

May 2005

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Dates to Remember

May

4-5	54 th Annual Beef Cattle Short Course - Gainesville, FL
10	Horse Management Workshop - Gainesville, FL
17	Forage/Beef Workshop - Immokalee, FL
21	Heart of Florida Club Calf Sale - Alachua, FL
26	Corn Silage Field Day - Citra, FL
29	Area F Horse Show - Miami, FL

June

1	Area F Horse Show - Miami, FL
2-3	Livestock/Forages Extension In-Service Training - Gainesville, FL
8-10	2005 Large Animal Emergency Rescue - Gainesville, FL
14-17	FCA & FCW Annual Convention & Allied Trade Show - Marco Island, FL
17	State 4-H Horse Events - Gainesville, FL
18	3 rd Annual Tri-State Farm Field Day - Slocomb, AL
23-25	4-H Hog & Ham - Gainesville, FL





Beef Management Calendar

May

- ✓ Remove bulls.
- ✓ Harvest hay from cool season crops.
- ✓ Plant warm season perennial pastures.
- ✓ Fertilize warm season pastures.
- ✓ Check mineral feeder.
- ✓ Check for spittlebugs and treat if necessary.
- ✓ Apply spot-on agents for grub and louse control.
- ✓ Check dust bags.
- ✓ Vaccinate and implant with growth stimulant any later calves.
- ✓ Reimplant calves with growth stimulant at 90-120 days, when you have herd penned.
- ✓ Dispose of dead animals properly.
- ✓ Update market information and refine marketing plans.
- ✓ Remove bulls May 21 to end calving season March 1.

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.
- ✓ Utilize available veterinary services and diagnostic laboratories.
- ✓ 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 plans.
- ✓ Revaccinate calves at weaning for blackleg.



UF/IFAS and FAMU Create Website to Help Small Farmers

Small farmers in Florida face a variety of issues and challenges and with less resources available to them than larger farms, they can be at a competitive disadvantage. With small farms representing over 90% of farms in Florida, ensuring their success is vital to the agriculture industry in the state. That's why UF/IFAS and FAMU have created a website (<http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu>) that specifically addresses the needs of small farmers.

“The website was developed to make small farm information accessible in one location,” said Bob Hochmuth, the Multi-County Agent at the UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center in Suwannee Valley. “Small farmers may be seeking information on getting started in farming or considering one of many alternative enterprises and it is all pulled together in one site to make the search easy.”

The website provides links and other resources for small farmers including, how to get started, enterprise budgeting, business planning, financing grants, and much more. Farmers using the site can select topics on enterprises of special interest to them, including aquaculture, cut flowers, livestock, and organic farming.

Each topic includes information on production, marketing, and economics as well as other appropriate links.

“What a fabulous resource,” said Betty O’Toole, owner of O’Toole’s Herb Farm in Madison, Fla. “Jim and I have found that the IFAS small farm webpage has become an invaluable tool for our business. The site is jammed packed with useful information, quick and user friendly, even for the computer novices as we are.”

Input from small farmers and allied organizations, identifying issues critical to small farmers, such as access to profitable markets, business skills development, accessible technical information, and alternative crops and enterprises, was used to help design the site.

Input from counties throughout Florida identified the need for small farm educational programs to be developed. The small farm website provides information that farmers can employ to address these issues and become more efficient in their business.

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UF/IFAS, North Florida REC-Quincy
Quincy, FL
Release - April 15, 2005

New UF/IFAS Study Shows Double-Digit Increases for Most Florida Farmland Values

The value of agricultural land continued to increase in all areas of the state last year, buoyed by a population boom and strong nonagricultural demand for land, according to a new University of Florida survey.

“Following recent trends, the market for agricultural land was very active this past year, and the rate of increase in land values was particularly high in the southern regions of the state,” said John Reynolds, a professor emeritus with UF’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. “In most land-value categories, we recorded double-digit increases.”

