I hope you enjoy this first edition of the Bull Sheet, a newsletter produced for the livestock producers in Brevard County. This newsletter is being produced as a result of suggestions from the Brevard Agriculture Advisory Board, a group of individuals lending their support to the Agriculture Agent. The members of the Advisory Board rotate over time. The current members of my Advisory Board are: Eric Jacobsen, Tom Schuller, Doug Raymond, David Yates, Mike Meek, Laurie Schuller, Ronnie Nails, and Larry Bridges. I thank them for their willingness to serve in this capacity.

If you have any suggestions for programming, the way your agents do things, ways to make this agent more valuable to you, or things you would like to see done by your Extension Agent please contact one of the Agriculture Advisory Board Members or Joe Walter (find contact information on last page of this newsletter).

The intent is to produce this new letter at least every two months, monthly if possible. It will address current issues that are important to our industry. Although every operation is unique, a calendar of task reminders will be published. New developments and research results pertaining to the livestock industry will be discussed; website addresses and links will be included for those who use the internet. Program announcements will also be published along with class schedules for pesticide applicator training.

This newsletter will be sent via e-mail, but can be sent via regular mail upon request, money is an issue.

Quiet Handling of Cattle and Ranch Horse Safety Seminar as part of the Beef Quality Assurance Program. Picture taken at Deseret Ranch.

On January 12, 2009, Forty-eight bulls were on offer at the 2008/2009 Florida Bull Test Sale located at the North Florida Research and Education center in Marianna, FL. The sale grossed $89,500 with an average of $1,865 per lot. Angus bulls averaged $1,887 on 31 lots; Charolais averaged $1,825 on 2 lots; Limflex averaged $2,000 on 3 lots; SimAngus averaged $1,612 on 4 lots; and, Simmental averaged $1,863 on 8 lots. The Florida Bull Test focuses on testing bulls on a diet that includes a high proportion of forage, targeting an average daily gain (ADG) of 3 pounds of gain per day. Overall ranking for the test is based on ADG and the weight per day of age (WDA) generating an index ratio.

Cliff Lamb
Small farms in Florida have traditionally represented a quiet, little-known, part of the agriculture industry. Recent changes, led by new consumer demands, have triggered many diverse opportunities to direct market specialty products throughout the state. Because the small farm industry in Florida has not been highly visible, the small farmers themselves are not well described. What is a small farm? Now for facts, the USDA defines a small farm as one that has gross annual sales of $250,000 or less. The small farm debate traditionally has been over the value of sales versus the land area of the farm. The value of sales basis is probably more appropriate, especially for Florida. This is because very high value enterprises or products such as greenhouse ornamentals or vegetables, cut flowers, or culinary herbs can easily have a value of more than $250,000 on less than 5 or 10 acres. Because Florida has so many opportunities for producing high value products, the classification based on gross sales value is much more appropriate. So, based on the USDA definition, 90% of the over 40,000 farms in Florida are small farms. The other common characteristic of these operations is they are family oriented farms dependent upon the family for management and labor. The USDA further classifies small farms based on the primary motivation of the family for farming. These categories include: primary income, retirement, lifestyle, or limited resources. New consumer demands for the development of community-based food systems and specialty products such as organic, heirloom, hydroponic, grass-fed beef, pastured poultry, ethnic meats and vegetables, all provide new opportunities for small farmers to sustain a profitable enterprise. The new opportunities are resulting in a heightened awareness of the small farm industry. A very popular website for small farmers was recently developed by the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and Florida A & M University (FAMU) to provide information on a wide variety of alternative enterprises, how to get started on the small farm, and a calendar of events specifically for small farmers. The site (http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu) receives over 70,000 hits monthly which means there are many people looking for information to start or sustain their farming venture. Additionally, a series of regional small farms conferences are held annually through the state reaching nearly 2000 attendees in 2007. This rising demand for information has led to the organization of an even larger event to bring small farmers together. The result of these discussions between farmers, allied industry, and educators is the first ever, Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference, August 1-2, 2009, at the Osceola Heritage Park, Kissimmee, Florida. This event will feature a large exhibitor area, six concurrent educational sessions (including live animals in the livestock arena), lunches feature local products, and a keynote speaker. The event is being planned by individuals from throughout the industry including: farmers, marketers, researchers, Extension agents, commodity organizations, and industry leaders. The conference website is available at http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu. This event will help farmers network with each other, learn about new methods; better organize as an industry; develop plans to improve policy; and celebrate small farms in Florida.
Fire Outlook—Wildfire Threat Increases

