Manatee County Extension will be holding a Basic Pasture Management Program on Monday, June 25, 7:00pm in Kendrick Auditorium. Topics to be discussed will be forage (grass) varieties, planting of forages, soil test, fertilizing pastures and stocking rates (animals per acre). This program is designed for any individual or producer who is new to pasture establishment and who plans to raise any species of animal on a pasture. The program is free of charge. Please contact Christa, 941-722-4524 at the Manatee County Extension Office to register for the class.

As you may or may not be aware the State Legislature will be holding a special session in mid-June to further discuss the Property Tax issues. With the impending budget cuts we are trying to make our department as efficient as possible. By doing this we would like to disperse newsletters via email rather than mailing paper copies each quarter. If this is an option for you please respond by sending a quick email to ccarlson@ufl.edu with the subject line of electronic newsletter. I will then compile a database of your email addresses to communicate with you on a regular basis. This can be of great benefit to you as I can then easily inform you in a timely manner of up-coming events, approaching deadlines and other extension program opportunities that I may be unable to inform you of via a paper newsletter should the event occur between cycles. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. We look forward to serving your needs in the future. If you have questions or program ideas do not hesitate to contact me at anytime. Thank you again for your support of Extension Programs.
RAISING BEEF CATTLE DURING A DROUGHT
CHRISTA L. CARLSON, EXTENSION AGENT II, LIVESTOCK

No one has to listen to the weather reports to realize that we are dealing with a drought. Everyone has ideas of how to effectively raise beef cattle during this time of little water. Many think a drought only affects the forages for the beef cattle to graze; in reality, it affects all different aspects of the cattle industry, from marketing strategies, to feeding and managing of cattle onto healthcare of the cattle.

During a drought, a cattle manager must consider many things on the cattle operation. He must evaluate stocking rates based on forage availability, culling cattle, early weaning of cattle, supplemental feeding of cows, overheating of cattle, shrinking quantities of drinking water, as well as the increasing number of poisonous plants available. Some of these things to be evaluated are easier to manage than others.

When evaluating stocking rates, one must consider if the forage will be able to recover when moisture returns to the pasture. If forage becomes scarce every time that there is a shortage of moisture, the pastures are probably overstocked. If large quantities of forage are available following a drought period, the pastures are probably under stocked. Some sandy spots may appear in a pasture following a drought; however, the entire pasture should not become a beach.

A manager may consider culling the mature cattle to decrease forage demand. Pregnancy rates must be considered; cows that are open, old or those who produce light weight weanling calves should be culled. Doing this will produce a higher quality herd and, more than likely, a younger cow herd.

Another consideration is to wean calves earlier than planned. During a drought situation weaning weights are almost always adversely affected. Some options to offset the decreased weaning weight are to creep feed the calves prior to weaning or to wean early and feed the calves separate from the cows. Cows in early to mid-pregnancy have a lower nutritional requirement, meaning they can maintain on lower quality forage with little supplementation required, if any.

Whether or not the decision is made to wean early, the main focus is to keep the cows in a good body condition so they will breed back. If supplementation is required, a mature cow usually will need about 1 to 1.5 pounds of grain supplementation per day plus forage. Lactating cows have a higher nutritional requirement than that of a dry cow. Besides feeding grains, there are many other options to keep cows in a preferred body condition. Some other options may be liquid supplementation or by-products.

It is important that during hot, dry weather cattle have access to plenty of water. If ponds or other natural water sources begin to dry up, other sources of water must be supplied. Some cattlemen have added ponds along with alternative drinking sources for their animals. When ponds become stagnant and low, blue-green algae can overgrow and poison cattle. One way to reduce the algae growth is to aerate the pond if possible. If not, the pond may need to be fenced off.

Some other ways to minimize the affects of the heat and drought would be to make sure cattle have adequate shade to reduce the heat. If animals are to be confined fans and sprinklers could be available to reduce heat and stress.

As pastures begin to show bare spots, poisonous plants begin to appear. With a lack of forage, animals are more apt to eat plants that they normally would not. The best way to ensure that animals are not exposed to poisonous plants is to view pastures weekly and remove any unwanted plants. Questionable plants should be removed.

