Spring Rancher’s Forum  
a program by the  
CENTRAL FLORIDA LIVESTOCK  
AGENTS’ GROUP  

Friday, June 4, 2004  
8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  

Yarborough Ranch  
1355 Snow Hill Road, Geneva, FL  

~ University Professors ~ On-Ranch Field Demos ~  
~ Field-Site Training ~ Live Animals  

8:30 am – “Heifer Breeding & Mgmt. Using BCS”  
9:45 am – “Feeding Beef Cattle in Central FL”  
10:40 am – “Forage Testing Why & How”  
11:30 am – “Toxic Plant Trouble in the Pasture”  
1:00 pm – “Improving Hay Buying Skills”  
2:15 pm – “Tropical Soda Apple Central Update”  

Reservations are required ~ $8.00 cost includes steak lunch.
Directions to Yarborough Ranch

- I-4 to the 408 East (East-West Expressway-Toll Road) Drive 3.9 miles.
- Take State Road 417 (Toll Road) NORTH exit, exit #18A on the LEFT, towards Sanford. Drive 0.4 miles.
- Take the exit on the LEFT toward Central FL Greenway-SR417 NORTH ramp. Drive 0.8 miles.
- Merge onto Central L Greenway (Toll Road) SR417 N. Drive 7.3 miles.
- Take the Red Bug Lake Rd. exit, #41 on RIGHT. Drive 0.3 miles.
- Take the Red Bug Lake Rd. East exit on the RIGHT towards Oviedo. Drive 0.1 miles.
- Stay straight to go onto W. Mitchell Hammock Rd. Drive 1.1 miles.
- W. Mitchell Hammock Rd. becomes E. Mitchell Hammock Rd. Drive 1.8 miles.
- Turn left onto Lockwood Road. Drive 2.0 miles.
- Turn RIGHT onto Oviedo Rd-County Road 426. Drive 3.4 miles.
- Oviedo Rd-CR426 becomes CR426. Drive 0.5 miles.
- Turn RIGHT onto Snow Hill Road. Drive 0.8 miles to 1355 Snow Hill Rd.

Alternate Directions (Bypass Orlando)

- Take Route 46 to Geneva.
- Turn SOUTH on state road 426.
- Turn LEFT onto Snow Hill Rd.

Protecting Florida Horses From Mosquitoes
Cynthia C. Lord and C. Roxanne Rutledge

Fly control for horses in Florida is crucial, both for the irritation they cause and as protection against disease. The most common equine mosquito-transmitted disease currently in Florida is Eastern Equine Encephalitis. The discovery of West Nile virus in north Florida in July 2001 increases concern about mosquito-transmitted equine disease and the need for mosquito control. The possibility of other exotic viruses entering Florida, such as Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis, is also of concern to horse owners. One method of disease prevention in horses is protection from mosquito bites.

Mosquito Protection for Horses

Mosquito protection for horses falls into several broad categories: reducing the population of mosquitoes; stabling, premise sprays and traps; physical barriers (horse clothing); and topical insecticides or repellents.

Population Reduction

Mosquitoes which breed in temporary pools, ditches, swamps, and other bodies of water are difficult to control at an individual stable, and are generally best controlled by organized mosquito control programs. Mosquitoes that prefer to breed in small, temporary pools of water and containers, however, can be reduced around the stable. They are quick to find and use any water-holding location, including puddles, tires, buckets, water troughs, and trash such as old soda cans. The best method for control of these mosquitoes is to reduce the number of places they can use to breed by controlling aquatic habitats in and around the stable.

- Keep water-holding containers to a minimum.
- Dump out, put away, or drill drainage holes in anything that can hold water which isn't needed for horse-keeping (including potted plants).
- Water buckets and troughs should be dumped, cleaned and refilled regularly - at least every 3 days.
- Watch for puddles which persist for several days: drain, fill or treat with formulations of Bti (Bacillus thuringensis var. israeliensis). Only use products labeled for use in water and follow all label directions. Do not treat water sources used for drinking by animals.
- Contact your local mosquito control district and follow their recommendations.
Stabling, Premise Sprays and Traps

Recommendations are often made to stable horses in insect-proof stables. However, these are difficult to achieve under any circumstances and, unless they are air-conditioned, not practical for Florida. Air circulation is needed to mitigate the high heat and humidity. Fine screening will reduce mosquitoes entering the stable, but will also reduce air circulation. Bug zappers typically kill many other types of insects and relatively few mosquitoes. Reducing contact between horses and mosquitoes is the most effective way to reduce bites.

- Stable horses during the dusk and dawn peak biting periods.
- Consider premise sprays and automatic spray systems. Automatic spray systems range from small, portable or wall mounted battery-operated systems which cover a few stalls to extensive tank-based whole-barn systems. Many use pyrethroid (see below) based sprays.
- New trap systems are available and may be effective, but are currently being evaluated.

