

July 2005

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## Dates to Remember

### July

<b>4</b>	Independence Day (Holiday)
<b>7-9</b>	State 4-H Horse Show - Tampa, FL
<b>8</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Annual Hay Field Day - Alachua, FL
<b>9</b>	Meat Goat Training Course (Part 1 of 5) - Quincy, FL
<b>12-15</b>	National County Agent Convention - Orlando, FL
<b>21</b>	Santa Rosa County Farm Tour - Milton, FL
<b>23</b>	2005 Referring Veterinarian Appreciation Day - Gainesville, FL
<b>25-29</b>	State 4-H Congress - Gainesville, FL
<b>30</b>	Meat Goat Training Course (Part 2 of 5) - Quincy, FL

### August

<b>2-6</b>	Southern Regional 4-H Horse Championships - Montgomery, AL
<b>4</b>	Extension Farm Field Day - Jay, FL
<b>6</b>	Meat Goat Training Course (Part 3 of 5) - Quincy, FL
<b>9-13</b>	NCBA Mid Year Conference - Denver, CO
<b>13</b>	North Florida Beef & Forage Group Extension Agents Annual Hay Field Day - Gainesville, FL
<b>18</b>	NFREC Beef Cattle/Forage Field Day - Marianna, FL
<b>27</b>	Meat Goat Training Course (Part 5 of 5) - Quincy, FL



Shannon Devereaux, a junior in the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, gives a drink of water to a thirsty quarter horse at UF's Horse Teaching Unit in Gainesville - Friday, June 17, 2005. The Coral Springs, FL student, who plans a career in veterinary medicine, said grooming and bathing helps the horse become accustomed to handling by people. (AP photo by Thomas Wright, University of Florida/IFAS)



## Beef Management Calendar

### July

- ✓ Cut corn silage.
- ✓ Control weeds in summer pastures.
- ✓ Apply nitrogen to warm season pastures, if needed.
- ✓ Check mineral feeder.
- ✓ Check pastures for army worms and mole crickets, and treat if necessary.
- ✓ Wean calves and cull cow from 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 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 from 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 from replacement herd.

### September

- ✓ Cut hay.
- ✓ Heavily graze pastures to be interplanted to cool season pastures.
- ✓ Check mineral feeder.

- ✓ Check for mole crickets, spittlebugs, and grassloopers, and treat if necessary.
- ✓ Check dust bags.
- ✓ Wean calves and cull cow herd if not already done. Remove open, unsound, or poor producing cows.
- ✓ Train cowboys to observe normal and abnormal behavior and signs of disease.
- ✓ Be sure any replacement purchases are healthy and have been calfhood vaccinated for brucellosis.
- ✓ September or October is a good time to deworm the cow herd if internal parasites are a problem.
- ✓ When replacement heifers are weaned, give them required vaccinations and teach them to eat from a bunk – then put them on a good nutrition program.
- ✓ Determine bull replacement needs, develop selection criteria, and start checking availability of quality animals.
- ✓ Review winter feed supply and feeding plans so that needed adjustments can be made before supplies tighten and prices rise.



## UF Researchers Declare Victory in 25-Year Battle Against Invasive Mole Cricket Pests

After a quarter-century fight against three invasive insects from South America, University of Florida researchers are declaring victory against the pests that caused \$94 million in damage to turf and pastures each year.

The successful battle against mole crickets is a prime example of how biological control agents can be used to manage pests without conventional pesticides, said Howard Frank, a professor of entomology at UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

He said the release of three beneficial organisms — wasps, nematodes and flies imported from South America that attack mole crickets — has reduced mole cricket populations in the Gainesville area by 95 percent, and the control is spreading throughout Florida.

“Reductions increased during the past 12 years as populations of the introduced natural enemies increased

and began to have a spectacular effect on the mole cricket pests,” said Frank, who has coordinated the mole cricket research program since 1985.

Frank said four species of mole crickets are found in Florida: northern, short-winged, southern and tawny.

The northern mole cricket, which is indigenous to the state, is not closely related to the three South American invaders, and it is not troublesome because native wasp and nematode species in Florida keep it under control. Unfortunately, the three invasive mole cricket species are not affected by native wasps and nematodes in Florida, he said.

