

April - May - June 2017

Orange & Seminole Counties Livestock Update

Hello all, Spring is coming upon us. At the time of your reading this you should be seeing Sand Hill Crane chicks in your pastures and yards. But there's more growing out there than just wildlife. Pastures should be starting to come alive, but not all that glitters is gold and not all that's green is grass. Dormant weeds are beginning to emerge. Because of this I would like to give some brief weed control suggestions.

Below is a brief synopsis of an excellent publication by Dr. Brent Sellers and Dr. Jay Ferrell titled **Weed Management in Pastures and Rangeland- 2017**.

The whole article can be found here: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wg006>



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The first step in controlling your weeds is to know what weeds you have. Scouting your fields and being observant in the pastures should help give you an idea as to what kind of weeds you have. If you cannot properly identify a weed contact your local extension agent (Me!) and send pictures or schedule for a visit.

The next step is prevention. Prevention for weed control is commonly viewed as preventing weeds from producing seed. Many of the weeds we see in pastures come from seed so if we begin to limit their seed production we begin to limit their appearance, having said that weed control will take time and perseverance. There is a "weed seed bank" within the top 12" of soil where weed seeds wait for their moment to strike. This is why repeated spraying and tilling is recommended for a true seed bed.

Control has four different forms. The first is cultural control. Cultural control mostly involves making sure your forage has the best conditions for it to outgrow the weeds. Making sure all growth needs are met (light, nutrients, moisture) will allow your forage to achieve its growth potential. Checking for optimal soil pH is a big component of forage growth, especially here in Florida. Routine soil tests will ensure that you know what you have so you know what you need. Overgrazing falls in this category too. Many weed problems can be avoided if overgrazing is prevented. This usually is an issue with stocking rate, but that is another publication and another time.

Mechanical control is basically mowing. Mowing will improve appearance and temporarily increase forage production and quality. Mowing is generally more effective on broadleaf weeds than on grasses and sedges. Mowing can remove blooms to prevent seed setting. But mowing does have some drawbacks. If mowing is done after seed set it can cause more seeds to be spread. While mowing stunts weed growth, it may not stop weed growth. Unless you are providing your forage the proper growth needs to overtake the weeds, the weeds may never truly go away. Also mowing has shown to cause weeds to grow more prostrate (horizontal) so that

they become less affected.

Biological control is using nematodes, insects and animals to control for weeds. Some examples are the beetle *Gratiana boliviana* used in Tropical Soda Apple control, and goats to clean up grazed pastures. Biological methods rarely provide complete control, and usually take time to establish and cause an effect. Despite these drawbacks biological control is being studied further in depth today because of its ecological potential.

And finally we have chemical control. Applying herbicides can have a rapid effect on weed control. Herbicides come in two main forms: Pre-emergence and post-emergence. While I won't go into detail about what herbicides affect which weeds the publication mentioned above does, and has very informative tables to help you in that area. After you have determined which herbicides you will apply it's equally important to time your application correctly. It's advised not to apply liquid herbicides during a dry spell. While you may think the plant will happily take up the herbicide it actually does not. During dry periods plants will "harden" in order to retain what moisture they have. Because of this they will not absorb the herbicide as well as they normally would do. Also always read herbicide labels for information such as Restricted Entry Interval (REI), and grazing restrictions.

That's my summary of a thorough and well written publication. One optional thing I would add is to research how your herbicides work, i.e. how the active ingredient affects the plant. I'm not suggesting we all become organic chemists and learn the entire pathway of the chemicals, but enough so that when someone who does not have an agriculture background asks you why you are polluting the water or adding chemicals to their food you are able to give them more scientific information. We live in a time when many consumers are not only un-informed but ill-informed. So when they ask us questions like the ones mentioned they do so because they are not playing with all the cards so to speak. It is up to us to help give them more "cards" so they can make more informed decisions.

Rainfall:

Jan- 2.36" 10yr avg- 2.66" Avg soil temp- 67.5°F

Feb- 1.24" 10yr avg-1.73" Avg soil temp- 69.9°F

Mar- 0.33" 10yr avg- 2.71" Avg Soil temp- 74.8°F

All data taken from Apopka FAWN station

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Forages of Florida - Pasture Reminders from the CFLAG Calendar

April

Plant warm season annual pasture
De-worm cows as needed if not done in March.
Vaccinate against blackleg and brucellosis after 3 months of age and before 12 months.
Update market information and refine market strategy for calves.

May

Remove bulls.
Harvest hay from cool season pastures
Apply spot-on agents for grub and louse control.
Vaccinate and implant with growth stimulant any later calves.

June

Last date to plant sorghum.
Check pastures and hay field for spittlebugs, mole crickets, and army worms.
Watch for evidence of pinkeye and treat.

For more information: <http://agronomy.ifas.ufl.edu/ForagesofFlorida>



Weed control panel



Field equipment discussion

The Spring Ranchers Forum was held on March 16 at Yarborough Ranch. Despite the chilly weather, there was a good turnout for the guest speakers who presented valuable information regarding dangerous pasture weeds and their control.

A dozen vendors were also present, donating door prizes for the raffle held after a delicious steak lunch provided by CFLAG.



Orange County Cattlemen's Association Members gathered April 1st for their annual meeting and dinner at the UF/IFAS Extension Orange County.



Set Aside the Dates...

State 4-H & FFA Meats Judging Contest, April 15, 2017, Gainesville

Wedgfield Firewise Spring Give Away
April 22, 2017, Wedgfield Community Park
Check Wedgfield Firewise on Facebook,
or email Sharonsimmons1953@att.net

66th Florida Beef Cattle Short Course
May 3-5 Gainesville, FL



For more info search:
66th Florida Beef Cattle Short Course

1st Annual Sunshine AG Extravaganza
April 22, 2017 Ft. Christmas Historical Park
Register at andrea.stevenson@ocfl.net
www.orangecountyparks.net

**Florida Cattlemen's Association
Annual Convention**
June 20 - 22, 2017 at the Hilton
Orlando Buena Vista Palace

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