The biggest thing is to ensure that animals are taken care of and that they have access to adequate feed sources and water. Ensuring this may require different strategies than normal. Each cattle operation is different; each must find its own cost efficient strategies.
4th UF/IFAS BEEF CATTLE / FORAGE FIELD DAY
NORTH FLORIDA RESEARCH & EDUCATION CENTER

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the 4th Beef Cattle/Forage Field Day at the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, (UF/IFAS) North Florida Research and Education Center Beef Unit in Marianna, FL, on Tuesday, June 5, 2007. The field day will begin at 8:00 am (CDT) and will end at 3:00 pm. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

The field day will include demonstrations along with field tours of ongoing research. Topics covered will include an update on feed efficiency research, alternative fertilization of pastures, weed control in pastures, mineral supplementation of the cow herd, cull cow marketing options, update on by-product feeds, ongoing forage studies, and pasture mole cricket control.

The NFREC Beef Unit is located one mile west of Greenwood, FL, on state highway 162. For additional information call (850) 482-9904 or (850) 482-1243. A registration fee of $10 will be charged.

SMALL FARMER PASTURE/GRAZING MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

The South Florida Beef Forage extension agent group has planned a Small Farmer Pasture/Grazing Management School. Under the direction of Joe Ven-dramini, UF/IFAS Range Cattle REC forage specialist, presenters will discuss, in depth, pasture management principles. The class will be held Saturday, August 11th in Wauchula. Topics covered will include soil and soil fertility, pasture fertilization, forage (grass) establishment, and grazing management. Speakers will include specialists and extension agents. Following a morning of classroom presentations we will then travel to the Range Cattle Research and Education Center in Ona for hands-on demonstrations. Final costs and times are still being determined at this time. For more information or to register for this class contact Christa Carlson at 941-722-4524 or check the Manatee County Livestock Website at http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/livestock.htm

FLORIDA CATTLEMEN’S CONVENTION AND CATTLEMEN’S COLLEGE

The 2007 Florida Cattlemen’s Association Convention and Trade Show will take place June 19-21 at the Marco Island Marriott in Marco Island, FL. The convention is a great time to catch up with old friends, make new ones, support Manatee County youth and learn a little bit about current issues in the Florida cattle industry. Manatee County will be represented in youth programs with Jr. Cattlemen members Ashley Howell, Britton Couch and Amanda Gennuso participating in the Team Marketing Contest. Ashley Howell, Kelly Davis, Jessica Davis, and Courtney Wingate participating in the Quiz Bowl Contest. We will also have triple representation in the Beef Ambassador contest with Jamie Adams, Ashley Sabourin, and Jessica Underwood. Once again this year they will be offering the Cattlemen’s College on Monday afternoon, June 18, and Tuesday morning. The cost is $30 pre-paid by June 1st and $50 on-site registration. Manatee County should be well represented at the convention this year. For more information contact the Florida Cattlemen’s Association at 407-846-6221.
**Beef Cattle Management Calendar**

**June**
- Last date for planting sorghum.
- Check mineral feeder, use at least 8% phosphorus in mineral and not over 2 ½ to 1 calcium to phosphorus ratio.
- Check pastures and hay field for spittlebugs, mole crickets, and army worms.
- Treat if necessary; best month for mole cricket control.
- Check dust bags.
- Watch for evidence of pinkeye and treat.
- Get heifers vaccinated for brucellosis if not already done.
- Pregnancy check cows.
- Update market information and plans.
- Make first cutting of hay.
- Put bulls out June 1 for calves starting March 11.
- Reimplant calves at 90 to 120 days with growth stimulant.

**July**
- Cut corn silage.
- Control weeds in summer pastures.
- Apply nitrogen to warm season pastures, if needed.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for army worms and mole crickets, and treat if necessary.
- Wean calves and cull cow herd.
- Watch for evidence of footrot and treat.
- Consider preconditioning calves before sale including vaccination for shipping fever and IBR at least 3 weeks before sale.
- Check dust bags.
- Update market information and marketing plans.
- Revaccinate calves at weaning for blackleg.

**August**
- Treat for liver flukes as close to August 15th as possible, if they are in your area.
- Cut hay.
- Apply lime for fall and winter crops.
- Harvest Bahiagrass seed.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Update market information and marketing plans.
- Check for army worms, spittlebugs, and mole crickets, and treat if necessary.
- Check dust bags.
- Wean calves and cull cow herd.
- Watch for evidence of abortions.
- Observe animals regularly for signs of disease.
- If cattle grubs were found on cattle last winter or heel flies were observed in the pasture, treat for cattle grubs this month.
- Pregnancy test and cull open heifers.