Accidentally introduced to the southeastern United States more than 75 years ago, the pest mole crickets first became a problem for Florida vegetable growers and were poorly controlled with arsenic baits. The invasive pests became a nuisance again in the 1970s when the Environmental Protection Agency banned chlordane and similar pesticides.

“When the three invasive mole crickets left their natural enemies behind, there was nothing to stop their population boom here,” Frank said. “These pest mole crickets, which tunnel into the ground and feed on plant roots, are now found from North Carolina to Texas, and they continue to spread north and west.”

Of the three, the tawny mole cricket is the most destructive, eating grass roots in Florida pastures and turf as well as the roots of tomatoes, cabbages, eggplants and bell pepper seedlings, Frank said.

He said the pest crickets have a real affinity for bahiagrass, Florida’s most common pasture grass, which covers more than 2.5 million of the state’s 35 million acres. Like the pest crickets, bahiagrass was imported from South America, and it provides the insects with an almost endless food source. They also eat Bermudagrass on Florida golf courses.

“Early research on the three invasive pests showed how mole crickets, like moles, burrow into soil around plant roots and prevent them from absorbing water,” Frank said. “We also realized that permanent control of these pests could only be achieved with a classical biological control program, and we began looking for natural enemies in South America.”



Howard Frank, left, and Tom Walker, professors of entomology at the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, check a trap used to monitor mole cricket populations near Gainesville. Frank said the mole cricket catches started to fall about three years after the beneficial biological control agents were released. By the early 2000s, the numbers of mole cricket pests were 95 percent lower than they were in the 1980s. (UF/IFAS photo by Marisol Amador)

### **A Beneficial Wasp**

In Brazil, researchers found a native wasp (*Larra bicolor*) that attacks the pest mole crickets. After the Brazilian wasp stings the pest mole cricket and lays an egg, the wasp grub (larva) begins feeding on the mole cricket and kills it within two weeks.

In 1981-1983, the Brazilian wasp was released at several South Florida locations, but it did not thrive and failed to provide effective control of the pest mole crickets.

Undaunted, UF researchers found a tougher strain of the same wasp in the higher elevations of Bolivia, releasing it in the Gainesville area during 1988 and 1989. It attacks all three pest mole cricket species, but does not threaten Florida’s native northern mole cricket.

“By late 1993, it was evident that the Bolivian strain of the wasp had become established,” Frank said. “Four years later, the population had spread at least 20 miles east and west of Gainesville. By 2002, it seems to have spread 135 miles northwest and perhaps as far south. In time, it is likely to occupy all of Florida.”

### **A Beneficial Nematode**

Next stop in the battle against the mole cricket

invasion was Uruguay where a parasitic nematode — a tiny, worm-like animal — was found and brought to Florida for mass-rearing and release.

“While other mole cricket natural enemies live above ground, nematodes dwell in the soil where mole crickets do most of their damage — that’s the real advantage of this parasite,” said Grover Smart, a professor of nematology who brought the nematode to Florida in 1985. “The nematode does not affect Florida’s native northern mole crickets, but it does attack all three invasive mole cricket pests.”

Once the parasitic nematode (*Steinernema scapterisci*) enters the body of a mole cricket to mature and reproduce, it kills the cricket within 48 hours, Smart said. Young nematodes emerge from the dead cricket about a week later to seek new hosts. Once infected, mole crickets can spread the nematode to new areas by flying, crawling or burrowing.

Between 1989 and 1992, scientists working on the mole cricket research program released more than 16 billion nematodes in 21 Florida counties. “We just don’t see a lot of mole crickets anymore in areas where we have released this parasite,” Smart said.

UF holds three patents on the organism, which is now available commercially as a biopesticide marketed as Nematac-S by MicroBio, a biotech firm owned by Becker Underwood Inc. in Ames, Iowa.

“If the nematode has not spread to your land, it will eventually get there,” Frank said. “If you want to speed up its arrival, apply the biopesticide. It will kill a large portion of your pest mole crickets year after year.”



*Beneficial wasp parasitizing a tawny mole cricket. (UF/IFAS photo by Lyle Buss)*

## **A Beneficial Fly**

The third effective biocontrol is a beneficial fly from Brazil (*Ormia depleta*) that is attracted to two species of the pest mole crickets by the sounds they make.

