CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 30, 2006
SPRING PASTURE FORUM
A program by the Central Florida Livestock Agents Group, Yarborough Ranch
Approved for (4) CEU's
(See Enclosed Agenda for Details)

April 11, 2006
PEST MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP BMP, FOR CITRUS
Indian River Research & Education Center
For further information you can go to http://stlucie.ifas.ufl.edu
Or call Sharon Lear at (772) 462-1660
Or e-mail silear@ifas.ufl.edu

May 3-5, 2006
55TH ANNUAL FLORIDA BEEF CATTLE SHORT COURSE
Hilton University of Florida Conference Center, Gainesville, FL
For registration contact University of Florida, IFAS Office of Conferences & Institutes at (352) 392-5930

June 6, 2006
REVIEW AND EXAMS FOR RESTRICTED USE ORNAMENTAL/TURF OR PRIVATE AGRICULTURE APPLICATOR PESTICIDE LICENSES
For registration contact Osceola County Extension Service, Kissimmee, FL
(321) 697-3000

August 7-10, 2006
BEEF CATTLE REPRODUCTION MANAGEMENT SCHOOL
DESERET RANCH
For registration contact Osceola County Extension Service, Kissimmee, FL
(321) 697-3000
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PUBLIC ADVISORY
Florida Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services

It has become clear that the Africanized honey bee (AHB) population has grown and will continue to grow in Florida due to its numerous pathways into the state and the lack of effective eradication products or techniques. The Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, in cooperation with other agricultural stakeholders, is developing the tools to protect the beekeeping industry and educate the public on how to learn to live with this potentially dangerous insect. At some point, the aggressive behavior of these bees will become more common. Interaction between AHBs and people and animals will likely happen.

For the last decade, Florida has been surveying for the AHB and established the country’s first AHB detection program that is jointly operated by the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The program involves placing bait hives in ports, and hives are in place throughout the state, primarily in port areas, along interstate-10 and on the Florida/Alabama border. The bait hives are checked on a three-week cycle based on the reproduction habits of the AHB.

Pathways for introduction of the AHB into Florida are numerous. AHB swarms have been intercepted 30 times in the past 22 years in Florida. The majority has come off ships from Guatemala. Since 2002, when the first AHBs were detected in the Tampa Bay area, 653 samples have been taken with 59 positive for AHB genetics.

Over the last several years, numerous attacks on humans and animals have been reported in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Emergency response agencies in these states have implemented first responder training programs as well as public education efforts. While there have been no attacks on humans reported in Florida, a horse in La Belle was attacked in May of this year.

As a state agency, your office may become actively involved in emergency situations. This letter provides some background information on the AHB situation. And to help you prepare for potential encounters with AHBs, we encourage you to follow the safety precautions listed below and to educate your staff as well.

**AHB safety precautions:**

-- Be attuned and alert to buzzing in your environment-this may indicate a nest or swarm of bees.

-- Use care when entering sheds or outbuildings where bees may nest.

-- Examine work areas **before** using power equipment such as lawn mowers, weed cutters, and chain saws-the noise excites bees.

-- Be alert when engaged in all outdoor activities.

-- Teach respect and caution of all bees.

-- Visit with a doctor about bee sting kits and procedures if sensitive to bee stings.

-- **Do not disturb** a nest or swarm of bees, leave the area immediately, and contact a pest control company or your county extension agent.

-- If attacked by aggressive bees, run as fast as possible to a safe area. Aggressive AHBs may pursue for up to ¼ of a mile.

**If stung:**

-- Go quickly to a safe area.

-- Remove stingers by scraping-use a flicking action with a fingernail
or credit card. Do not squeeze or the stinger may stay in and get infected.

-- Apply ice.

-- Seek medical attention immediately if breathing becomes labored.

If you anticipate your personnel might be exposed to AHBs or asked to assist First Responders, a risk assessment should be performed. Properly fitting protective equipment is a necessity. Full length “bee suits,” protective veils, hats and gloves with sleeve length extensions are available from most beekeeping supply distributors. Without the correct protective equipment and training, the potential rescuer may become an additional victim.