He said the most prominent changes occurred in



John Reynolds, a professor emeritus with the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, initiated his annual agricultural land values survey in 1985. He says a population boom and strong nonagricultural demand for land continues to push land values higher every year. (UF/IFAS photo by Josh Wickham)

South Florida where the value of cropland increased by 58 percent and pastureland values jumped by 76 percent. The largest increases were in the Indian River area, Okeechobee County and the Gulf Coast counties.

Cropland and pastureland in other regions also experienced substantial increases: 19 to 25 percent in the central region of the state, 10 to 19 percent in the northwest region and 9 to 15 percent in the northeast region.

Although citrus groves did not increase in value as much as cropland and pasture, the value of orange groves in the south region increased by 10 percent and 12 percent in the central region. The value of grapefruit groves increased 34 percent in the south region and 15 percent in the central region. The value of land with 5- to 7-year-old citrus plantings increased about 9 percent in the south and central regions.

The average value of orange groves in the south region was \$6,540 per acre, about \$130 per acre higher than in the central region. The estimated value of grapefruit groves increased to \$5,264 per acre in the south region, about \$746 per acre higher than in the central region. The average value of land with 5- to 7-year-old citrus groves was \$5,920 per acre in the south region, about \$580 per acre higher than in the central region.

Reynolds’ 2004 land value survey, which measures changes over the past year, divides the state into five regions: south, southeast, central, northeast and northwest. Because of the impact urbanization has on

agricultural land values, Reynolds collects data for the southeast region, including Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties.

He also measures the value of transition land - acreage being converted or likely to be converted to nonagricultural sites for homes, subdivisions and commercial uses. Counties were divided into metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties, and transition land values were estimated for each region.

The value of transition land within five miles of a major town in metropolitan counties increased by 7 to 13 percent in northern regions of the state and by 6 to 52 percent in southern regions. In dollar amounts, the value of transition land in metro counties ranged from \$14,082 to \$24,983 per acre, except in the southeast region of the state where transition land values were \$62,500 per acre.

The value of transition land more than five miles from a major town in metro counties ranged from \$7,950 to \$14,352 per acre, except in the southeast where the value was \$36,250 per acre.

In non-metro counties, the value of transition land within five miles of a major town ranged from \$4,793 to \$6,778 per acre. Transition land more than five miles from a major town ranged from \$3,921 to \$5,446 per acre.

For the 2004 study, six counties were reclassified. Reynolds said the changes in the northwest include moving Jefferson and Wakulla counties into the Tallahassee metropolitan statistical area (MSA), which is a federal designation for urban or urbanizing areas. In the northeast region, Gilchrist County was moved into the Gainesville MSA, and Flagler County was removed from adjacent MSA counties. In the southern region, Indian River County was designated as the Vero Beach MSA.

“It is important to emphasize that the value of a specific tract of land may vary substantially from the survey estimates because of the physical characteristics of the tract, its location and the economic or institutional factors that restrict its use,” Reynolds said. “The survey measured land values up to May 2004, and it does not include any changes in land values that may have occurred after last year’s hurricane season.”

The 2004 Florida Agricultural Land Value Survey also shows:

- Last year, the value of cropland and pastureland in the south region increased from \$1,100 to \$1,400 per acre. The value of improved pasture was higher in the central region than in other regions. The lowest agricultural land values were reported in the northwest region, ranging from \$1,450 per acre for unimproved pasture to \$2,193 per acre for irrigated cropland.

- The value of irrigated cropland was \$3,901 per acre in the south region, \$3,709 in the central region, and \$3,428 in the northeast region. The value of non-irrigated cropland was \$3,237 in the central region, \$2,657 in the northeast region and \$1,983 in the northwest region.

- The value of improved pasture ranged from \$3,608 per acre in the central region to \$1,783 per acre in the northwest region. The value of unimproved pasture ranged from \$2,605 per acre in the south region to \$1,451 in the northwest region.

