



Sept 1, 2009

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

Iberia Research Station News



Acadiana Cattle Producers 2009 Spring Field Day

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ACADIANA CATTLE PRODUCERS 2009 SPRING FIELD DAY 1 - 2

ACADIANA CATTLE PRODUCERS FALL FIELD DAY 3

PASTURE WALK HIGHLIGHT FORAGE-FED PROJECTS 4

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RESEARCH AT THE IBERIA RESEARCH STATION 4 - 5

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

2009 Acadiana Cattle Producers Fall Field Day

October 31, 2009

Hosted by Lafayette Parish.

Please contact **Mr. Stan Dutile (337-291-7090)** for more information.

A crowd of approximately 90 area beef and forage producers attended the **Acadiana Cattle Producers 2009 Spring Field Day** March 21 at the LSU AgCenter's Iberia Research Station. The field day was the latest in a joint effort among the LSU AgCenter, Louisiana Cattlemen's Association (LCA) and Louisiana Forage and Grassland Council (LFGC).

The day began with a welcome to the station by resident coordinator Dr. Howard Viator. Mr. Robert Joyner, executive vice president of the LCA, extended his welcome to the crowd and spoke to the importance of membership in the LCA as well as that of working jointly with LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Forage and Grassland Council to plan and host field day and education programs throughout Louisiana. Mr. Coy Fitch, board member of both the LFGC and the American Forage and Grassland Council, echoed the sentiments of Mr. Joyner and warmly welcomed the crowd to the field day. The program contained a mix of field tour stops and an educational program.



Mr. Stan Dutile and Mr. Andrew Granger (county agents) provided important information for producers considering a stocker beef production system.



Dr. Guillermo Scaglia, ruminant nutritionist at the Iberia Research Station, presented his forage-fed beef research plan and stocker research to those attending the field day.

With warm weather just ahead, presentations made by Dr. Wink Alison, LSU AgCenter forage agronomist, and Dr. Jay Stevens, LSU AgCenter soil scientist, were quite timely and informative. Dr. Alison covered management of hay meadows, and Dr. Stevens addressed soil fertility in pastures and hay meadows.

Acadiana Cattle Producers 2009 Spring Field Day

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Dr. Wayne Wyatt, LSU AgCenter beef cattle geneticist, presented his ongoing research evaluating tropically adapted breeds of cattle for beef production in the hot, humid environment of Louisiana and along the Gulf Coast. His research compares Hereford-, Braford- and Bonsmara-sired calves out of Angus and Brangus cows. The value of Brahman breeding, in terms of heat and insect tolerance and maternal productivity, is well-known among beef producers in the Gulf Coast region. Bonsmara, a South African breed of cattle, is expected to thrive in a subtropical environment and purportedly have tender meat, but less is known about the breed's maternal ability.

Dr. Wyatt stated, "It is important to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of these breed types in all phases of beef production to determine how they might best be used for Gulf Coast beef production." He added, "The research is still in the early stages, and it is too soon to draw conclusions." At lunch, each person was given a steak from one of the breed crosses and asked to evaluate the steak for juiciness, tenderness and overall acceptability. Dr. Wyatt viewed this as an opportunity to involve area beef producers in research specific to their needs. "By seeing the cattle and eating the steaks, producers have a better feel for what we are researching and will have a better understanding of the data once the project has been completed," he said.

Dr. Guillermo Scaglia, LSU AgCenter ruminant nutritionist, introduced his research that will focus on producing forage-fed cattle in the Gulf Coast region. Dr. Scaglia spoke about forage sequencing in terms of using cool- and warm-season annual grasses, perennial summer grasses and legumes to provide a year-around forage base for grazing. His work will evaluate three forage systems, varying in complexity, for the production of forage-fed beef. It is noteworthy that the research has an environmentally friendly component: the three forage systems will employ no-till management and will be characterized for carbon sequestration effects. Other research topics being conducted by Dr. Scaglia include timing of supplemental feeding to grazing cattle and the use of soybean baleage for cattle.