The Department is partnering with the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences on AHB response and control training initiatives and anticipates having a coordinated plan in a few months. During this developmental phase, please be aware, be alert and be cautious.

If you have any questions, need further clarification, or if we can assist you otherwise, contact Jerry Hayes at 352-372-3505 x 128 hayesq@doacs.state.fl.us or Denise Felber, APR, 352-372-3505 x 102 feiberd@doacs.state.fl.us.

Cogongrass Control in Pastures and Fencerows
Brent Sellers, Jason Ferrell, and Greg MacDonald
University of Florida, IFAS

Cogongrass is a perennial grass that commonly infests disturbed areas in the Southeast. Cogongrass invades and persists through several survival strategies including an extensive rhizome system (for underground storage of energy and nutrients), adaptation to a variety of soil conditions, drought tolerance, prolific seed production, and adaptation to fire. Additionally, this weed is unpalatable to livestock because it accumulates silicates along the leaf margin, making leaves hard and razor sharp. Cogongrass also forms a dense mat of cover and quickly displaces desirable forage grasses. Due to these properties, cogongrass is one of the most difficult species to effectively remove from pasture and range settings.

Control of cogongrass has been studied for many years by researchers all over the world. During this time nearly all available herbicides have been tested on cogongrass, but few effective products have been found. For example, all of the commonly used pasture herbicides such as Cimarron, 2, 4-D, Remedy, Velpar, and Weedmaster have no activity on cogongrass. Only, glyphosate (Roundup, etc.) and Stalker herbicide (imazapyr) have been found to be effective, but long-term control is rarely achieved.

Stalker is an extremely effective herbicide that controls a variety of weeds, from herbaceous to woody species. One or two applications of Stalker (2 qt/A) will often effectively control cogongrass for 18 to 24 months. However, there are several disadvantages to using this herbicide. First, Stalker will severely injure or kill forage grasses such as bermudagrass and bahiagrass. It also has a long soil half-life and will remain in the soil for several months after application. This often leads to “bare ground” for up to 6 months in the application area due to the non-selective nature of this herbicide. Stalker also has the potential to move down slopes during periods of rainfall, killing or injuring other species in
the runoff area. Secondly, Stalker can only be used as a spot-treatment with no more than 10% of the pasture area treated per year.

Glyphosate is often the easiest and least expensive option. This herbicide applied at 3-4 qt/A will substantially reduce cogongrass stands, but multiple applications are needed. One drawback to glyphosate is that it is non-selective herbicide and will control/injure all vegetation present at the time of treatment. However, glyphosate has little or no residual soil activity and crops can be planted immediately after application. But, if high rates (4-5 qt) of glyphosate are used, slight soil residual may exist in some Florida soils; therefore, a 10-14 day waiting period should be observed before reestablishing the area with tender seeds or seedlings.

To date, there are no “great” herbicide options available for control of cogongrass in pastures. For this reason an integrated control plan will be required that combines herbicides and soil amendments. Cogongrass grows extremely well over wide soil fertility and pH ranges. On the contrary, bahiagrass begins to grow poorly if soil pH becomes too low or if nitrogen fertilizer is lacking. But given a setting where bahiagrass has sufficient fertility and optimum soil pH, it may out-compete cogongrass and maintain the pasture. The most likely program to control cogongrass will require using multiple applications of glyphosate (to remove the cogongrass that is present), amending soil fertility and pH, then quickly reestablishing bahiagrass. Although this program will not eradicate cogongrass, using this integrate approach is the most effective means of managing cogongrass in grazing areas.

UF/IFAS and FAMU to host Small Farms conferences around the state

GAINESVILLE, Fla.---The University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and Florida A&M University (FAMU) will host a “Florida Small Farms Conference” series to help small farmers build more efficient operations.

“Attendees will learn about a wide variety of alternative enterprises, marketing options and other important financial topics that will help them improve their own small farm,” said Bob Hochmuth, the UF/IFAS multi-county agent of the North Florida Research and Education Center in Suwannee Valley. “The conferences will help improve the sustainability of our small farms and maintain viable agricultural communities throughout Florida.”

These small farms workshops were designed by UF/IFAS and FAMU county extension agents and faculty to help small farmers learn more about marketing, business planning, alternative production, worker health and safety, and more.