“Like little guided missiles, the flies home in on singing crickets and lay their larvae on or near the singer,” Frank said. “The larvae burrow into the crickets and feed, killing the host within a week.”

He said the mole cricket research program found and reared the Brazilian fly, releasing a few hundred flies in Gainesville and Bradenton in 1988. Between 1989 and 1992, researchers released more than 10,000 flies across the state in cooperation with golf courses and the Florida TurfGrass Association. By 1994, the fly had spread to 38 of Florida’s 67 counties, but the tropical insect does not seem to survive permanently north of the Orlando area.

“In counties where the fly is established, surveys show significantly less damage by pest mole crickets on golf courses,” Frank said.

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## **Hog Wild in Florida! UF Experts Say Feral Pig Problem Here to Stay**

Florida’s population boom now includes some 500,000 wild hogs whose piggish habits are causing

problems for farmers, residents and health officials as well as native flora and fauna.

“Nothing personal, but the only state with more wild hogs than Florida is Texas,” said Bill Giuliano, an assistant professor of wildlife ecology at the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. Wild or feral hogs can now be found in every Florida county and in at least 35 states — including 1 to 2 million hogs in the Southeast. Nationwide, their population totals about 3 million.

“Because they are prolific breeders, there is no way to completely eradicate them,” Giuliano said. “Even with intensive hunting pressure, you’re not going to get rid of them.”

He said the problem can be traced to 1539 when Hernando DeSoto brought hogs into southwest Florida, and some of them found freedom in the New World. Nearly 500 years later, there are some 3 million descendants of these “pioneer pigs” across the nation.

In Florida, some of the highest densities of feral hogs can be found north and west of Lake Okechobee where large forested tracts, dense vegetation, abundant water and limited public access provide an ideal environment for the pigs. Hog numbers tend to be lower in areas with intensive agriculture or urban development.

“Although they are a popular target for hunters, wild hogs are coming into conflict with people and wildlife,” Giuliano said. “Farmers are not happy when feral hogs root up their fields, and health officials say the animals carry diseases that could affect wildlife, livestock and people.”

Giuliano, who conducts research on the animals with George Tanner, a professor in the UF wildlife ecology and conservation department, said hogs can also host many diseases and parasites, including hog cholera, psuedorabies, brucellosis, tuberculosis, salmonellosis, anthrax, ticks, fleas, lice and various flukes and worms.

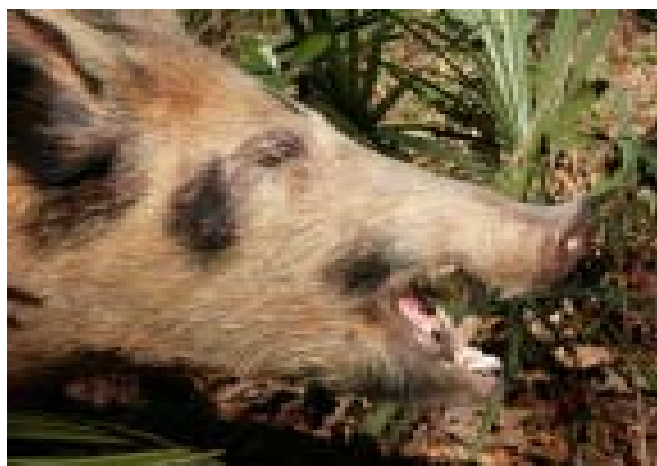
“Wild hogs, which usually weigh 100 to 200 pounds, are dangerous,” Giuliano said. “Although they prefer to run and escape danger, they can be aggressive when they’re injured or cornered. They can move with great speed and can cause serious injury with their tusks.”

Acorns are their favorite food, but they will eat

almost anything, including dead animals, and it seems like they’re always looking for opportunities, he said. When natural foods are scarce or inaccessible, hogs will forage on almost any agricultural crop and livestock feed. They will also feed on tree seeds and seedlings, causing significant damage in forests, groves and plantations. In Florida and the Southeast, this may be a problem in regenerating long-leaf pine forests.

In addition to the effects of consuming, knocking down and trampling large amounts of native vegetation and crops, the rooting behavior of wild hogs causes significant damage, Giuliano said. Rooting — digging for foods below the surface of the ground — destabilizes the soil surface, uprooting or weakening native vegetation, damaging lawns and causing erosion. Their wallowing behavior destroys small ponds and stream banks, which may affect water quality. They also prey upon ground-nesting wildlife, including sea turtles.