Dr. Ed Twidwell, LSU AgCenter forage agronomist, completed the field tour with a demonstration plot of clovers available to area forage producers. The plots were a great way of demonstrating those clovers that do well in the heavy clay soils found on the station, and those that might be avoided. Dr. Twidwell stressed to the crowd that clovers are site-specific in terms of their productivity.

Visitors were then presented a mini-seminar on the "nuts and bolts" of stocker production in south Louisiana. Mr. Andrew Granger and Mr. Stan Dutile, both LSU AgCenter county agents specializing in beef cattle, presented an excellent overview of stocker beef production in Louisiana. They emphasized several points of consideration for those contemplating a stocker beef program. Dr. Christine Navarre, LSU AgCenter veterinarian specialists, next addressed the key health concerns that should be considered in a stocker beef production scenario. The session ended with a presentation, by Dr. Ross Pruitt, LSU AgCenter agriculture economist, of the economic and financial aspects of a stocker beef production program. The panel of presenters fielded several questions from the audience.

During the steak lunch, door prizes from area agriculture vendors were awarded by Mr. Joe Hidalgo (LCA board member-at-large) and Ms. Liz Buteau (administrative assistant for the Iberia Research Station). The field day was adjourned following the completion of luncheon activities.

The **2009 Acadiana Cattle Producers Fall Field Day** is set for **October 31** and will be **hosted by Lafayette Parish**. Please contact **Mr. Stan Dutile (337-291-7090)** for more information.

Dr. Wayne Wyatt

wwyatt@agcenter.lsu.edu

ONLINE STORE

The Web site address is

www.lsuagcenter.com/onlinestore

Acadiana Cattle Producers Fall Field Day

Dominique's Stockyard, Carencro

Saturday, October 31, 2009

8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.



Louisiana
Forage &
Grassland
Council

Program Topics:

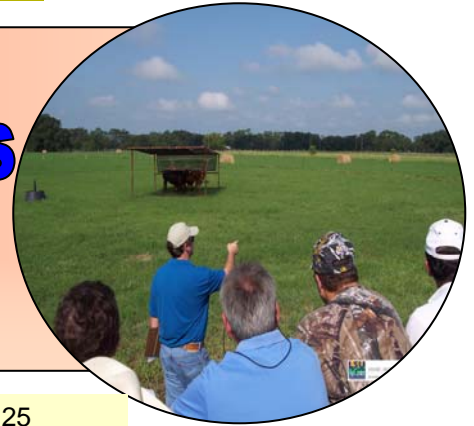
- **So you think you know about hay?**—*Help evaluate hay bale weight and quality*
- **Breeding soundness exam of herd bulls**—*What we've learned from 15 years of the Lafayette BSE program*
- **Receiving top dollar for your calves begins at home**—*Explaining calf price differences and maximizing price per pound—Mr. Mike Dominique*
- **Factors affecting hay quality**—*Anticipated high feed costs makes this a very important issue to cattle producers*
- **Winter feed rations based on hay analysis**—*Matching hay and feed resources to meet animal requirements*
- **My beef stocker program**—*First year experience operating a stocker program—Mr. Hank Moss*
- **BQA certification session**—*An important program for all beef producers and required for Master Cattle Producers*

EQUIPMENT DISPLAY—FREE LUNCH—AND MUCH MORE!

CONTACTS: Evangeline and St. Landry—Vincent Deshotel (337-948-0561), Iberia—Blair Hebert (337-369-4441), Iberia Research Station—Guillermo Scaglia or Wayne Wyatt (337-276-5527), Lafayette, St. Martin, and St. Landry—Stan Dutile (337-291-7090), St. Mary—Jimmy Flanagan (337-369-4441), and Vermilion and Acadia—Andrew Granger (337-898-4335).