“I always gain something at these conferences where I can see all types of new ideas presented,” said Belinda Cheney, a past small farms conference attendee, who owns and operates Cheney Farms, in O’Brien, Fla. “Attending has been especially helpful to me in finding new crops to try and new ways of doing things to improve my operation.”

The idea for the small farms conference series stemmed from the UF/IFAS and FAMU small farms website (http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu), which was designed to compile resources for small farmers in one location. Farmers using this site can select topics on enterprises of special interest to them.
Each topic includes information on production, marketing, and economics as well as other appropriate links. Small farms represent over 90% of all farms in Florida, based on the USDA definition of up to $250,000 in sales. These farms represent about 15% of all farm product sales in Florida.

The Small Farms Conferences will be held at various locations around the state during the next several months.

APHIS NEWS RELEASE

USDA ANNOUNCES IMPLEMENTATION OF ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS UNDER VOLUNTARY NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

WASHINGTON, March 9, 2006-The U.S. Department of Agriculture is announcing plans to begin allocating animal identification numbers (AINs) to tag manufacturers and approving visual identification tags for use under the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), paving the way for distribution of these tags to producers. The initial implementation of AINs focuses on cattle. The use of AINs with other types of identification devices (e.g., implants) used in other species will be considered as the NAIS species working groups finalize their recommendations for utilizing the AIN.

USDA also is providing an option to use supplemental identification methods or technologies (e.g., radio-frequency and biometrics) that enhance the utility of AIN tags. Supplemental identification methods or technologies are optional and may vary among species. To ensure compatibility and uniformity is achieved in the national program, USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will establish technology standards, when applicable, along with performance requirements for these technologies. USDA invites companies who wish to manufacture AIN tags to apply for USDA approval. Guidelines for the manufacture and distribution of AIN tags under NAIS can be found in the document Administration of Official Identification Devices with the Animal Identification Number on the NAIS Web site at www.usda.gov/nais. Information regarding the distribution of AIN tags to producers is also provided on the Web site.

NAIS is a cooperative state-federal-industry program to standardize and expand animal identification programs and practices to all livestock species and poultry. Implementation of NAIS will support state and federal animal disease monitoring and surveillance through the rapid tracing of infected and exposed animals during animal disease outbreaks. The ultimate long-term goal of NAIS is to provide animal health officials with the capability to identify all animals and premises that have had direct contact with a disease of concern within 48 hours after discovery. Notice of this action was published in the March 3 Federal Register.
SPRING PASTURE FORUM
A program by the
Central Florida Livestock Agents Group
THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2006
YARBOROUGH RANCH
1355 Snow Hill Road, Geneva

AGENDA

8:30 Arrival

9:00 Welcome
Hosts: Dennis Mudge, IFAS Livestock Extension Agent
Imogene Yarborough, Yarborough Ranches

9:15 “Weed Management”
Dr. Jay Ferrell, Associate Professor
Department of Agronomy, University of FL

10:00 “What to Expect from BMPS and Your Ranch”
Joe Walter, UF/IFAS Livestock Agent, Brevard County
Pat Cockrell, Executive Director, Florida Farm Bureau

10:45 Trade Show Break

11:00 “Mole Cricket Control in Pastures”
Al Clarke, Southeast Territory Manager
Becker Underwood
Dr. Martin Adjei, ONA Research Center, UF/IFAS

11:45 Steak Luncheon
Yarborough Ranch, Yarborough Family
Invocation-Al Johnson, Seminole County Cattlemen’s Association

12:45 “USDA Fire Ant Control”
Dennis Mudge, UF/IFAS Livestock Agent and
Lauren Cantin, Valencia Community College Intern

1:30 “Pasture and Sod Fertilization”
Dr. Jerry Sartain, UF/IFAS, Soil and Water Science

2:15 “Question and Answer Agent Panel”
CFLAG Livestock Agents UF/IFAS
Randy Bateman, Sharon Gamble, Brantley Ivey, Ed Jennings, Dennis
Mudge, Mark Shuffitt, Martha Thomas, Joe Walter

3:00 Evaluations & Give-A-Way