“Wild hogs compete for food with other game animals such as deer, turkeys and squirrels, and they may consume the nests and young of many reptiles, ground-nesting birds and mammals,” he said. “With their fine sense of smell, wild hogs can find and consume young domestic livestock, including poultry, lambs and goats. Millions of dollars are spent each year to prevent damage from hogs.”



*Feral hogs resemble domestic hogs, but are usually leaner with different behaviors to survive in the wild, according to researchers with the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. Wild hogs have an excellent sense of smell and good hearing, but relatively poor vision. They use variety of vocalizations, including an alarm grunt given to sense an intruder that causes a flight response by the rest of the herd. (UF/IFAS photo by J. Dunlap)*

Tanner said it may be possible to limit further population expansion by hunting, various trapping methods and exclusion.

“Hunting is an important control method for wild hogs because it provides recreational opportunities,” he said. “Baited hog traps may be more successful than hunting, especially when the animals are nocturnally active. The traps should be strong enough to contain large hogs and have tall walls or a wire roof to prevent them from escaping. And remember that hogs are powerful animals that are easily excited when trapped.”

Fencing is an effective but expensive control option for a small area such as a garden, but hogs are intelligent and resourceful animals that often find ways through many types of fences, Tanner said. Chain link fences buried at least 12 inches under the ground with heavy supports and posts, and various types of mesh or multi-stranded electric fence provide the best results.

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## Three National Meetings Slated on Beef Cattle Reproductive Issues

The North Central Region Bovine Reproduction Task Force will join forces with several other institutions

this fall to host intensive workshops on reproductive strategies for beef cattle.

The workshops, “Applied Reproductive Strategies in Beef Cattle,” will be in three locations around the country. Many topics will be repeated at each site, but some presentations will be specific to the particular host region.

The meetings are October 27-28 in Reno, NV.; November 1-2 in Lexington, KY; and November 12-13 in College Station, TX. Each location will feature an industry trade show.

“The excellent pregnancy rates possible with today’s synchronization systems and the increasing opportunities to get paid for specific, known genetics are making estrous synchronization and AI (artificial insemination) even more valuable tools than they have been in the past,” said Sandy Johnson, reproductive physiologist with Kansas State University Research and Extension.

Two previous meetings coordinated by the task force (in 2002 in Manhattan, KS, and 2004 in North Platte, NE) sparked the demand for similar events in other regions.

The upcoming workshops are designed to improve understanding of the physiological processes of the estrous cycle, the procedures currently available to synchronize estrus and ovulation, and the proper application of these systems. Sessions also will focus on improving understanding of methods to assess male fertility and of its effects on AI program success.

“They are for anyone interested in beef cattle reproduction and estrous synchronization, including producers, veterinarians, AI technicians and Extension specialists,” said Johnson, who is one of the workshop series coordinators.

Among others, each workshop’s first-day topics will include information on the physiological principles underlying estrous synchronization, a detailed review of current estrous synchronization systems, costs and comparisons, nutrition and reproduction interactions, and dealing with non-cycling females.

Day two sessions will include presentations on breeding-soundness exams, sexed semen, industry

application of technology in male reproduction, embryo transfer, reproductive tract scoring, and ultrasound for early pregnancy diagnosis and fetal sexing.

Each workshop program will end with a panel of veterinarians discussing the use of advanced reproductive technologies.

Interested persons can check the Web site <http://westcentral.unl.edu/beefrepro/>, for links to all three meetings.

For more information about the October 27-28 workshop in Reno, NV, they also can contact Ron Torell at (775) 738-1721 or [torellr@unce.unr.edu](mailto:torellr@unce.unr.edu). The contact person for the November 1-2 meeting in Lexington, KY, is John Hall, (540) 231-9153 or [jbhall@vt.edu](mailto:jbhall@vt.edu), and the November 12-13 workshop in College Station, TX, is Gary Williams, (361) 358-6390 or [glwilliams@tamu.edu](mailto:glwilliams@tamu.edu).

