

The Range Review

Bradford County Extension
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April 2008

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Upcoming Events:

- Bradford County Fair
Starke, FL
April 11- 20, 2008
- Beef Cattle Management Basics
Columbia Co.
April 24, 2008
- Goat Field Day
Quincy, FL
April 11, 2008
- UF/IFAS Beef Cattle Short Course
Gainesville, FL
April 30 - May 2, 2008
- Master Goat Producer's Certification Program
Quincy, FL
May 12 - 16, 2008

Howdy from the Bradford County Extension Office. This month we are gearing up for a great slate of activities that include the 58th Annual Bradford County Fair, production meetings, workshops and many other educational events.

In this issue of The Range Review I will focus on calf management. I will cover different components of calf management over the next few issues starting with animal identification, castration and then moving into vaccination, parasite control and preparing cattle to move to the next stage of production. Also you'll find a useful guide to taking soil samples in this issue.

I am excited about some of the upcoming events scheduled in April and May that will provide excellent educational material related to beef cattle as well as goat production.

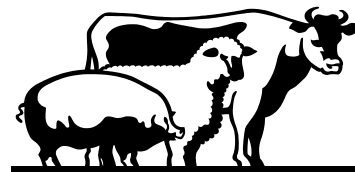
If you have any questions related to livestock and forages, or any other areas of agriculture, please feel free to give me and the office a call at any time.

Timothy W. Wilson

Timothy W. Wilson
County Extension Director
Livestock and Forages
Bradford County Extension Service



Tim Wilson
County Extension Director
Livestock and Forages





Identifying calves can help in the record-keeping process..

“Identifying your cattle and maintaining records should be a high priority.”



Calf management can increase overall profits.

Animal Identification

Identifying your cattle and maintaining records should be a high priority. Beef producers who use individual identification should be able to maintain accurate records and in the long term improve overall production efficiency by making informed decisions based on those records. Several forms of individual animal identification are used in the beef industry. Some are used alone while others are combined to ensure that each animal maintains its identity if one or the other fails. Some of these methods include fire brands, freeze brands, ear tags, and tattoos.

Many beef producers use ear tags coupled with tattoos to identify their cattle. Ear tags are very common and the variety of colors and styles may seem endless. If an ear tag is pulled out or lost, an animal can easily be identified by reading its tattoo.

Castration

Is castration worth it?

A study conducted by Oklahoma State reports that in an evaluation of over 26,000 head of cattle sold in 18 sale barns, bulls were reduced in price by \$3.56 and \$2.24 per hundred pounds compared to steers during 1997 and 1999 respectively. These reductions could be seen as a 550 pound bull being reduced in price by \$20 and \$12 when compared to a 550 pound steer. The reduction in price for bulls was presumed lower due to the subsequent decreased performance expected after castration.

Research from Texas A&M University reports that weaned intact bull calves that were shipped in load lots and castrated upon arrival had a 13.5% reduction in daily gain and a 10.3% reduction in season long gain. When the effects of castration were combined with the effects of morbidity, productivity decreased 24.8% compared to steers. Their conclusions from this study indicated that healthy steers were valued at \$22 more than healthy bulls and \$48 more than morbid bulls.

When to castrate

Castrating calves at a younger age verses at weaning or older has been proven to be less stressful. If possible, producers are encouraged to castrate during the spring or fall to reduce infection and disease. However, some calves are not born in conjunction with these time frames and must be castrated as soon as possible. The earlier a bull is castrated, the sooner he will overcome the stresses of this process and continue to grow.

Soil Testing Pastures: How to take a Sample

As spring green-up arrives many beef producers prepare to fertilize their hay fields and pastures. Increased fertilizer costs put a strain on pasture management budgets. Using a soil test, producers can determine the necessary amount of fertilizer that should be applied to each pasture; however, taking a soil test may seem intimidating. The following is a description of how soil samples should be collected.

See the Bradford County Extension Office for complete details.

1. Divide farm into fields or areas for sampling. Sample separately areas with different crop growth, soil color, or lime or fertilizer histories.
2. Don't sample areas too small to be fertilized or limed separately. Don't sample unusual areas. Avoid wet spots, feeding areas, burn piles, old fence rows, sand boils, etc. The sample you collect should be the average of the field or area sampled.
3. Proper sampling tool is important. Use sampling tube or auger. If necessary use shovel or trowel, dig a V-shaped hole in the soil 6 inches deep, and slice 1-inch slab off one side of hole. Lift out and save center 1-inch wide strip of soil.
4. Take a core (with sampling tube) of soil 6 inches deep from at least 15 spots in each field or area to be tested. Sample lawns only to a 3 inch depth. Mix together the cores from one field or area. Put about a pint of the mixed soil in a soil sample bag.
5. Identify samples by letter or number. Make a sketch or record of some kind so you will know which sample came from which field.
6. Fill out an information sheet and include it and payment in box with samples.
7. Send samples to the laboratory for analysis. Shipping boxes are available from County Extension Offices.

Note: Consult with the Bradford County Extension Office if help is needed with interpretation of test results or fertilization recommendations. (Source Adapted: Kidder and Rhue, UF/IFAS)



Soil test probe

“Take a core (with sampling tube) of soil 6 inches deep from at least 15 spots in each field or area to be tested.”

Beef Management Calendar

April

- Fertilize permanent pastures according to soil test results if not already done
- Feed winter supplements as needed
- Start thinking about fly control strategies
- Clean hay storage areas for new hay; use outside hay stores
- Evaluate body condition and adjust nutrition accordingly

May

- Fertilize permanent pastures according to soil test results if not already done
- Control pasture weeds either by clipping or chemical control
- Control flies
- Prepare hay equipment for use
- Evaluate body condition and adjust nutrition accordingly

(Source: Silcox and McCann)



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58th Annual Bradford County Fair Events Schedule

We're on the web!
<http://bradford.ifas.ufl.edu>



Date	Event	Time
April 11	Dog Show	7:30 PM
April 12	Goat Show	7:00 PM
April 12	4-H Strawberry Pie Contest	4:00 PM
April 12	4-H Strawberry Auction	6:00 PM
April 14	Poultry Show	10:00 AM
April 14	Swine Fundraiser Cook-out	5:00 AM
April 14	Rabbit Show	6:00 PM
April 15	Swine Show	6:30 PM
April 15	4-H Strawberry Auction	7:00 PM
April 16	Steer Show	6:00 PM
April 17	Livestock Judging Contest	8:30 AM
April 17	Breed Show	6:00 PM
April 17	Beef Showmanship	After Breed Show
April 18	Swine Sale	6:00 PM
April 19	Steer and Breed Sale	4:00 PM