

# Farm/Garden

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## Grazing management course offered at UWA

LIVINGSTON — A one day grazing management course is scheduled for Friday, April 13 and targeted for livestock producers in Choctaw, Greene and Sumter counties at the Alfa Building on the University of West Alabama campus in Livingston.

This event is a spin off from the popular Alabama Grazing School, which will involve instruction and hands on exercises designed to educate par-

ticipants in grazing management principles. Topics to be covered will include the following: Grazing Methods; Physiology of Forage Growth; Stocking Rates; Economics: Hay vs. Grazing; Environmental Impacts of Grazing; Forage Response to Grazing; Nutrient Cycling in Pastures; Fencing and Watering Technology; Animal Nutrition on Pasture; and Minimizing Hay Requirements.

The best resource available to cattlemen in the Black Belt region is grass. With the rising cost of feed supplements, it becomes increasingly difficult to squeeze a profit in a livestock enterprise. Thus many producers seek increased efficiency through management. Pastures can provide most of the nutrition for livestock and the costs associated with stored feeds typically are responsible for over half the cost of livestock pro-

duction. Grazing management is the manipulation of animal grazing in pursuit of economic gain and/or environmental conservation. The goal of this one day management course is to increase your knowledge base of grazing management.

The cost of participating in course is \$40 per person, and must be paid in advance. The fee includes a number of valuable education materials

including the book Southern Forages. Registration materials can be picked up at 8 a.m. Lunch will be provided, and the meeting will end around 4:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required and the registration deadline is Friday, March 30.

For more information, contact Jonathan Gladney, Animal Science and Forages REA, at 334/624-8710 (office) or 334-341-1674 (cell).

## Deadline to apply for many Hurricane Katrina relief programs is March 30

JACKSON, Ala. — Wyatt Hendry, USDA Farm Service Agency County Executive Director, has announced that farmers and ranchers who suffered losses due to Hurricanes Katrina or Rita in 2005 have until the close of business March 30, 2007, to sign up for the following programs:

2005 Hurricanes Livestock Compensation Program — provides payments to livestock owners and cash lessees for certain feed losses.

2005 Hurricanes Livestock Indemnity Program II — provides benefits to livestock owners and contract growers for certain livestock deaths.

2005 Hurricanes Citrus Program — provides benefits to citrus producers who suffered citrus crop production losses and associated fruit-bearing tree damage, including related clean-up and rehabilitation costs.

2005 Hurricanes Fruit and Veg-

etable Program — provides benefits to producers who suffered fruit and vegetable crop production losses, including related clean-up costs.

2005 Hurricanes Tropical Fruit Program — provides benefits to producers of carambola, longan, lychee and mangos who suffered tropical fruit production losses.

2005 Hurricanes Nursery Program — provides benefits to commercial ornamental nursery and fernery producers who suffered inventory losses and incurred clean-up costs.

"All interested producers must apply by the March 30, 2007, deadline," said Hendry. "There are no late-filed provisions for any of the programs." Producers may sign up for the 2005 Hurricanes Disaster Programs at their local Farm Service Agency Office (FSA).

Eligible counties are those declared primary natural disaster areas or designated a major disaster

or emergency for 2005 calendar-year hurricanes Katrina, Ophelia, Wilma or Rita. Counties contiguous to a primary county are also eligible. The Act did not include counties declared disaster areas by Hurricane Dennis. Program fact sheets include the list of eligible counties, as well as program details, and can be found online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>, click on Disaster Assistance Programs. To receive benefits, producers must meet other eligibility requirements.

USDA understands that some producers may have little documentation of their losses due to hurricane devastation; however, USDA will require producers to provide all available documentation. Producers may not receive payments made under other federal programs for the same losses.

Details about these and other disaster programs are available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

## Blister beetle poisoning can kill horses, cattle

By Jennifer U. Miller  
County Extension Agent-Coordinator

BUTLER — Alfalfa hay is an excellent, high quality forage for horses, and many horse owners are purchasing alfalfa hay this year due to the shortage of grass hay caused by the drought last summer. However, like all feedstuffs, alfalfa is not the perfect forage. The main problem with alfalfa is its tendency to attract blister beetles. Blister beetles have a toxin in their body, cantharidin, which causes painful blisters when it comes in contact with skin or mucous membranes. When accidentally baled in alfalfa hay, very small amounts of the dead beetles can kill horses or other animals ingesting their bodies.

Signs of blister beetle poisoning in horses are salivation, colic, diarrhea, frequent urination, shock and death. If you suspect your horse may have been poisoned, you should immediately seek professional veterinary care to treat the horse. If cantharidin poisoning has been diagnosed in one horse, all horses in the barn which are eating alfalfa should be examined by a veterinarian. An individual horse's sensitivity to the toxin and the amount of toxin consumed can cause variations in the time of onset and severity of the signs of poisoning.

So, how can the horse owner protect his animals from blister beetle poisoning? The obvious answer is to avoid feeding alfalfa. However, this is not very practical with the hay shortage in the state, and it restricts horses from a high quality forage. Being an informed consumer is a better option. Some things you should do are:

- Find out when the alfalfa was harvested. Blister beetles mature in July and August, so the first cutting is the safest in terms of reduced numbers of beetles. Later cuttings should be baled pre-bloom to reduce beetle numbers.

- Find out how the hay was harvested. Blister beetles often swarm alfalfa fields or sections of fields and then move on in a few days. Conscientious hay producers investigate alfalfa fields for the presence of blister beetles prior to harvest and delay harvest if beetles are present. Also, harvesting equipment which kills or crushes the beetles, such as mower-conditioners and sickle bar mowers, should be avoided. Likewise, insecticides which kill the beetle are not recommended because the dead beetles are still baled in the hay.

Beetles tend to concentrate around the margins of the fields and hay in these areas is driven over repeatedly crushing insects in the hay. Knowledgeable hay growers segregate alfalfa bales along the margins of the field and do not market them to high value animals such as horses.

Horse owners may hear that it is safe to purchase alfalfa hay produced in certain areas of the country because these areas do not have blister beetles. However, there are 355 species of blister beetles found throughout the U.S., so all alfalfa hay is suspect for beetle infestation.

## Professional pesticide application workshop planned on April 4th

By John P. Ollison  
Regional Extension Agent

BUTLER — Professional Foresters, pesticide applicators and landowners should plan to attend an invasive species identification and control program planned for Wednesday, April 4 at the Rural Heritage Center, on Hwy. 25 North in Thomaston.

This program will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m. and has

been approved by the Ala. Dept. of Agriculture and Industries for 10 recertification points and the Society of American Foresters for professional forester or logger continuing education credits. These points will allow applicators and foresters to remain current with their state sanctioned license to practice.

Registration for this program is \$40 and includes materials, lunch

and breaks. Checks should be made to the Marengo County Extension Office. Their phone number is 334-295-5959. Seating is limited, so early registration is encouraged. We will accept registration at the door; however pre-registration is requested for planning purposes.

This program is approved for pesticide applicator recertification points (5) hours SAF Category 1CFE, (5) PLM hours.

Get a group together and volunteer to help clean up Choctaw County on Saturday, March 31st during

## Operation Clean Sweep.

Call Tommy Campbell for more details at 251-843-6397

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Sealed bids will be opened  
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