

# Internet Roundup: How the World Wide Web Can Help Florida Cattle Producers

## South Florida Beef–Forage Program<sup>1</sup>

Cooperative Extension Service  
University of Florida

### Introduction

The “Information Age” and the “Internet” are upon us with full force, but how can these tools be used to enhance productivity of the Florida cattle industry? The internet gives us rapid access to a tremendous amount of useful information, and allows us to communicate with each other in a way that we have not experienced before.

Many universities and private companies—in the United States and around the world—have established internet sites that provide various services. University of Florida has several internet sites (see Table 1) that can be used by Florida cattle producers to obtain information on topics related to cattle production and other areas of agriculture.

### South Florida Beef–Forage Program Internet Site

County extension faculty involved in the South Florida Beef–Forage Program have developed a World Wide Web site to assist Florida cattle producers. The internet address is

<http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~sfbfp/beef.html>

The South Florida Beef–Forage Program is composed of extension faculty representing Desoto, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Okeechobee, Osceola, Pasco, Polk, and Sarasota Counties, as well as research faculty and extension specialists located at various research centers and departments at the University of Florida. A major goal of this program is to coordinate extension and

research activities for enhanced forage and cattle production in central and south Florida.

The internet site provides the following links, which contain information that is useful to Florida cattle producers:

**Members.** The “Members” link provides a profile of each county extension faculty member in the South Florida Beef–Forage Program. Information summarizing their primary areas of focus, in addition to telephone numbers and electronic mail addresses, is included.

**Programs.** The “Programs” link provides information on all workshops, schools, and seminars sponsored by the South Florida Beef–Forage Program. For example, this group sponsors a biennial Forage and Pasture Management School. Beef production and marketing programs include the Cattle Industry Market Outlook Seminar, Beef Cattle Reproductive Management School, Florida Cattlemen’s Institute and Allied Trade Show, an Annual Quality Replacement Heifer Sale, and the Pasture-to-Plate (Steer Performance Evaluation in the Feedlot & on the Rail) program. An Environmental and Regulatory Educational Program is also sponsored. Links to each sponsored program provide information, along with an example agenda or schedule from a previous program.

**Calendar of Events.** The “Calendar” is a listing of events that includes dates, times, and locations for meetings, educational programs, and cattle sales.

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<sup>1</sup>Members of the South Florida Beef–Forage Program include Jim Selph, Desoto County; Pat Hogue, Highlands County; Travis Seawright, Manatee County; Mark Kistler, Okeechobee County; Charlie Williams, Osceola County; Ed Jennings, Pasco County; Doug Mayo, Polk County; and Steve Gran, Sarasota County.

**Publications.** Searching the World Wide Web for information on a specific topic can be a frustrating experience. The “Publications” page provides links to selected articles directly applicable to cattle production in Florida. Research and extension circulars concerning tropical forages, supplementation programs for cattle in Florida, and herd health issues are included. Most publications were written by research and extension personnel within the University of Florida system.

**Discussion Group.** A discussion group called “Cattle Talk” is designed to provide a forum for discussion of topics related to Florida cattle production. Cattle producers, industry representatives and university personnel are encouraged to subscribe to this discussion group. There is no cost to participate.

The discussion group is established as an electronic mailing list accessed through your electronic mail system. Any individual who is subscribed to the list can pose a question or comment. The question or comment is distributed to all members of the list. Any member can respond to the question or comment, and this response is also distributed to all list members.

The potential for this type of communication allows a unique situation for individuals interested in cattle production in Florida to link together and share information. This is an excellent opportunity for Florida cattle producers to communicate with each other, and to express their needs to the University of Florida. For example, a producer in south Florida may pose a question and receive responses from 10 or 15 (or maybe more) producers from all across Florida.

**Services & Products.** This link provides listings of services and products available to cattle producers in south Florida. Directories of cattle

day workers, livestock hauling companies, individuals who do custom tractor work, sources of hay, sources of grass planting material, individuals who build fence, sources of supplemental feed, along with other areas of service are provided. This list is continuously updated, so if you would like to be included under a given service, or if you provide a service that is not currently listed, please contact your county extension faculty.

**County Newsletters.** Newsletters from each county extension faculty member in the South Florida Beef–Forage Program can be read and printed at your home or office computer.

**EPDs & Sire Summaries.** Publications are available describing the use of expected progeny difference (EPD) in cattle breeding programs. These publications can be read and printed from your computer. Many breed associations have World Wide Web sites, and links to these sites are provided. Also, many of these breed associations have their sire summaries online, and these sire databases can be searched for specific EPD traits of interest to you. Links to these sire summaries are also provided.

**Agricultural Links.** This section has links to websites that are of interest to Florida cattle producers. (For example, cattle-related organizations and associations such as the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association and various Farm Bureaus have websites.) Marketing services such as the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Chicago and Kansas City Boards of Trade, various Florida marketing organizations, and cattle marketing companies have established websites. Sites that provide reference material (virtual libraries), agricultural publications, cattle breed associations, and state and federal government information also exist. Many television stations have websites that provide weather forecasting and radar images.

## County Workshops

During 1998, the South Florida Beef–Forage Program will be presenting workshops on the use of the World Wide Web for Florida cattle producers. They will cover practical aspects such as purchasing a computer, and how to obtain access

to the World Wide Web. Use of a web browser (such as Netscape) will be covered. A complete description of the South Florida Beef–Forage Program website, and the use of “search engines” to find information on specific topics will be covered. Check your county newsletters for times and more information.

**Table 1.** University of Florida websites of interest to Florida cattle producers

| <b>World Wide Web Site</b>                        | <b>Internet Address (URL<sup>a</sup>)</b>   |
|---|---|
| University of Florida                             | <a href="http://www.ufl.edu">http://www.ufl.edu</a>   |
| Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences       | <a href="http://www.ifas.ufl.edu">http://www.ifas.ufl.edu</a>                                   |
| Florida Agricultural Information Retrieval System | <a href="http://hammock.ifas.ufl.edu">http://hammock.ifas.ufl.edu</a>                           |
| South Florida Beef–Forage Program                 | <a href="http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~sfbfp/beef.html">http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~sfbfp/beef.html</a> |
| Range Cattle Research and Education Center        | <a href="http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~ona/onahp.html">http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~ona/onahp.html</a>   |
| Animal Science Department                         | <a href="http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~animal/">http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~animal/</a>                 |
| Dairy and Poultry Science Department              | <a href="http://dps.ufl.edu">http://dps.ufl.edu</a>   |
| Agronomy Department                               | <a href="http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~agroweb/">http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~agroweb/</a>               |

<sup>a</sup>URL = universal resource locator.

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