

# The Range Review

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**Upcoming Events:**

- **Wildlife Workshops**  
Graham, FL  
Oct. 17 and 27, 2011
- **Farm-City Celebration**  
Fairgrounds  
November 15, 2011
- **Beef Cattle Palpation Clinic**  
UF Beef Teaching Unit  
Gainesville, FL  
November 17 & 18, 2011
- **Beef Cattle Marketing**  
Baker County Extension  
December 1, 2011
- **Small Ruminant Wksp**  
Alachua Co. Extension  
December 5, 2011
- For more information,  
call 904-966-6224

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October/November/December 2011

Howdy from the Bradford County Extension Office!

October has arrived and with it cooler weather; but not cold. We're fortunate in Florida to have the opportunity to produce forage crops almost year-round. Other parts of the country are not a lucky and are limited in their ability to provide nutrition in the field.

Many beef cattle managers are preparing for calving. With that, it is wise to evaluate your equipment (calving pens, tattoo guns, scales, etc.) and grease, oil and repair as needed. Although breeding will not usually begin until late December or early January, it is important to have your bull evaluated for a breeding soundness exam. Bulls that receive an unsatisfactory or classification deferred designation will need to be replaced or re-evaluated at a later date. The reproductive success of your herd have big impacts on your ability to market calves later in the year.

In this issue of the Range Review you'll find some interesting and helpful information on breeding soundness exams, cattle management, external parasites and things to consider for the breeding season.

In the Upcoming Events section of this newsletter you'll find several programs related to livestock in the coming months. Programming is designed to meet the needs of Bradford County citizens, and if you have a suggestion for a program, please contact me.

We have a lot going on here at the Extension Office. If you are interested in attending one of the many programs we have planned, please give us a call and register. Don't miss out because you forgot to RSVP!

If you have any questions related to livestock and forages, please feel free to give me a call at any time. If I don't know the answer, I'll help you find it.




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Timothy W. Wilson  
County Extension Director  
Livestock and Forages



## The Basics of Breeding Soundness Exams

Production cattle are culled each year based on their inability to produce and wean quality calves. These females lower the overall profitability of the herd and make it difficult to reach break-evens. If a percentage of females are cycling properly, are in good condition, yet still do not conceive, what could be wrong? The problem may not be the females, but rather the bulls used in the breeding program. An important management practice that should be considered is conducting breeding soundness exams on herd sires each year prior to the breeding season.



A veterinarian should perform this exam 30 – 60 days prior to the breeding season. Bulls that undergo a breeding soundness exam will receive one of three classifications (satisfactory, classification deferred or unsatisfactory). Timing this exam appropriately allows producers to either re-test a preferred bull or purchase a replacement bull if a negative classification is awarded. Re-examining herd sires after the breeding season can help explain a low or failed calf-crop.

This exam evaluates: 1.) soundness, 2.) reproductive anatomy and 3.) semen quality

Soundness is critical in the breeding process. Bulls must be in good body condition, have clear eyesight, adequate motor skills and be able to support themselves on their hind two legs. If any of these physical characteristics are lacking, a bull may not be able to successfully identify females in estrus and mount them properly.

Reproductive anatomy is evaluated to ensure it can be used effectively. Palpation of the external genitalia (penis, testis and epididymis) is performed to identify structural abnormalities. Scrotal circumference can be correlated to puberty and is therefore measured and compared by age to the minimum recommended guidelines. Vesicular glands are palpated rectally to identify any inflammation.