Over the last week our wildfire activity has increased in the peninsula of Florida considerably with almost all of the fires being human caused. Some of the wildfires from Jacksonville to South Florida have been the result of escaped prescribed fires. The state (predominately the peninsula of Florida) has moved into drought conditions based on the national Palmer Index. The statewide KBDI (515) is about 200 points above the normal for this time of year. All forecasts for Florida through at least June of this year are below or well below normal in rainfall. The combination of the drought and the dried vegetation from numerous freezes that extended as far south as the Everglades has created conditions that are ripe for wildfires.

Today, I am asking you to talk to your managers, prescribed fire personnel and contractors to emphasize to them that our conditions are changing. Fire spotting potential is going up, fire spread in the freeze dried fuels has increased and heavier fuels (100 hour and 1000 hour fuels and in some instances muck soils) are starting to burn longer and create more lingering smoke issues the next day and beyond. We need to emphasize that as our State drys out our prescribed fire crews need to routinely check their burns for possible escapes until there is no more smoke or hot spots. Take into consideration increased levels of mop-up for your burns to prevent potential escapes or smoke management issues.

Florida had a record year in 2008 for putting prescribed fire on the landscape with close to 2.3 million acres prescribed burned. We should all be proud of that. However, we need to recognize when conditions have changed and make adjustments to those changes. I look forward to working with all of you, and hope you will take these precautions into consideration through this time of elevated wildfire conditions.

Jim Karels
Director/State Forester, Florida Division of Forestry

Livestock Agents Activities

Several field trials are ongoing in Brevard County. These trials are cooperative efforts of the University of Florida, the Brevard County Agricultural Agent, and local farmers. The projects include the Biological control of Tropical Soda Apple, use of Bio-solids and the effect on forage production and Soil Chemistry. Use of Legumes as a nitrogen source for Citrus and Forage production, Assay of Macro-element removal in Sod Production, Control of Smutgrass by Management Alterations, Comparison of Seeded Bermuda-grasses for Pastures, and the Effects of Bio-solids on Tissue Quality of Forages.

Two educational series are being presented at this time one on Marketing in the Beef Industry and a second on Marketing in the Poultry Industry. These sessions are 90 minutes each and will be presented over a six month period. These series will be repeated interest is shown.

Brevard County will have its first real fair at Wickham Park March 27-April 5. Poultry and Beef Cattle will be exhibited. There will be a Ranch Rodeo on the first Saturday at 1 PM, come support our Brevard County Team as they compete with top team from across the state! There will also be Casting Competitions for those fisherman types. We will have numerous seminars on gardening, growing and cooking with herbs, how to properly catch and release fish, Florida yard design, fish filleting, energy reduction and more. Visit the website: brevardcountyfair.com for more information and schedule of events.

Joe Walter

Forages of Florida Solutions for Your Life

http://agronomy.ifas.ufl.edu/ForagesofFlorida/index.php

NEW YEAR…NEW FIELDS . . . OR NEW PASTURES!

If this is the case, going over the establishment checklist will help keep in mind details that may seem obvious but if left unattended will have undesirable impacts such as more weeds or low germination in the field.

- Study the selection of your pasture plant options and choose those that are adapted to your soil type and climate condition. An adapted forage will propagate and establish promptly helping to reduce the fertilization and weed control costs.
- Buy or use good quality seed (whether it is vegetative planting or true sexual seed), it may not be the cheapest but keep in mind that in many cases “cheap” turns out expensive.
- Select an adequate seeding rate that will guarantee a good stand and will help minimize weed control practices. Recommended seeding rates for bahiagrass are 20 to 30 lb/acre; if lower seeding rates are used you will be fighting warm-season grassy weeds that cannot be controlled chemically until bahiagrass is 6 inches tall.
- Check the right seeding depth. A common mistake when planting seeds that are very small, such as bahiagrass, is to bury the seed too deep. Bahiagrass recommended seeding depth is less than 1/4 in.
- Make sure that your seedbed is firm. In many cases an additional roller pass after planting is necessary to seal in the soil moisture.
- If you have not started your soil preparation, you are still on time, use the dry months to till the soil and get rid of the weeds. Check and prepare your planting equipment, thus when the right weather conditions are present (moisture and warm weather) you will be prepared with a seedbed rid of weeds, will have the bag or bags of seed and/or have contracted the spraying material, will know what seeding rate to use, and will have the seeding equipment ready to go.