The North Central Region Bovine Reproduction Task Force includes members at land grant universities in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota. It is coordinating the fall workshop series with help from the Cooperative Extension Services of Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia; the Texas A&M University System; and the Western Beef Resource Committee, which includes members in Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

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<sup>1</sup>K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program

designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county Extension offices, experiment fields, area Extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus, Manhattan.



## World's First Live Cattle Diagnostic Test For BSE Developed In Canada

Vacci-Test™ Corporation has announced that a simple, reliable and economical diagnostic tool for the detection in “live” cattle of infectious Brain Diseases (BD), including Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), will soon be available for use on farms and ranches in Canada and around the world.

Designed for the measurement of immunity and the presence of infectious diseases in both humans and animals, patented Vacci-Test™ allows for the precise evaluation of the immune status very quickly through a simple blood test. Vacci-Test™ BD can determine the presence of a protein marker which identifies brain infections such as BSE in cattle.

“A single drop of blood will identify the presence of Protein 14-3-3, the marker for brain infections, including BSE,” says Bill Hogan, President and CEO. “This will facilitate affordable mass testing of live cattle in the field with results readable in less than 30 minutes. Furthermore, Vacci-Test™ platform can diagnose any kind of bacteria-viruses based infectious diseases in livestock and humans. To this end, we now have 6 additional Vacci-Test™ In Vitro diagnostic products ready for commercialization,” said Hogan.

“Vacci-Test™ BD represents a significant scientific and medical breakthrough as it has the in-field ability to detect a marker in the blood that is present when an animal or human has an infectious brain symptom, such as BSE in cattle or new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in humans,” says Dr. Jacques Mayet, co-inventor, who has been working on the procedure platform in Lyon, France since 1996. “The breakthrough

for our Vaccin-Test™ BD came when live BSE sera was made available to us for testing by both the AFFSA of France, and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA), Weybridge, England that is managed by Danny Matthews,” said Mayet.

The Scientific Review of the last 2-years test results has been continuously filed with the French Food Safety Agency (AFSSA), the European Food Commission (EFSA) in Brussels, and the VLA. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Health Canada and the Alberta Government have also received updated test results. The next step is to transfer all of the final results to EFSA and CFIA. These Agencies will then follow our protocols in order to confirm the internal lab results for Validation. The EFSA in Brussels will then add the test to their approved list. The Validation procedure will allow the test to be used in the market place to guarantee the safety of their cattle. Upon Validation, Vaccin-Test™: BD can then go to the market, which is expected this fall.

“The implications for the livestock industry are extensive. Soon producers will be able to certify that their cattle are free of brain infections such as BSE. We believe that Vaccin-Test™ BD will provide the required assurance to allow cattle to be exported across any border,” says Hogan.

At present, BSE can only be detected “post-mortem”, in a laboratory procedure that takes much longer to identify and is significantly more expensive than the “pre-mortem” Vaccin-Test™.

“We forecast that Vaccin-Test™ BD, at a cost of approximately \$20 per animal, will be available in North America for purchase by the fall of 2005,” says Hogan.

For more information contact: William J. Hogan or The Honourable Charlie Mayer or visit <http://www.vaccin-test.com>.

**SOURCE:** Vaccin-Test™  
<http://www.vaccin-test.com>  
Release - June 16, 2005

## Animal Being Tested Might Have New Form of BSE

At least one scientist believes that the so-called “November cow” currently being retested for bovine spongiform encephalopathy in England might have an atypical form of the disease.

Juergen Richt, a senior USDA scientist based at the agency’s lab in Ames, Iowa, told *Reuters* that while there is no conclusive evidence, anomalies in the sample sent by USDA to the OIE BSE Reference Laboratory in Great Britain suggest that the animal in question may have developed a new, atypical form of BSE.

Similar cases are suspected in Italy and the Netherlands, although no firm diagnosis has been made. Richt said it is too early to tell, but that the samples, on which he worked both last fall and last week, exhibit “hallmark signs” that it could be atypical and the result of some sort of sporadic development rather than the result of ingesting infected feed.

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## AMIF Soliciting Research Proposals

The American Meat Institute Foundation has issued a request for proposals on applied and fundamental research to improve pathogen control in meat and poultry products. Proposals are due to AMIF by August 5.

The full RFP is available on the AMIF Web site at <http://www.amif.org/AMIFResearch/AMIFResearch-OpenRFP.htm>.

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<http://Meatingplace.com>  
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