

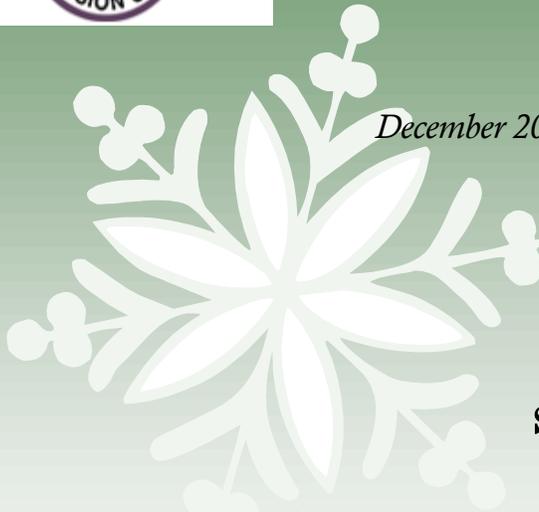


Homestead & Farm Notes

4-H Happenings

December 2013

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Seasons Greetings

STUDENTS EXPLORING FISH PONDS

“Learning By Doing”

Last summer Union County Extension Office was glad to host three students from Union County High School; Lethia Johnson, Kamil Mazol and Autumn Ray under the supervision of their teacher Angela Johnson. They spent eight days learning why fish die suddenly in ponds. They participated in this training under the Science Technology Engineering and Science (STEM) Program Talent Development Summer Field Experience.

One of the major problems with growing fish in ponds is sudden death or over night fish kill due mainly to inadequate levels of dissolved oxygen and build up of ammonia nitrogen, and the other undesirable pond conditions. The students learned to collect water samples from the ponds. Then they brought the samples to the Extension Office. They were taught by the Extension Agent how to analyze for pH, dissolved oxygen and ammonia nitrogen etc. Their training was complemented with a tour of The School of Forest Resources and Conservation Program in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences at the University of Florida and a canoe trip down the Santa Fe River, led by Colan Coody where they took water samples and did more analysis.

In addition to their field and analytical work, they collectively researched and wrote an article on “Tilapia, What Potential Farmers Need to Know.” At the end of the session they were evaluated on what they had learned by a survey. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating or I would say in the telling. So they told their summer experience to the Lake Butler Rotary Club by means of a Power Point presentation.

I think this is an excellent opportunity for students to learn about solving an issue within the community. The Extension Office always welcomes projects like this one, and is looking forward to working with more students during the summer.

Basil Bactawar,
County Extension Director/Agent



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4-H NEWS

December 14, 2013 at 5:00PM we will meet behind the Extension Office to fix up our float. Be sure to check with your 4-H Club Leader, as each 4-H Club may have something a little different. We will go back to the Extension Office after the parade, so parents please make sure to pick up your 4-H'er there.

Best of all this is the time we stop and enjoy our family and friends. Let us not forget those in harm's way, so we can enjoy the freedoms we share in the United States of America. Our service men and women; in the uniformed and ununiformed service at home and abroad.



These brave men and women voluntarily gave their time and efforts, so we at home are afforded our freedoms. Remember the two who voluntarily made this possible, God and the American service men.

Wishing you the best of the season, and a better New Year to come

COOL-SEASON VEGETABLES TO PLANT:

Beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, Chinese cabbage, endive, kale, leek, mustard, onions, radish, rutabaga, all can be planted this month.



Carnation

ANNUAL FLOWERS TO PLANT:

Calendula, Carnation, Delphinium, Foxglove, Larkspur, Ornamental Cabbage & Kale, Pansy, Petunia, Shasta daisy, and Snapdragon.

Office Note

Once again another New Year is about to begin. If you would like to receive your newsletter via e-mail please contact the Extension Office at 386-496-2321 or e-mail ptoney@ufl.edu. If you are receiving duplicates of the newsletter you do not need, please contact the office. Happy Holidays!!!

WILDLIFE WONDERS

Snail Kites gather in large South Florida roosts, and nesting activity begins

Great Horned Owls and Barred Owls are courting

Look for Goldfinches in your bird feeders in North Florida

Bald Eagles start hatching near Christmas Day in North Florida



LIVESTOCK CALENDAR

- * Keep your mineral feeders full. Low quality forages require more mineral for fiber digestion by cattle.
- * Check for external parasites (lice during cold weather, especially) and treat.
- * Worm cows and heifers before putting them on rye pastures for supplementing.
- * Check cows daily for calving problems.
- * Rotate calving pastures.
- * Check bull health, if you are buying a replacement bull, investigate its health.
- * If you have dead animals, be sure to post them with your vet to prevent further deaths.



The role of nutrition and management in maintaining high reproductive efficiencies in beef cattle

Proper feeding and nutrition are essential to maintain reproductive efficiencies in a beef operation. These begin with the young heifers that will be used as replacement for mature cows. On average, about seventeen (17) percent of the cow in a beef operation is replaced annually. Consequently they must be properly fed early in their lives. Research has demonstrated that young females that received poor nutrition had delayed puberty, reduced conception rates and increase pregnancy loss. In addition, genetics can influence age of puberty or first heat. Cross bred heifers tend to reach puberty earlier than purebred heifers, and daughter from sire with larger scrotal circumference tend to reach puberty earlier. Further, heifer must be able to conceive as early as possible, and so it is important that heifers are recycling before the breeding season. Research has shown that conception rates increased by twenty (20) percent in heifers bred at their third estrus. Heifers must conceive at fifteen (15) to sixteen (16) months in order to produce a calf every year. As a general guideline, heifers should weigh sixty (60) to seventy (70) percent of their expected mature weight at their first breeding. Furthermore, they should weigh about eighty (80) to ninety (90) percent of their mature weight at their first calving. Their daily average gain during gestation should be approximately one pound per day. Although it is important to meet the needs of the replacement or growing heifers, over feeding should be avoided because it can lead to breeding problems.

A manager of profitable beef enterprise expects a cow to produce a calf every year, and so adequate nutrition is one of the key factors that influences reproductive efficiencies in cattle. In general cows that are fed diets high in energy after calving conceive sooner than those diet with low energy. Cows that conceive late extend the breeding seasons, and this usually leads to lighter calves for the feeder market. In addition, it costs more to feed cow that conceive late in the breeding season. The take home message is ensure that heifers and cows are receiving adequate nutrition necessary to produce a calf every . Please note that not every beef producer can get his cow to produce a calf every year, but it is a target one can strive for.

Basil Bactawar,

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