- The value of farm woods increased by 18 percent in the northwest region of the state and by 16 percent in the northeast region.

Survey respondents were asked if they expect agricultural land values to be higher, lower or remain unchanged during the next 12 months. Eighty-five percent of the respondents in northern areas and 67 percent of the respondents in south region expect land values to increase during the next year. Only 2 percent expect lower land values during the next 12 months. Respondents in the southeast region said that they expect land values to increase by 30 percent, primarily because of strong urban demands.

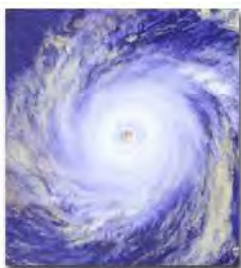
The annual food and resource economics department survey, which Reynolds started in 1985, was compiled from information provided by 190 respondents from around the state. Respondents included property appraisers, farm lenders, real estate brokers, farm managers, land investors, federal farm-assistance and conservation staff, UF/IFAS extension agents, and others who develop and maintain information about rural land values.

More details on the survey, “Nonagricultural Demand Causes Agricultural Land Values to Increase”

(FE 545), are available on the UF/IFAS Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS) Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

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UF/IFAS News
Gainesville, FL
Release - April 4, 2005



Protecting Livestock During a Hurricane

As we all nervously take part in the countdown to June 1 which is the official start date of the 2005 Hurricane Season, now is the time to begin our hurricane preparation. This seems unfair as many of us are still attempting to clean and rebuild from the 2004 season, but nature doesn't seem to stop for anyone and proper preparation is crucial as last season proved to many.

The damage to agriculture caused by the four powerful, hurricanes that hit Florida was great, with significant damage to livestock operations. Trees fell across fences, allowing livestock to get out, often along roads and highways, causing even greater complications. Recovery required removal of downed trees and repair of fences, as well as rounding up stray livestock and returning them to pastures.

The lessons learned from last hurricane season may help cattlemen prepare for the 2005 season.

An excerpt from the National Extension Disaster Handbook, developed by UF/IFAS

■ When the forces of a hurricane cause flooded conditions, livestock that are not in a confined area can usually take care of themselves. Do not, however, let them become trapped in low-lying pens.

■ Provide feed and water for the livestock. Water is essential. Thirsty animals will try to break out to get to flood waters. If water is in short supply, limit the livestock's feed intake.

■ Block off narrow passageways where animals would be unable to turn around. A few heavy animals in a narrow dead end can be dangerous not only to themselves but also to the buildings in which they are housed.

■ Make provisions to block livestock from even remote access to herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers and treated seeds. Store agricultural chemicals and seeds where hurricane flood waters will not contaminate livestock feed or water.

■ Turn off electricity at the main switch. Livestock could damage electric fixtures, causing fires or electrocutions.

■ If there is a possibility that dairy barns may become flooded, drive cattle out of the barn. During the rapid rise of water, cattle often refuse to leave a barn and may drown if the water rises high enough in the barn.



The Disaster Handbook

The Disaster Handbook can be accessed by visiting <http://disaster.ifas.ufl.edu/default.htm>.



This is an ongoing program of the Prevention and Preparedness Design Team, State Major Program (SMP) 124 of Florida Cooperative Extension. SMP 124 is concerned with delivering information and training to the people of the State of Florida in the areas of agricultural safety and disaster preparedness and recovery. For more information about the agricultural safety program, please visit the Florida AgSafe Web site at <http://www.flagsafe.ufl.edu/>.



Florida, through University of Florida Cooperative Extension, is a member of the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN). EDEN is a consortium of Extension professionals from

45 states and Puerto Rico whose responsibilities involve disaster issues. EDEN acts as a nationwide network which can provide rapid response to member needs with information, contacts, and publications. In addition, EDEN provides continuing support to member states through an annual meeting, committee work, coordination with federal agencies and the EDEN Web site (<http://www.eden.lsu.edu/default.aspx>).

