evaluation.

For more information, consult the University of Kentucky web page on MRLS at www.ca.uky.edu/gluck/mrls/index.htm or The Horse: Your Guide to Equine Health Care at www.thehorse.com.

Prepared by: Dana Zimmer, DVM Diplomate ACVIM, ABVP
(Equine Practice) University of Florida College of Veterinary
Medicine

EEE - old news?

Florida Agriculture Commissioner Charles H. Bronson is urging horse owners to vaccinate their horses against Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus as mosquito season gets underway. Four cases of EEE have already been confirmed in Florida since January the first cases are not usually seen until May.

Bronson says the majority of cases can be prevented through proper vaccinations and booster shots against mosquito borne illnesses and he is reminding horse owners that now is the time to take action.

"Last year there were 150 reported cases of EEE across 43 counties, triple the number from the year before when 48 cases of the disease reported impacting 27 counties," Bronson said. "Now that mosquito season is upon us, it is critical that horse owners take steps to protect their animals. We have already seen some EEE cases due to the relatively warm winter and we need to ensure that these cases are kept to a minimum."

EEE is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system and is transmitted to horses by infected mosquitoes. Signs of the virus include fever, listlessness, stumbling, circling, coma and usually death. The disease is fatal in horses in 90 percent of the cases.

Bronson says he is pleased that no cases of West Nile Virus have been reported so far this year, and WNV cases have continued to drop over the years since a vaccination against the disease became available in 2001.

"There was a lot of attention paid to West Nile Virus when it was first discovered in Florida in 2000. Horse owners did a very good job in protecting their animals from this disease. We want to be sure they are just as aggressive in protecting horses against EEE," Bronson said.

The Department and the state's numerous mosquito control districts have strengthened their surveillance, control and prevention measures in order to be better prepared for mosquito-borne illnesses. There are ongoing efforts to keep the mosquito populations down, but because there is no fool-proof method to prevent the diseases, vaccinations are critical.

So far this year EEE has been confirmed in horses in Columbia, Duval, Marion and Levy counties.

Celebrating the Fifty-fifth Annual
Beef Cattle Short Course
Hilton University of Florida Conference Center
Gainesville, Florida
May 3 – 5, 2006

Beef cattle production in Florida is a dynamic and challenging industry. Every producer faces challenges regarding economics and marketing, resource utilization, and management decisions. These challenges are on-going processes that necessitate current information for decision making. The 55th Annual Florida Beef Cattle Short Course addresses these challenges that the beef cattle producers face on an everyday basis. The Wednesday afternoon program will focus on marketing and land resource utilization challenges. As the cattle cycle evolves; knowing where we are and where the market may be headed is always pertinent. In addition, this session will focus on a timely and important topic for the sustainability of the beef cattle industry. The beef cattle enterprise's land resources and the continuing issue of land use and value in Florida will be approached on a number of different fronts. The day will conclude with a reception and Allied Industry Trade Show, a great chance for cattlemen and allied industry representatives to interact and share information. The program Thursday addresses some of the management issues of beef cattle production. Nutrition, cow herd management, beef products, and beef product procurement systems will all be addressed. These basic issues of beef production will be approached with improved production efficiency in mind. Lunch will generously be sponsored by Farm Credit of North Florida. The afternoon program moves outside to utilize the Beef Teaching Unit to demonstrate calf processing, cattle evaluation, and hay production techniques. Thursday evening is capped by the annual Cattlemen's Steak-Out, an opportunity to enjoy a prime rib dinner and time for conversation. On Friday morning, the program highlights the University of Florida's ongoing dedication to beef cattle production. Two concurrent sessions will showcase some of the current research efforts in the Animal Sciences and Agronomy departments that relate directly to the Florida beef cattle producer. Alternatively, that morning will be an opportunity for interested producers to attend a Florida Beef Quality Producer training session. Securing the ability and the resources to maintain the beef industry in Florida will continue to be a challenge. Utilizing new and innovative production practices to profitably produce quality beef cattle and beef products will be an important key to maintaining the opportunity we have to enjoy a profession and lifestyle in the beef industry.

Matt Hersom, Co-Chair and Dwain Johnson, Co-Chair

Registration Information

The reduced early registration fee is \$90.00 if payment is postmarked **before** April 21, 2006. **After** April 21, 2006, the regular registration fee will be \$120.00. The registration fee includes refreshment breaks, exhibitor's reception, Thursday's luncheon, one Cattlemen's Steak-out ticket, and proceedings. Extra Cattlemen's Steak-out tickets are available at \$10.00 each. Please refer to the registration card to purchase extra tickets..

CONVENIENTLY REGISTER IN ONE OF THESE EASY WAYS:

1. **ONLINE:** If paying by credit card, register online at: <http://www.register123.com/event/profile/form/index.cfm?PKformID=0x164066463d>
2. **FAX:** If paying by credit card, FAX completed registration form to: (352) 392-9734

For registration questions, please contact: **REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT**

UF/IFAS Office of Conferences & Institutes
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Hotel Accommodations/Meeting Site

The [Hilton University of Florida Conference Center](#), located at 1714 SW 34th Street, Gainesville, FL, is offering a special group rate of \$89.00 single or double occupancy, plus 9% tax. **To qualify for this special rate, reservations must be made prior to April 14, 2006.** Please call the hotel directly at (352) 371-3600 to make your reservation and be ready to provide **Code BCS** in order for Hotel Reservations to recognize you as a Beef Cattle Short Course participant. After the deadline, the discounted group rate and guest room availability are no longer guaranteed.