Topical Insecticides and Repellents

The best known and most often used protection from mosquitoes is fly spray. There are many types on the market, with a wide variety of ingredients which will work best depends on the horse, use, location, and type of mosquito causing the problem. Rotation between different types may help prevent resistance and maintain effectiveness. Make sure that if you rotate types, they each contain different active ingredients, and are not just produced by different manufacturers.

The "natural" versus "chemical" debate is misleading in some ways. Whether derived from a plant or synthesized in a vat, all repellents and insecticides depend on a chemical which interacts with the mosquito to repel or kill it. Be aware that products which are registered as pesticides with the EPA must follow legal guidelines in their labels. These label instructions are the result of testing and review for safety and efficacy.

It is illegal to recommend or apply these compounds in a manner inconsistent with the label. Products that do not come under EPA rules are not required to follow these guidelines; the label is for information only. This includes some, but not all, botanical or herbal repellents.

Physical Barriers - Horse Clothing

Physically preventing the mosquito from contacting the horse will reduce mosquito bites. There is a trade-off between mosquito protection and heat in the summer. Monitor horses wearing fly sheets and remove the sheet if the horse becomes too hot. Use caution when turning unsupervised horses out wearing this type of equipment, as they can become caught or tangled. Some types of horse clothing are listed below. These can be sprayed with repellents for additional effects.

- Fly sheets
- Face masks and ear nets
- Leg wraps

Vaccine for Horses

Florida Agriculture Commissioner Charles H. Bronson urges all equine owners to have their horses vaccinated against WN and to be vigilant about receiving booster shots at regular intervals. For more information on this vaccine, contact your veterinarian or call the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services WN vaccine hotline: 850-410-0900. Horses that have been vaccinated against Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) are not protected from WN virus.
Strong Beef Prices Expected To Continue

Fed cattle prices are predicted to decline slightly this summer as beef supplies become seasonally larger. But prices should rebound again this fall as feeder cattle supplies tighten, says a Texas cooperative extension economist.

"We're going to be pulling cattle forward in July, August and September, but we're not going to have large numbers," says Ernie Davis, extension livestock marketing economist. "And the weights on those cattle may not go up if grain prices increase."

Cattle prices have remained strong through the first quarter of 2004, but several key factors could stir the market: Future discovery of mad-cow disease, high grain prices, and terrorist attacks leading up to the November presidential election could impact trading activity, Davis says. The current beef market continues to ignore what some in the industry thought would be negative effects on pricing. Upon announcement of the first confirmed case of mad-cow disease in the U.S. last December, the market dipped for only a week before bouncing back.

Most recently, the futures market continued to climb amid a federal investigation as to why a suspect cow at a San Angelo packing facility was not tested after staggering and falling down. USDA is continuing its investigation into the incident.

The scenario during the fall of 2003 could happen again in 2004, Davis says. Ranchers last fall were marketing cattle at a furious pace to take advantage of high prices. Packers were also pulling feeder cattle "green" from feedlots to keep up with demand. While Davis says the U.S. will not run out of feeder cattle, supplies are tight because of liquidation among cattle herds the past five years. Drought conditions in the Midwest forced a number of cattle to be sold off, and many producers have been taking advantage of high prices and selling off heifers. Also contributing to the shortfall, Davis says, is the continued ban on live cattle trading with Canada, which has not allowed feeder steers and heifers to enter the U.S.

The second quarter of 2004 saw beef production down 4.8% from that of a year ago, says Jim Robb, director of the Denver-based Livestock Marketing Information Center. "The first quarter saw beef production down 7.8%," Robb says. "There aren't many quarters in history with a minus 7% in front of them. Given our cattle supply, we're still cyclically tight on cattle. With our export market representing 10% of our beef production, it's something that gets harder and harder to compensate for as you get into summer months."

Weekly slaughter has been below 600,000 head a week, he says. "We need to be around 650,000 in the next few weeks and on into summer."

U.S. beef cow inventory as of Jan. 1 was at 32.86 million, compared to 32.98 million the same time a year ago. "That's a reduction of 100,000 head of beef cows in the U. S.," says Robb.

International trade with Japan and Korea also plays an important role, and ongoing negotiations could reopen those borders by the end of the year, increasing demand, Davis and Robb suggest. Both countries are big consumers of chuck and round cuts, which "are hard to move as we move into the summer months," says Robb. "You don't want to lose sight that Korea is the second or third largest export destination for U.S. beef."

Feeder supplies are predicted to remain tight for a couple of years. "The heifers being held this year won't calve before 2006," says Davis. "It will be 2006 before we see a significant increase in beef tonnage," Robb adds. "The fall of 2006 will be the first time you will see a decrease in feeder calf prices."

Source: Texas A & M University.

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