SOURCE: The Disaster Handbook
<http://disaster.ifas.ufl.edu/default.htm>
 UF/IFAS
 Gainesville, FL

Where to Invest Profits

*Reprinted with permission from Drovers,
 March 2005 issue*

Noble Foundation agricultural economist Fred Schmedt says that through the combination of high prices and ample grass, the nation's cow herds have truly become "cash cows." In the business world, cash cows are products that generate a steady, dependable flow of cash. With that added cash, producers need to carefully consider where they put that money.

"The temptation will be great to purchase a new pickup or upgrade to a better line of farm equipment," he says. "These types of purchases will no doubt make life easier, but will they ensure profits next year and the year after?"

Better choices might be to identify key areas of the operation where investments will lead to lower future production costs or increased quality and quantity of production. Here are some of Mr. Schmedt's suggestions.

■ **Cattle genetics:** Now is the time for producers to assess the type and quality of calves they are producing. Do they fit the market? Do you need more muscle or more growth?

■ **Working facilities:** With more emphasis on backgrounding programs, working facilities are needed to enable producers to easily perform routine health-

management procedures. Investments in facilities should focus on items that will make cattle working faster, easier and safer for both humans and animals.

■ **Grazing facilities:** Fencing and water systems can make grazing more efficient, leading to increased production. Grazing cows can cost half as much as producing and feeding hay. Every county has different priorities, but some counties have EQUIP funds for fencing and water systems available through the NRCS.

■ **Feed storage:** Bulk storage is a long-term investment that immediately saves \$20 to \$30 per ton over sacked supplements. In many areas, hay storage sheds offer long-term feed savings. As the availability of alternative feeds such as brewers grains (a byproduct of expanding ethanol production) increases, a good investment might be building a commodity shed to receive and store truckload lots of the cheaper byproduct feeds.

■ **Pasture acquisition:** In the long term, all businesses need to grow to survive. Now would be a good time to consider adding additional grazing capacity. Leased land is usually more economical than purchasing, but now is a good time to evaluate all possible alternatives.

SOURCE: Drovers
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 Release - March 2005



Johanns Announces Model Food Security Plans for Federal Establishments

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced the availability of model food security plans and training that meat, poultry and egg processing plants can utilize to strengthen security measures and prevent potential acts of intentional contamination.

"Food security is a shared responsibility of USDA and our many partners to prevent or respond to the

contamination of food products and we continue to make these efforts a priority,” said Johanns. “By applying the principles contained in these plans, federal and state inspected plants can increase their own preparedness planning while doing their part to protect America’s food supply.”

The security of meat, poultry and egg processing facilities can be enhanced through the implementation of risk-management techniques tailored to each establishment’s needs. Food security plans are valuable technical and operational resources that can help plant operators identify various types of preventive steps to minimize the risk of food product tampering or other criminal actions.

The model food security plans are being issued in the form of guidance documents and are voluntary. However, USDA strongly encourages all establishments operating under federal and state inspection programs to develop plans to fit their particular needs, as each plant may be vulnerable.

The model plans are designed for meat and poultry slaughter facilities, meat and poultry processing plants, egg processing plants and import facilities, which are available on the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) web site at: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. The model plans are also intended to be used with other FSIS food security resources, such as food security guidelines and food security checklists that were developed over the past three years.

To assist the industry, especially small and very small establishments in developing food security plans, FSIS will conduct a series of training workshops throughout the nation in May, June and July 2005. FSIS also expects to broadcast some of the workshops via the internet in order to include more plant operators.

The purpose of the workshops is to provide additional guidance about the development and implementation of food security plans for meat, poultry and egg processing facilities, import establishments and identification warehouses. Tools such as the Model Food Security Plans, FSIS Industry Self-Assessment Checklist for Food Security and FSIS Directive 5420.1, Revision 1 (Food Security Verification Procedures) will be addressed during the half-day meetings.

For planning purposes, a tentative schedule has been created. Information on specific meeting locations and agendas will be posted on FSIS’ web site, <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>, for each workshop.

