



THE LEADING EDGE CATTLEMAN

Mississippi/Alabama Cattle Producers



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Mission Statement:

The goal of the "Leading Edge Cattleman" program is: To improve the profitability, management skills and cattle of beef producers in the 20 county area.

County Cattlemen President

County Extension Director

LEADING EDGE

Participating Counties:

<i>Alabama</i>	<i>Mississippi</i>
<i>Bibb</i>	<i>Chickasaw</i>
<i>Fayette</i>	<i>Clay</i>
<i>Greene</i>	<i>Lee</i>
<i>Hale</i>	<i>Lowndes</i>
<i>Lamar</i>	<i>Monroe</i>
<i>Marion</i>	<i>Calhoun</i>
<i>Pickens</i>	<i>Noxubee</i>
<i>Sumter</i>	<i>Oktibbeha</i>
<i>Walker</i>	<i>Webster</i>
<i>Tuscaloosa</i>	<i>Winston</i>

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Bull Selection

You may have already made plans for your bulls for this winter and spring. I hope that you are making plans to purchase bulls, or making arrangements to do so very soon. Good quality bulls are becoming harder and harder to find. Not that they are not there, but more cattle producers are realizing that they need quality bulls to breed cattle with. Cattle producers know that if they are going to get top dollar for their calves, they must start with good bulls. So producers are beginning to buy bulls earlier so they can get their pick, thereby buying the best quality bulls.

There are some advantages and some disadvantages to buying a younger bull. One advantage is that you get to purchase bulls that have not yet been picked through. Most purebred producers will let buyers purchase bulls as yearlings or younger. This can help with getting the best quality bull you can afford. Now is the time to be looking for a bull to use this winter and spring, most purebred breeders have weaned their spring born calves and will be glad for you to look. They also have fall babies on the ground for you to start looking at

Another advantage is that by purchasing a younger bull, you are able to use him lightly. I strongly emphasize LIGHTLY. Too many times we just turn bulls out and forget them. We cannot do this, especially with yearling bulls. Producers ask me, "How many cows will a yearling bull breed?" My answer is not how many they will breed, but how long are they left out. Yearling bulls should not be left out more than 45 days at a time. These animals are still growing and maturing. They need time to do so. They cannot do that when they are out trying to breed a herd of cows. Please note also that none of our bulls should be out more than 90 days at a time. The big disadvantage of buying a younger

bull is that you will have to continue to grow and maintain this bull. When purchasing older bulls, there is still a growing and maintaining process, just not as much as with



Producers inspecting bulls at the MSU South Farm in July 2006

yearling bulls. Also, the younger bulls will not be able to handle as many cows as older, mature bulls.

I encourage you to look at purchasing younger, good quality bulls. Good quality two-year-old bulls are difficult to find because producers are buying earlier, selecting better quality in the beginning, and planning for that bull before he needs to be turned out. We can't wait until the last minute because the good bulls will be gone. Plan ahead, and this plan may include purchasing a yearling bull as your next bull.

Mississippi /Alabama/ Southeast Bulls

Too many times I hear of producers who have gone to Texas, Montana, Kansas, Nebraska, etc. to purchase bulls. I'm not denying that there are good bulls out there, but the bulls right here in Mississippi, Alabama and the Southeast are just as good.

Our producers are some of the most aggressive producers and are using the same breeding/genetics as those in many other states. With the use of A.I. and embryo transfer our producers are using the same genetics. Not to mention that the Mississippi, Alabama, Southeast bulls will be better adapted to our climate.

The major advantage that some of the breeders out West have is strictly numbers – it is not quality. We do have some producers that are large enough to fill a big order of bulls to purchase if contacted early enough. This is why we need to plan early to purchase bulls and get the best quality that our producers have. If you haven't visited with some of them yet, I encourage you to do so.

I have been on both sides of this issue as I used to sell bulls here in Mississippi for a purebred cattle operation and know the challenge of the ever-increasing demand from the producers. They want the best bull for the least amount of money. In my role now as an Area Extension Agent my job is to help educate the producers, so hopefully they can make an informed decision that can help improve their operation. Our producers are better educated than ever before, and hopefully that is in part because of the job Extension Agents and others are doing

to better educate our producers about buying quality bulls.

There are several easy ways to find out who and where our bull producers are. First, contact your local Extension Service office to find local breeders.

Other sources are the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, Alabama Cattlemen's Association, BCIA from each state, as well as other regional publications. These are only a few of the resources to find local seedstock producers. Work with your Extension Agent or Extension Specialist to find others that fit your specific need. The Mississippi and Alabama purebred producers can meet your needs; just take time to visit with them and see what they have to offer.

BQA

Mark your Calendar for January 11th for BQA training in Marshall County. The meeting will be in Holly Springs at the Marshall County Fairgrounds with registration beginning at 6:00 p.m., a meal at 6:30 p.m. and a program to begin immediately following. I encourage you to attend, as this is a great educational opportunity. If you plan to attend please contact the Marshall County Extension Office at 662-252-3541.