50th Ocala Bull Sale – “Report”

The Ocala Bull Sale is held each year on the second Tuesday of January at the Southeastern Livestock Pavilion in Ocala. Grading takes place beginning at 8:00 am on the day before the sale. Buyers are welcome to preview the bulls on Monday (all day) and Tuesday (until noon).

All bulls are evaluated on weight, condition, conformation, scrotal circumference and EPD's then assigned a grade from A+ to C. Bulls that do not score a C grade or higher are sifted from the sale.

One hundred twenty one bulls representing eight breeds sold for an overall average of \$2,082 at the 2006 Marion County Cattleman's Association Annual Graded Sale in Ocala. This year's sale toppers were lot #141 an (A) graded Hereford bull consigned by Woodard Hereford Farms of Springfield, TN and lot #1 an (A-) graded Angus bull consigned by Baker Farms of Troy, TN sold for \$3,900 each. Additionally, lots #139 an (A) graded Hereford bull out of the Woodard Hereford consignment, lot #10 an (A-) graded Angus bull offered by Double C Farms of Marshallville, GA and lot #31X a (B) graded bull from the Rafter G Bar Livestock Inc. of Groveland, FL sold for \$3,700 each. Lot #70 an (A-) graded Brangus bull consigned by Maranatha Ranch of Morriston, FL and lot #11 an (A-) graded Angus bull offered by Double C Farms brought a price of \$3,600 each. Thirteen other bulls sold for a price of between \$3,000 and \$3,500. In addition, 14 bulls sold for between \$2,500 and \$2,900 and 19 bulls brought a price of between \$2,100 and \$2,400.

This year three **A** graded bulls averaged \$3,500. Twenty-seven **A-** bulls brought an average price \$2,573. Twenty-nine **B+** bulls brought an average price of \$2,014, thirty **B** graded bulls averaged \$1,800 and twenty-four **B-** graded bulls averaged \$1,896. Eight **C+** bulls averaged \$1,750.

Breed averages were as follows:

- ⇒ 25 Angus sold for an average of \$2,880
- ⇒ 6 Red Angus sold for an average of \$1,766
- ⇒ 8 Brangus sold for an average of \$2,688
- ⇒ 6 Braford sold for an average of \$2,183
- ⇒ 34 Charolais sold for an average of \$1,817
- ⇒ 29 Hereford sold for an average of \$1,800
- ⇒ 12 Polled Hereford sold for an average of \$1,575
- ⇒ 1 Simmental sold for \$1,800

The Marion County Cattleman's Association would like to **THANK everyone** who had a part in making this sale possible. A special **THANK YOU** to our volume buyers: **Braco Farms**, Floral City; **Little Everglades**, Dade City; **Plumley Farms**, Ocala; **Elsie Smith**, Lorida and **Frank Smith**, Weirsdale.

We hope to see all of you again January 9th, 2007 for the 51st Annual Ocala Bull Sale, **The Oldest Graded Bull Sale in the Nation**.

Beef Cattle Management Tips

APRIL

- Plant warm season and perennial 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 prior to 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.
- Check and fill mineral feeders.
- 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.
- Re-implant calves with growth stimulant at 90-120 days, when you have the herd penned.
- Update market info. and refine marketing plans
- Remove bulls by May 21st to end calving season March 1st.

JUNE

- Check and fill mineral feeder, use at least 8% phosphorus in mineral and not over 2 ½ to 1 calcium to phosphorus ratio.
- Check pastures for spittlebugs, mole crickets, and armyworms. Treat if necessary.
- Check dust bags.
- Observe cattle for evidence of pinkeye and treat.
- Utilize available veterinary services and diagnostic laboratories.
- Get heifers vaccinated for brucellosis if not already done.
- Pregnancy check cows.
- Put bulls out June 1st to begin calving March 11th.

John Mark Shuffitt
Livestock Agent III
Marion County Extension Service

WEED MANAGEMENT

In addition to controlling weeds in a pasture, efforts should be taken to prevent weeds from reinfesting the pasture. Knowledge of how weeds are dispersed is important.

Weeds may be dispersed by wind, carried by water, distributed in planting seed, in feed or hay, carried by animals including man, or moved by machinery. Animals grazing in a weed infested pasture and then allowed to move directly to a clean pasture may move weed seed both internally and externally.

One of the most common problems is failure to control weeds in ditch banks, fence rows, and farm roads. See EDIS factsheets [SS-AGR-110 Weed Management for Grazed Fence Rows and Non-Cropped Areas](#) and [SS-AGR-111 Weed Management for Fence Rows and Non-Cropped Areas](#). These weeds produce seed and/or vegetative growth which reinfests the pastures. Fence rows are also a common area where poisonous plants are left uncontrolled. Plants such as croton, black nightshade, and lantana are commonly found

poisonous plants in Florida. Animals won't usually choose to graze most poisonous plants, however, if grass is limited in pastures due to poor growing conditions or overstocking a pasture, they may try them. It should also be remembered that some poisonous plants may become more palatable following herbicide application and then be more readily grazed. Therefore, if poisonous plants are present in fence rows and pastures are in short supply, care should be taken and cattle watched closely. When treating fence rows it is often advisable to apply a foliar applied herbicide to kill the existing vegetation along with a soil applied residual herbicide to prevent weeds from regrowing in the fence row.

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