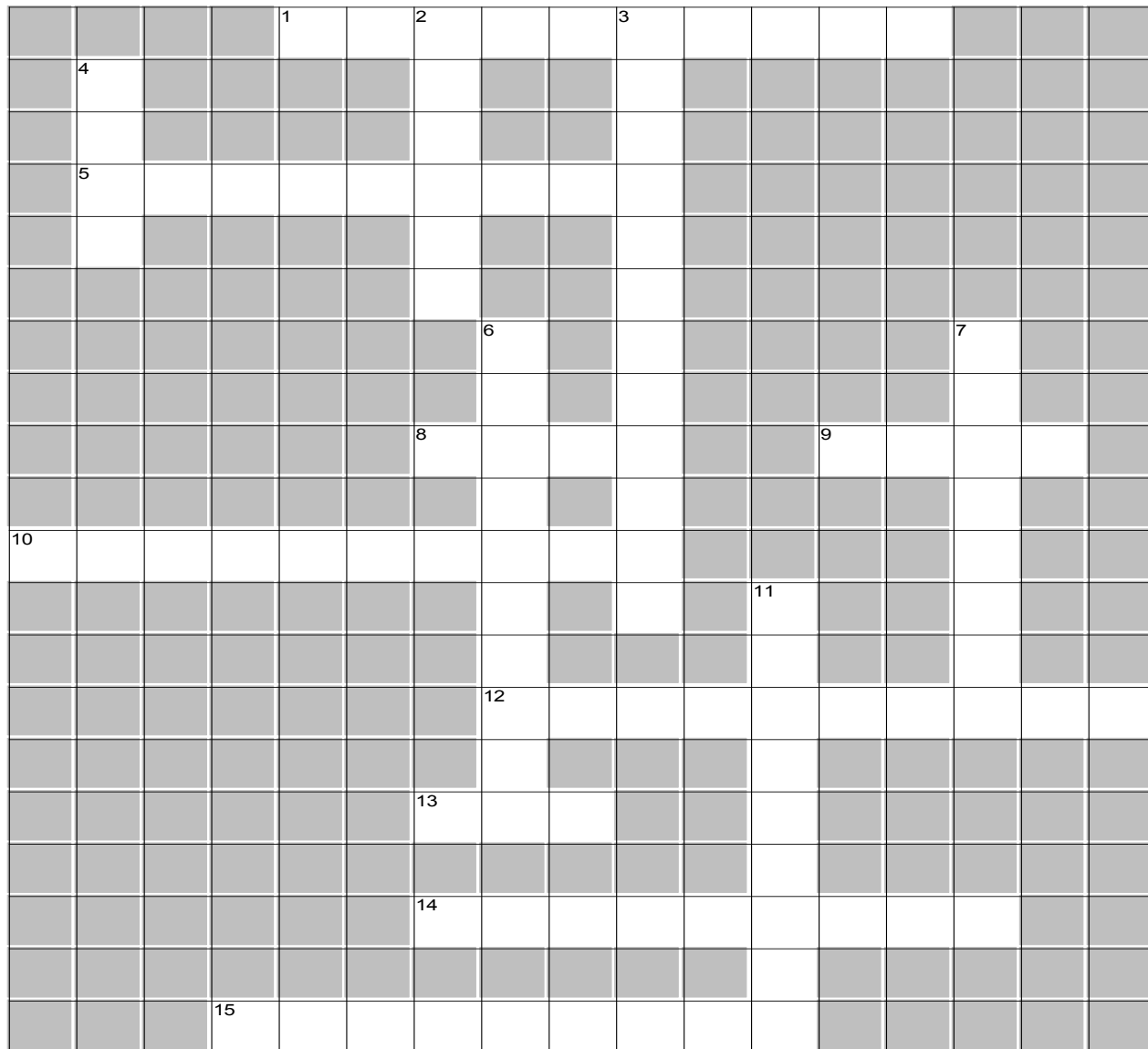
An ejaculate is collected to evaluate semen quality. Percent motility and morphology are examined to verify viable semen in the ejaculate.

Libido is the bulls desire to breed. Although libido is not used in the criteria included in a breeding soundness exam, it is very important that the sexual stamina of the sire used is sufficient to breed all cycling females.

There are many different factors involved in performing a breeding soundness exam. Failure of any one of the observations can result in an "Unsatisfactory Classification" being awarded to a bull. Young bulls or bulls that have a temporary problem may be classified as "Classification Deferred" and required to retest to receive a "Satisfactory Classification".

If you have any questions regarding breeding soundness exams, please contact you local veterinarian or contact me at (904) 966-6224.