The Mississippi Beef Quality Assurance (MS-BQA) Program identifies areas in beef production where defects in quality occur. The MS-BQA Program is a cooperative effort between beef producers, veterinarians, nutritionists, and professionals from the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, MSU Extension Service, and MSU College of Veterinary Medicine, who believe that cattle managed under BQA guidelines will be less likely to contain a volatile residue, injection-site tissue damage, or foreign metal such as a broken needle. The program asks everyone involved with beef production to follow the FDA/USDA/EPA guidelines for product use and to use common sense, reasonable management skills, and accepted scientific knowledge to avoid product defects at the consumer level. After all, consumers purchase what they trust, and their confidence is the basis of our industry's and our children's future.

For more information on BQA contact your county Extension Office or go on line to

<http://beefusa.org/prodguidelines.aspx>



Charolais Meeting

Mississippi cattle producers will have a meeting with the American-International Charolais Association on January 29th over the MSU Extension Service interactive video system. The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. Our speaker will be Robert Williams, Director of Breed Improvement and Foreign Marketing. He will discuss what the Charolais Association and cattle can do for you. This will also be a great time for you to ask him questions as well. If you are interested in attending the meeting in your area, please contact your local MSU Extension Office so they can make arrangements to be included in the broadcast via Internet before January 29.

Mississippi Beef Agribition

The 2007 Mississippi Beef Agribition will be held on March 24th in Verona, Mississippi just south of Tupelo. The consignment deadline date is January 19th so if you are interested please do so before then. This will be a great opportunity for you to market some quality bulls and heifers or purchase some as well. If you need consignment forms please contact your local Extension office, as they should have them, if you need further information about the sale or consignments please contact Mike Howell at 662 566 2201.



Chicory as a Forage Alternative

Jimmy Ray Parish
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[Editor's Note:

Producers are constantly looking for high quality forages to fit into our southern climate in order to boost animal performance. Chicory is one such forage that has promise. MSU Research Associate Jimmy Ray Parish provides the following guidelines on chicory as the result of ongoing work he is doing at Mississippi State University.]

Chicory Establishment Guidelines:

Seeding Location

Chicory prefers well to moderately drained soil of medium to high fertility. Flooding, particularly during the summer months, can injure chicory stands so low-lying ground should be avoided.



Seeding Into A Tilled Seedbed

Chicory establishes best on a moist firm seedbed. The seedbed should be culti-packed before and after broadcast seeding to ensure good seed-to-soil contact and correct planting depth. If using a drill, set the planting depth to no more than ¼ inch.

No-till Seeding into Pasture

Clear the area of all standing forage by close grazing, haymaking, or clipping close with a bush-hog. Then spray glyphosate (41% active ingredient at 1.5 quarts/acre plus surfactant), to kill the existing stand of forage. After applying glyphosate, wait seven days before planting to ensure no herbicide residue remains.

Seeding Rate

Seeding five to six pounds of pure live seed per acre is recommended.

Fertility

Lime, Phosphorus and Potassium should be applied according to soil test recommendations with alfalfa as the specified crop on the soil test information sheet. Soil pH should be at least 5.5. Nitrogen fertilizer should be applied at planting at a rate of 35 pounds of N per acre to stimulate chicory establishment. Subsequent nitrogen applications (30-50 lbs/acre) can be made after each grazing in the spring and fall up to a total of 200 lbs/acre/year.

Grazing Management

Do not allow newly established chicory stands to be grazed until the chicory is at least 8 inches tall. This will generally occur 60 to 80 days after seeding, depending on climatic conditions. Chicory can be grazed to a stubble height of three inches. Chicory should be allowed to accumulate growth of four to six inches before going dormant in the fall. Chicory will become dormant after the first killing frost of the year. Grazing may resume in the spring when the plant is at least ten inches tall.

Chicory should not be continuously grazed. Research trials have shown that continuous grazing will greatly decrease stand persistence of chicory. Chicory production and animal performance are optimized under rotational stocking (rotational grazing) management. Depending on time of year and climatic conditions (and thus the rate of re-growth), a rest period of 14 to 25 days between grazing periods is best for chicory persistence and performance. A stubble height of three inches should remain after grazing. Caution should be taken so that overgrazing does not occur in August. In Mississippi, chicory growth slows in August during periods of high temperatures.

Keep Stems From Bolting

After the seeding year, chicory grows vigorously and will attempt to produce stems in the late spring. Stubble heights greater than three inches, or rest periods longer

than 25 days can allow stems to bolt (rapid stem growth). Rapid stem growth is less of a problem during the fall grazing period.

Once bolting has occurred, the production potential of the plants is reduced for the remainder of the grazing season or until the stems are removed. Management practices that do not allow the chicory flower stems to exceed a 6- to 10-inch height in late May to early June and grazing or clipping to a 3-inch stubble height will reduce the amount of stem bolting.



