



Farm & Ranch Advisor

Jackson County Extension Agriculture Newsletter

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Tough Decisions for Crop Farmers in 2015

Josh Thompson, Regional Agronomy Agent

2014 has come and gone and now farmers are looking for information that will help them make some tough decisions in 2015.

Commodity prices for peanuts, cotton, corn and beans are all low and there is no certainty there will be a change in the right direction in the coming year.

Another complicated issue is how the new Farm Bill will affect the profitability of different crops. What are the base acres allocated to your farm? Should you reallocate those base acres? Should you choose PLC or ARC? What is the cotton STAX program?

All of these questions, and more, are looming in the minds of area farmers, and the Extension Service will do our best to help. We can't tell you how to divide your acreage between crops or what the markets will do, but we can provide you with tools to help you make the best possible decisions.

The insert in this newsletter provides a few examples of the following helpful tools:

Farm Bill Decision Aid Tool – This online tool is provided by the USDA/FSA to assist farmers in making base acre reallocation and program (PLC/ARC/STAX) election decisions for their farms. To login, you must create a username and password. County UF/IFAS Extension Agents will be trained to assist growers in using this tool.
<https://usda.afpc.tamu.edu/>

Interactive Crop Budgets – Estimate costs and returns for row crops, based on your actual farm expenses. Sheets are differentiated for conventional and strip till, as well as irrigated and dryland.
<http://www.caes.uga.edu/departments/agecon/extension/budgets/index.html>

Crop Comparison Tool – Compares side-by-side net returns of various crops based on expected yields, prices and costs. Features a peanut price calculator and a crop price comparison chart.
<http://www.caes.uga.edu/departments/agecon/extension/decisionaids/index.html>

In addition to these tools, UF/IFAS Extension will address the new Farm Bill, commodity markets and financial planning concerns through various events in 2015. Be sure to read through the following information to find out more about these events.

Upcoming Educational Programs & Events

Complete listing of events and information available at <http://jackson.ifas.ufl.edu>

Farm Bill Decisions Training -- January 7 or 8

The Farm Bill Decisions Training is designed to help producers and landowners understand the requirements and benefits of participating in the new Farm Bill programs. Meetings will be conducted by University of Florida agricultural economists John Van Sickle and Rod Clouser, and the USDA Farm Service Agency.



There will be a question and answer session after the presentations.

Topics to be covered include:

- Decisions to be made, who makes them, and the timeline
- How to update payment yields
- If and when to reallocate base acres
- The differences between PLC and ARC
- Generic base v. cotton base
- STAX- the new safety net for cotton
- Resources and decision aids available to help make decisions

The same training will be offered twice: **Jan. 7** from **3:00-5:30 PM** or **Jan. 8** from **9:00 – 11:30 AM** at the Jackson County Agriculture Center, located at **3631 Highway 90 West**, Marianna. (*Not the Extension Office*)

Tri-State Cucurbit Meeting – January 23

The 2015 Tri-State Cucurbit Meeting will be held on Friday, January 23, at the Jackson County Agricultural Conference Center, 2741 Pennsylvania Avenue, Marianna.



Registration opens at 7:30 AM and the event will end with a sponsored lunch. This event will provide the latest research information for commercially grown watermelons, cantaloupe, squash and other cucurbits. Topics to be presented include: fertilization, insect and disease management, weed management, varieties and food safety. Additionally, CEU's will be available. Speakers include research and extension faculty from UF/IFAS and Auburn University.

There is no fee for the event, but please RSVP with Jackson County Extension, so there will be an accurate count for lunch: 850-482-9620.

FL Bull Test Sale – January 17

The 15th Florida Bull Test was conducted at the University of Florida North Florida Research and Education Center near Marianna. There were 103 total bulls in this year's test: 46 Angus, 4 Braford, 4 Brahman, 10 Charolais, 2 Hereford, 3 Red Angus, 16 SimAngus, and 18 Simmental consignments born between August 15 and December 31 of 2013. Bulls were evaluated during a 112-day test. In addition, a hallmark of the Florida Bull Test is that individual feed intake was assessed to establish feed efficiency. At completion of the test, the entire group of bulls averaged 3.38 pounds of gain per day, but ranged from 2.21 to 4.59 pounds per day.



Activities with the Bull Test conclude with a sale on **Saturday, January 17, 2015**. Bulls are inspected for structural soundness and disposition and must pass a breeding soundness exam to qualify for the sale. Performance information, such as adjusted weights, expected progeny differences (EPDs), and carcass ultrasound data is available for bull buyers to aid in the selection of excellent quality bulls.

For more information on the Florida Bull Test, visit the web page at http://nfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/fl_bull_test, or telephone 850-394-9124. Catalogs for the sale are available by request. The Research Station office will be closed December 25 to January 1.