# Beef Management Crossword



EclipseCrossword.com

## Across

1. Placenta and membranes from calving
5. First milk
8. Number of stomachs in a cow
9. Baby cow
10. Most common pasture forage in Florida
12. Type of grazing that involves resting a pasture
13. Nutrition during the winter
14. Mineral that should be fed during the winter
15. Nutrition \_\_\_\_\_ after calving

## Down

2. Type of cattle identification
3. Common pasture forage in Florida
4. External parasite that thrives in the winter
6. Poisonous to cattle
7. Outstanding milk production
11. Crossbreeding two different types of cattle results in

## Cattle Lice

Lice are highly specialized parasites that live in the hair coat and feed off of the cattle host. Lice are primarily a winter problem. That is because summer direct sunshine, rain and self-grooming keep louse numbers low in the thin summer-hair coat of cattle that are pastured in the open. Cattle lice are small, but they occur by the thousands, or even tens of thousands, on infested cattle. The economic impact of cattle lice is highly variable and does not always correlate with the apparent severity of infestation. Two kinds of lice occur on cattle, sucking lice that suck blood and biting or chewing lice that feed on skin and secretions of the skin. Biting and feeding activity of lice irritate cattle, and the irritation intensifies with increasing numbers of lice. Cattle damage fences, and bruise and scrape themselves, as they rub to relieve itching caused by the lice. Louse-infested animals are under stress and may be predisposed to disease. Blood loss from sucking lice is sometimes severe enough to cause anemia. If severe enough, louse induced anemia causes calf abortion and, rarely, may even result in the death of the infested animal. The five species of cattle lice found in North America include four that feed by sucking blood. These are the short nosed cattle louse, long nosed cattle louse, little blue cattle louse, and the cattle tail louse. The fifth species, the cattle biting louse, feeds on skin tissue of cattle. All cattle lice spend their entire lives as parasites on living cattle. When removed from the cattle, they live a few days at most.

### Diagnosing Lousiness in Cattle

Often, one of the first signs that cattle have lice is that they rub and scratch themselves against fences, feed bunks, trees, or other objects. In advanced cases, this may result in large patches of bare skin.

### “Carriers” or “Chronics.”

Typically, up to one or two percent of the cattle in a herd may carry extremely high numbers of lice, even in the summer. “Carriers” are most often bulls or older cows in poor condition. A “carrier” cow’s calf is usually also heavily infested. Such “carriers” are unthrifty and perform poorly. Bulls may become “carriers” because their hair is longer and denser, and their massive necks and shoulders prevent effective self-grooming. When older cows are “carriers” it is probably the result of reduced self-grooming ability and interactions involving the cow’s nutrition, general health, and immune system.

### Sucking lice.

Cattle sucking lice are the Short nosed Cattle Louse, (*Haematopinus eurysternus*), Long nosed Cattle Louse, (*Linognathus vituli*), and the Little Blue Cattle Louse, (*Solenopotes capillatus*). These sucking lice species all have a similar life cycle. The females lay eggs, which they glue to individual cow hairs close to the skin of their host. Immature lice are called nymphs. Each nymph sheds its skin three times as it grows to adulthood. Nymphs resemble adults of the same species in feeding habits and appearance. Typically the life cycle takes about a month. Cattle Tail Louse, (*Haematopinus quadripertusus*) is a blood sucking louse and that is closely related to the short-nosed cattle louse, and very similar in size and appearance. They prefer to live on the long-haired portion of the tail, but are also often found on the neck and around the eyes. Unlike other cattle lice, tail lice are most abundant in late summer to early fall and are scarce throughout the winter. **This is often the most damaging species in coastal areas of the South, the Southeast, and southern California, but it is absent to uncommon in the rest of the U.S.** Cattle sucking lice sometimes congregate in dense patches, which, when they occur on shorthaired sites, may be seen from several feet away. They appear as black or blue-brown spots the size of a quarter or 50-cent piece. Close inspection of these patches reveal individual lice including adults, nymphs, and eggs. Sucking lice spend most of the time with their heads partly buried in the host’s skin as they engorge themselves with blood. Cattle severely infested with short nosed cattle lice take on a characteristic “greasy” appearance. This greasy appearance results from crushed, blood engorged lice and their feces, from blood and serum

## Cattle Lice, cont.

oozing from wounds made by the lice as they feed, by the cow's scratching and rubbing, and by the shiny translucence of thousands of living lice packed densely together.