Jane and Jimmy Ray Parish discuss chicory production and grazing on the MSU South Farm with Oktibbeha and Webster County Cattlemen on July 18, 2006.

Manage for Quality, Yield, and Animal Performance

Established forage chicory stands have quality potentials and yields comparable to, or better than, most other forage crops. Protein levels at Mississippi State University range from 17 to 33 percent. Also, the digestibility of chicory can be as high or higher than those of alfalfa.

The digestibility of chicory at Mississippi State University has generally been between 70 and 95 percent. Research has shown that chicory flower stems are less digestible than the chicory leaves. This is an additional reason to manage chicory pastures so that plants do not bolt. Forage yields of six tons per acre have been obtained from pure chicory stands in Mississippi State University small plot trials.

Animal performance on Oasis chicory has been exceptional in Mississippi. In Mississippi State University trials at the Holly Springs Research Station, Oasis chicory pastures have produced steer gains of 457 pounds per acre, during the spring grazing period. Additionally, the same steers grew at an average daily gain of 2.61 pounds per day, during the 56 day grazing period. Other researchers have reported that chicory contains relatively high levels of minerals (potassium, calcium, magnesium, sulfur, zinc, and sodium) that are essential for proper animal nutrition.

Weed Control

Grassy weeds or grasses can be controlled with Poast (Sethoxydim) at a rate of 1.5 to 2 pints per acre plus surfactant, not to exceed 6.5 pints per acre per year. Graz-

ing should be delayed for seven days after applying Poast to pasture.

NOTE: The information in this document was obtained from a number of sources and research conducted at Mississippi State University.



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Mississippi BCIA Adopts New Bull Sale Guidelines for 2007

In keeping with continued genetic improvement efforts, the Mississippi BCIA Board of Directors recommended and approved the following change to the annual fall bull sale requirements:

1) A minimum 365-day adjusted yearling weight of 900 lbs. is required to qualify for the BCIA Fall Bull Sale effective starting with the 2007 sale. The MBCIA Board of Directors is also currently reviewing sale order specifications for the 2007 fall bull sale. Look for updated information on sale order guidelines in the MBCIA newsletter and on the MBCIA website at msucare.com/livestock/beef/mbcia/bcia_bullsale.html in early 2007. Contact Jane Parish in Animal and Dairy Sciences at 662-325-7466 with any questions about bull sale eligibility.

Mississippi BCIA Annual Meeting

Mississippi BCIA will hold its annual membership meeting on Friday, February 9, 2007 at the Regency Inn in Jackson, MS in conjunction with the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association annual convention. The BCIA session will start at 1:00 p.m. Educational presentations at the MCA convention will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, February 9 and continue through Saturday, February 10. For the complete schedule of events, call the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association at (601) 354-8951.

Centralized Bull Scanning Sites Available in MS

Mississippi BCIA members can take advantage of central ultrasound scanning opportunities offered through BCIA. Scanning is being offered by appointment only and is only for registered bulls from Mississippi beef operations. Scanning fees are \$15 per head and cover scanning costs and image processing. To participate in one of the central ultrasound scanning sites, contact Rhonda Vann at (601) 857-5952. Scanning locations, dates, and other details are available by contacting Dr. Vann. Breeders interested in finding a technician and scanning cattle on their own farms can locate a UGC certified ultrasound technician by contacting Mississippi BCIA or by going to msucare.com/livestock/beef/mbcia.

Calendar of Events

- January 11 BQA Training @ Marshall County Fairgrounds –Holly Springs, call Lance Newman at Phone 662-234-4451, Fax: 662-236-5704, Email: lancen@ext.msstate.edu
- January 29 Charolais Meeting via Interactive Video at MSU Extension County Offices, contact your local office for viewing times
- Jan. 31- Feb. 3 National Cattlemen’s Beef Association Convention & Trade Show, Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Nashville, TN, NCBA Phone 303-694-0305
- February 9 Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association Meeting, Regency Inn, Jackson, MS, 1:00 p.m.
- February 9-10 Mississippi Cattlemen’s Association Annual Meeting & Trade Show, Regency Inn, Jackson MS, phone 601-354-8951
- March 3 Deep South Bull Group Sale, 1:00 p.m., Tylertown, MS, 55 bulls, Black/Red Simmental, SimAngus & Angus bulls, also consigning heifers, contact Mike Keene 601-545-6083, or Roy Higdon 601-776-3951
- March 23-24 Mississippi Beef Agribition at Verona, MS, consignment for heifers and bulls is Jan. 19, contact Mike Howell, Area Livestock/Forages Agent, Phone 662-566-2201, Fax: 662-566-2257, mhowell@ext.msstate.edu
- Every Friday “Cattle Market Notes Newsletter” by Dr. John Anderson, MSU Extension Agricultural Economist, is available every Friday, except holidays, by going to: <http://www.agecon.msstate.edu/Extension/newsletters.php> and click on “Cattle Market Notes”.

Mississippi Hay
Directory:

<http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/mshay.pdf>