Pasture Walk Highlights

Forage-Fed Project



The Iberia Research Station hosted a pasture walk July 18 at which more than 25 producers and agents roamed the grounds to learn about our forage-fed beef project.

The first stop showed the different varieties of Bermudagrass being used for grazing and hay. The presentation covered the differences among Jiggs, Tifton 85 and Alicia in terms of their growth habits, plant structure and yield potential.

The second stop reported on a brown mid-rib sorghum-sudan variety being used for grazing. Because of the excess growth of this variety in such a short period, best management practices were discussed: baling, dry hay, green-chopped and direct-grazing. The same stop also introduced the first of the soybean varieties that will be used for balage, called Laredo, a Group 5-6 soybean, which was planted after an application of herbicide. Its growth has been fairly good, and we hope it makes good balage material.

Stop three was a pasture where cowpeas were planted without the application of any herbicide at planting. Here visitors found much crabgrass, signalgrass and other grasses that have competed and, in many cases, outgrown the cowpeas.

Different Bermudagrass varieties were seen and their characteristics presented.



Alternatives to manage a brown mid-rib sorghum-sudan variety were discussed.

Stop four was a Dallisgrass pasture. Everyone agreed about the positive characteristics of Dallisgrass in terms of its preference by cattle and high nutritive value. Its negative aspects, however, like the lack of seed, high price for the seed that is available and the management required to control the problem because of the presence of ergot alkaloids in the seedheads, were addressed.

The final stop showed two other varieties of forage soybeans (Group 7 and Roundup Ready). Discussions included the type of the animal to include in forage fed systems, marketing issues and other challenges that producers in this sector face.

We think the walk was a highly productive meeting enhanced by the avid discussion and sharing of ideas of all of those who were present. Thanks for coming to the pasture walk, and we hope to see all of you next time!!!!

Dr. Guillermo Scaglia
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A Brief History of Research at the Iberia Research Station

With the local sugar industry suffering from the imposition of tariffs and the adverse effects of mosaic disease in 1914, U.S. Senator Robert Broussard succeeded in getting the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish the Iberia Livestock Experiment Farm to conduct experiments in the "breeding and feeding" of beef and dairy cattle on land known as Hope Plantation that previously was part of the Department of Corrections. It was felt that livestock production would be a good fit for the coastal environment and provide a profitable enterprise should the sugarcane industry succumb to the challenges it was facing.

Cont. pg. 5

A Brief History of Research at the Iberia Research Station

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The farm's mission was to serve the livestock industries along the coastal plain region extending from Florida through Texas. Early experiments included beef and dairy cattle cross-breeding, pasture improvement, feeding trials with local crops like sugarcane and swine and mule breeding and management. Beginning in 1930, the major focus was to "develop a new type of polled, solid-black beef breed similar to the Aberdeen-Angus in conformation but carrying sufficient Brahman or Africander breeding to make them well-adapted to the long, hot summers of the coastal region." This effort ultimately led to the signature accomplishment of the USDA cross-breeding work, the genetic combination that is the basis of the Brangus breed.

In 1974, the LSU AgCenter took over managerial responsibility from the USDA, at which time research was diversified to include management studies with crops of economic importance to the area. Today, beef cattle, sugarcane and forage, grain and oil crops are the commodities emphasized in projects designed to address relevant production concerns of growers and ranchers. Animal resources are being used for a genetic evaluation of tropically adapted breed types with acceptable meat quality. Also, research is being initiated on forage-fed beef and the behavior of animals using forages. Sugarcane research focuses on the development of sugarcane cultivars and crop-management studies using both conventional and precision-farming technologies.

The station is just a few miles north of the Gulf of Mexico. It covers 1,137 acres of older sediments of the Mississippi River, soil that is typically used for sugarcane and pasture. Resources consist of 335 breeding females, 900 acres of summer perennial pasture and hay meadow, a 200-head feedlot and 150 acres devoted to research with agronomic crops.

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