**Cattle Biting Louse**, (*Bovicola bovis*). Biting lice feed on the cells of the skin's surface. The feeding and movement of lice on the skin of cattle cause itching and distress. Cattle biting lice are present on most beef cattle. The moderate infestations of cattle biting lice typical on unsheltered beef animals occur primarily on the withers, upper parts of the shoulders and ribs and along the back.



### Controlling Cattle Lice

Lice are effectively treated with insecticides. Currently, lice treatment comes in three forms for cattle; pour-on dewormers that are also effective against lice, pour-on pyrethroids, and organophosphate insecticides. Most of the pour-on de-wormers also are very effective at lice control. The pyrethroids and organophosphates do not have a long killing time and will not kill the eggs so they will require a second application about three weeks after the initial application. **The rate of successful lice treatment will depend on proper dosing of all the cattle in the herd. If one head is missed or added after treatment, the herd may easily become re-infected.** A fall treatment is recommended to prevent build up of lice during the winter. If left unchecked, lice numbers increase throughout the winter (except for tail lice). High louse populations coincide with a) periods of acute and cumulative winter stress, b) the season when vitamin A is often deficient in cattle diets, and c) the stress of calving. Lousy cattle are much less able to cope with these other stresses. Self-application devices, such as dust bags and oilers, apply little or no insecticide to the brisket, belly, and legs. Therefore, such methods seldom achieve more than 70 or 80 percent control of lice, and will not provide rapid cleanup of established populations. Some of this information was contributed by D. E. Mock.

Source: Article used with permission and written by:

Mel Pence DVM MS PAS Diplomat ABVP (beef cattle), (mepence@uga.edu); Professor, The University of Georgia, (Retired)

## Things to Consider for the Breeding Season

1. Body Condition Score
  - A. Cattle should score a BCS of 5 or better at breeding
2. Nutrition
  - A. After calving the nutritional energy requirement of lactating cattle increases.
3. Reproductive Tract Problems
  - A. Cystic follicles
  - B. Retained placentas
  - C. Reproductive diseases
    1. Vibriosis
    2. BVD
    3. Leptospirosis

To learn more about these topics and others related to beef cattle reproductive physiology, contact Tim Wilson at the Bradford County Extension Office at 904-966-6224.

## **2011 Tri-County Wildlife Management Workshops Bradford Sportsmen's Farm**

The University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension Agents from Bradford, Baker and Union Counties will host two Wildlife Management Workshops at the Bradford Sportsmen's Farm in October. On October 17th, topics will focus on Coyotes and Hogs and on October 27th, topics will focus on Deer and Cattle. Registration for each workshop is \$5.00, and the programs will be held from 5:30 till 8 PM. Register early and reserve your place for dinner by calling the Bradford County Extension office at 904-966-6224 by 10 AM the day of each program.

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### **Farm-City Celebration Luncheon**

In Building 1 of the Bradford Fairgrounds

You are invited to the Bradford County Farm-City Celebration Luncheon on November 15, 2011 at the Bradford County Fairgrounds. This celebration will include not only lunch, but an opportunity to visit with your neighbors while viewing educational exhibits. This celebration is free and open to the public; however space is limited to the first 200 residents who RSVP by November 1, 2011 by contacting the Bradford County Extension Office at 904-966-6224.

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### **Beef Cattle Palpation Clinic**

On November 17 and 18, 2011, a Beef Cattle Palpation Clinic will be held at the University of Florida Beef Teaching Unit in Gainesville, FL. Topics will include reproductive basics, calving difficulty, breeding season management and hands on palpation. Registration is limited and is expected to fill-up quickly, so interested participants should contact Cindy Sanders at 352-955-2402 as soon as possible to sign-up.