For a listing of the Florida Forage plants, their description, including establishing practices check the Forages of Florida website at: http://agronomy.ifas.ufl.edu/ForagesofFlorida/index.php

Dr. Ysano Newman
Extension Forage Specialist
Topdressing small grain with nitrogen for grazing is different than for grain. In most cases, small grain for grazing is planted earlier than for grain. Therefore, the first application of N is often made in December for grazing and in late January or early February for grain. This will help spur tillering and vegetative growth for either use. A total of 90-120 lbs/acre of total N is usually adequate for top yields for grain while 3 applications of N 4-6 weeks apart may be made for grazing with 50 lbs/acre in each application. Include a total of about 15 lbs sulfur/acre with the N to prevent sulfur deficiencies. Weed control measures should be done when weeds are small and some materials can be mixed with liquid N to save a trip and application costs. It is important to scout for disease on wheat for grain, in small grains to be used for grains, time the fungicide applications to go out when the plant is at the stage of flag leaf to early head emergence.

Recently, the European Crop Protection Association’s (ECPA) reported there is rapid growth in Europe and other areas of the world of counterfeit plant protection products. The ECPA estimates that 5%-7% of annual turnover is affected by counterfeiting and illegal trade. At the time of the report, in U.S. dollars, this is about $260 million - $370 million of the European pesticide business across Europe. In some regional hot spots, 25% or more of the market is estimated to be counterfeit. These are estimates based on statistics, market dynamics, percentage of customs seizures and case-by-case country studies. And the problem is growing. In China and India, illegal pesticides are deemed to make up about 30% and 20% of these markets, respectively. The rapid growth of chemical manufacturing capabilities in these countries has made this possible. Pesticide imports from China into the European Union (EU) are growing 8 times faster than average world pesticide imports into the EU. This is worrying, especially in light of the fact that 80% of counterfeited goods seized in 2006 came from China. There are over 2,000 Chinese companies formulating pesticides and over 400 involved in manufacturing. Active substances are readily supplied and exported with no controls to countries around the world where they are formulated and labeled for onward distribution. Likewise, sophisticated copies of proprietary products are manufactured and shipped with fraudulent documentation to countries around the world with growing emphasis on illegal parallel trade. The nature and extent of counterfeited products and illegal trade varies per market and can originate from many different sources in many different forms. The three main areas of illegal activity are Fakes, Counterfeits, and Illegal Parallel Imports.

**Fakes**
- Containing anything, from water or talc, to diluted and outdated or obsolete stocks, including banned or restricted materials. Some fakes may provide a degree of biological control, as they sometimes contain an illegal and untested copy of the proprietary active substance. These products are often sold in simple packs, such as plain bottles with minimal labeling describing their use and no health and environmental precautions. In the photo, the fake product is on the left and the legitimate product is on the right.

**Counterfeits**
- Sophisticated copies of legitimate branded products usually with high quality labeling and packaging. Most will contain a copy of the original active ingredient; however, its biological efficacy is often diminished due to high levels of impurities in manufacturing and process by-products. Such products, often difficult even for experts to distinguish between legitimate and counterfeit ones, are sold to agricultural producers and only show adverse side effects such as crop damage after application. In the photo, the fake products are on the left.

**Illegal parallel imports**
- Legitimate parallel traded products substituted with illegal generic copies, repackaged and sold as legitimate products. Parallel trade of plant protection products has been a contentious issue for several years. However, a recent ruling by the European Court of Justice has lead to the re-adoption of "common origin" thus precluding the legitimate substitution of an equivalent registered product. The repackaging of plant protection products is still contested by the plant protection industry as repackaging compromises the products' integrity and allows for contamination and the use of unacceptable packaging leading to an inferior product that may cause harm to crops and pose risks to consumers.

Pesticides and plant protection products sold and used in Europe are extremely well regulated through EU and national regulations and are such that they are tested to ensure the maximum safety to farmers, the environment, and consumers purchasing and eating fresh produce treated with any pesticide. We are fortunate that here in the United States our laws and regulations governing pesticides and their use are well-established, serving to protect human and animal health while minimizing impacts on the environment.

Dr. Fred Fishel
Pesticide Information Officer