Pesticide License Training and Exam – January 27

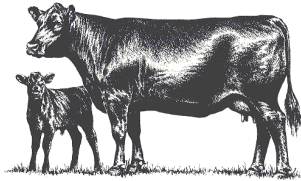
A training will be held for anyone interested in obtaining a Private Applicator Pesticide license. This license is required for anyone that applies restricted use pesticides (RUP) to their own property, or property they lease for farming. Additionally, CEU's will be available for CORE and Private Applicator

Registration opens at 8:15 AM and the training portion of the class ends with a provided lunch. After lunch, exams will be administered to those seeking licenses.

The cost is \$15 per person, payable at the door (cash, check or money order). Please RSVP by January 20 by calling 850-482-9620 or email Josh Thompson at j.thompson@ufl.edu

NW FL Beef Conference & Trade Show - February 11

The 30th annual Northwest Florida Beef Conference and Trade Show will be held on Wednesday, February 11th, at the Jackson County Agriculture Conference Center, located at 2741 Pennsylvania Avenue, Marianna, Florida. The event begins with registration and the Trade Show at 7:30 AM central time, the program starts at 8:15 AM, and concludes with a steak lunch. There is a \$5 per person registration fee for the event, payable at the door.



The focus of the Beef Conference this year will be: ***Investing in the Future of Your Herd.*** The speakers will be sharing ideas to guide ranchers on investments worth consideration during the good years, to prepare for when prices fall again. Topics will include feeding systems, pasture management, herd reproduction, financial management, and pasture weed control.

The Beef Conference will also feature a Trade Show of businesses that offer goods and services to cattle producers in the region. Time will be provided to visit with the company representatives to learn about products and services offered for beef cattle operations.

The Northwest Florida Beef Conference and Trade Show is an educational program provided by the UF/IFAS Panhandle Agriculture Extension Team. For more information on the Beef Conference, or exhibiting in the Trade Show, contact Doug Mayo, at 850-482-9620, or demayo@ufl.edu.

Truly Yours,

Doug Mayo
County Extension Director
Josh Thompson
Regional Agronomy IPM Agent




February 23 Ag Save\$: Summit

Ag Save\$ is a new initiative to bring farmers and ranchers personal financial education,

**Ag
Save\$**

Securing Your Farm's Financial Future

such as wealth building, estate planning, succession planning, asset protection, and other financial topics.

The Summit or kickoff session will be held in Marianna, at the Jackson County Extension Office on Monday, February 23. Registration starts at 8:30 AM, with the program being held from 9:00 AM Central to 1:00 PM. Please RSVP, so that adequate food and resource materials can be prepared: 850-482-9620

Panhandle Crop Meeting - March 5

The 2015 Panhandle Crop Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 5th, at the Jackson County Agriculture Conference



Center, 2741 Pennsylvania Ave., Marianna, FL. Registration opens at 7:15 AM (Central) and the meeting concludes at noon with a sponsored lunch.

The Panhandle Crop Meeting will consist of an array of presentations from extension specialists from across the Southeast. The purpose of the meeting is to provide peanut and cotton growers with the latest research information regarding important issues for their businesses in 2015.

Topics from UF/IFAS specialists include an update on the new farm bill, peanut varieties, cotton variety and production information, as well as alternative crops. Additionally, guest speakers will provide information on peanut markets and production, cotton insect control, and peanut diseases.

Pesticide CEUs will be available for CORE, Private Applicator, and Agriculture Row Crop. For more information on the Crop Meeting, or to be a sponsor of the event, contact Josh Thompson, at 850-482-9620, or j.thompson@ufl.edu.

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Agriculture Calendar of Events

January	Event	Location
7 or 8	Farm Bill Decision Training	Jackson Agriculture Center 3631 Hwy 90 W, Marianna
17	Florida Bull Test Sale	NFREC Beef Unit
23	Tri-state Cucurbit Meeting	Jackson Ag Conference Center 2741 Penn Ave Marianna
27	Pesticide Training	Jackson Ag Conference Center 2741 Penn Ave Marianna
February	Event	Location
11	NW FL Beef Conference & Trade Show	Jackson Ag Conference Center 2741 Penn Ave Marianna
17	Jackson County Fed Cattle Show	Jackson Agriculture Center 3631 Hwy 90 W, Marianna
23	Ag Save\$: Summit	Jackson Ag Conference Center 2741 Penn Ave Marianna
March	Event	Location
5	Panhandle Crop Meeting	Jackson Ag Conference Center 2741 Penn Ave Marianna
21	Master Gardener Plant Sale	Jackson Extension Office 2741 Penn Ave Marianna

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web page: <http://jackson.ifas.ufl.edu>