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### **Beef Cattle Marketing Workshop**

The UF/IFAS Northeast Florida Beef and Forage Group will host a "Beef Cattle Marketing Workshop" on December 1, 2011 at the Baker County Extension Office. Registration is \$5.00 and will include a meal sponsored by the Baker County Farm Bureau. This program will provide producers an opportunity to learn about marketing options from Extension Agents as well as an invited speaker. Contact Tim Wilson, 904-966-6224 at the Bradford County Extension Office to register by November 29th. For a detailed agenda and directions visit: [www.nfbfg.ifas.ufl.edu](http://www.nfbfg.ifas.ufl.edu)

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### **Small Ruminant Workshop**

On December 5, 2011, a Small Ruminant Workshop will be held at the Alachua County Extension Office. If you are interested in sheep and goats, you should contact Cindy Sanders at 352-955-2402 to sign-up.

## Recent University of Florida/IFAS Publications of Interest

### **Comparison of Hay or Round Bale Silage as a Means to Conserve Forage (AN266)**

Florida's climate makes conserving forages for later feeding challenging. Traditional hay harvest systems require optimal cutting, drying, and baling weather conditions. The use of round bale silage overcomes several of the challenges to hay production in Florida and offer an attractive compliment to traditional hay harvest systems. Learn more in this 6-page fact sheet written by Matt Hersom, Todd Thrift, and Joel Yelich, and published by the UF Department of Animal Science, August 2011. (Photo: Thomas Wright, UF/IFAS)

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/an266>

### **The Impact of Production Technologies Used in the Beef Cattle Industry (AN272)**

The use of technologies in the beef industry is a major contributor to the safe, wholesome, and affordable beef supply in the United States. This 4-page fact sheet provides a brief evaluation of the effects that individual technologies have on beef production. Written by Matt Hersom, Todd Thrift, and Joel Yelich, and published by the UF Department of Animal Science, September 2011.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/an272>

### **Dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*): Biology and Control (SSAGR224/AG233)**

Dogfennel is currently the number one most commonly occurring pasture weed in Florida. Many people think it is only unsightly, but it causes significant bahiagrass yield loss and can cause dehydration when ingested by cattle. This 3-page fact sheet was written by B. A. Sellers and J. A. Ferrell and published by the UF Department of Agronomy, September 2011.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ag233>

### **Flat-top Goldenrod (*Euthamia caroliniana*): Biology and Control in Pastures (SSAGR353/AG361)**

This perennial plant, which flowers September – November with flat-topped inflorescence consisting of many yellow ray and disk flowers, is a common weed found in pastures with low levels of management. Learn more in this 3-page fact sheet was written by B. A. Sellers and J. A. Ferrell and published by the UF Department of Agronomy, September 2011.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ag361>

### **Prickly Pear Cactus Control in Pastures (SSAGR354/AG363)**

Prickly pear cactus is not a problem in every pasture in Florida, but where it is found, it is often the biggest and most difficult issue to manage: mowing prickly pear fragments the pads and dramatically increases the infestation, and although prickly pear doesn't form dense canopies and doesn't outcompete desirable forage grasses, its impact on grazing can be just as severe because of its barbed quills. This 2-page fact sheet was written by J. A. Ferrell and B. A. Sellers, and published by the UF Department of Agronomy, September 2011.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ag363>

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



# SOLUTIONS *for your* LIFE

## Beef Management Calendar

### *November*

- Deworm cows as needed
- Watch for lice and treat as needed
- Remove old insecticide ear tags
- Prepare your winter supplement plan
- Check pregnant cattle often
- Check your bull for Breeding Soundness 30—60 days prior to breeding
- Watch pasture conditions and supplement if needed
- If you've not had your hay test, it isn't too late. Knowing you're hay quality can help you make wise supplementation decisions

(Source: Silcox and McCann)

### *December*

- Do not overgraze winter annuals
- Provide high magnesium mineral with supplements
- Watch grazing conditions
- Remember Vit. A when feeding frosted grass or weathered hay as a primary forage source

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