FSIS highly recommends that attendees pre-register for the workshops by logging on to the web site http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News/Meetings_&_Events/ or by calling the toll-free registration number (800) 485-4424.

SOURCE: Ed Loyd
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USDA, Washington, DC
<http://www.usda.gov>
Release - April 14, 2005



The Black Stallion Literacy Project

The program is based on the classic books of Walter Farley and the natural connection between children and horses. The project was conceived in 1999 by Farley’s son, Tim and Mark Miller, owner of Arabian Nights Dinner Attraction in Kissimmee, Florida.

Friends for more than thirty years, Tim and Mark share a common interest in encouraging children to read. Tim knows the influence his father’s books have had on millions of children, and Mark grew up and remains in the company of horses -- a winning combination for a program designed to motivate children to read.

The program introduces children in first grades to reading their very own book and touching the pony in the book. Later, the children attend a horse day event where they learn more about horses and have an opportunity to read to their favorite horse.

The fourth grade program continues the legacy of reading by providing each child with their own copy of *The Black Stallion*, a universally recognized children's classic as well as an introduction to the critically acclaimed 1979 movie of the same name.

To sponsor the program, enrollment, or volunteer information, please contact The Black Stallion Literacy Project at (407) 239-9223.

SOURCE: The Black Stallion Literacy Project
<http://www.bsllp.org>

USDA Plans to Ease Restrictions on Slaughter of Downer Cattle

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has suggested he is considering easing the ban on the slaughter of so-called downer cattle, non-ambulatory animals that cannot walk or stand on their own. At present, all such animals are prohibited from being used for human food.

Johanns said that if an animal has a broken leg and is under 30 months of age, there is no danger of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, so such animals should be allowed into the food chain.

Consumer groups, activists for humane animal treatment and medical authorities oppose any such easing of restrictions on grounds of food safety and compassion.

Johanns stated that cattle at 1,110 pounds can be expected to bring about \$1,000 at slaughter, but only \$200 if rendered for pet food, a sizeable loss for the industry, since about 200,000 such animals are condemned each year.

But a bovine veterinarian, Jim Reynolds of the University of California's School of Veterinary Medicine, disputed those figures. Non-ambulatory animals bring less money even if slaughtered for food, due to the difficulty of transporting them, processing them and trimming them for food, he maintains. "A survey of down dairy cattle at a slaughter house in California found 60 percent of the downers were condemned and the value of the passed cattle to be about one-fourth that of ambulatory cows," Reynolds said. "Sending down cattle

to slaughter cannot be supported by economics."

More important, he said, may be the food safety issue; a broken leg does not mean that an animal may not be suffering from something else as well. "It is very, very difficult for a veterinarian to differentiate the many reasons a cow may be non-ambulatory," he said. "There are metabolic and infectious causes as well as trauma and fractures, and accurate diagnosis is usually not possible at the farm."

Farm Sanctuary, an animal welfare group, sided with Reynolds. "The Bush administration's regressive proposal to allow the slaughter of some downed cattle presents a risk both for animals and for the American consumer," said Gene Bauston, president of the group. "Not only does it mean increased suffering for untold numbers of injured cattle, but it also increases the chance that diseased meat may enter the human food supply."

Bauston pointed out that broken limbs may in fact be a symptom of greater problems, such as BSE.

SOURCE: Pete Hisey
Email: phisey@meatingplace.com
<http://www.Meatingplace.com>
Release - April 21, 2005

Two More Positive BSE Tests in Japan

Two more cattle have tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy, *Kyodo News* reports.

The two, one black cow born in 1987 and a Holstein born in 1995, were found in the Miyagi Prefecture.

If the initial test results are confirmed, they would be Japan's 18th and 19th known cases of BSE.

SOURCE: Pete Hisey
Email: phisey@meatingplace.com
<http://www.Meatingplace.com>
Release - April 20, 2005