



# Florida Beef Cattle Short Course - 2010



# Integrated Production Systems to Finish Cattle

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# Preparing for the Next Decade

- Trends
- Tools
- Technologies



# Trends



# Can we pasture finish beef?

➔ YES

- “the devil is in the details”



# Farm/Ranch Goal

☞ “If you don’t know where you are going any road will get you there”



# Issues

- ☞ Adjust total carrying capacity of farm/ranch
  - Sold at weaning – now will finish all calves
  - Need about  $\frac{1}{2}$  the number of cows



# Issues

- ☞ What do you do best?
  - Are you a marketer?
  - Spend all of your time doing something other than managing the cattle.
  - What do you enjoy doing?





# What Customer Wants?

- **Doesn't really know**
- Absolute definitions
  - Grass-fed
  - Pasture – finished
  - Natural
- ~25% prefers grass-fed flavor
- Know and Trust



# Grass-fed vs Pasture-finished

## 👉 Legal Standards

- **Grass-fed** Grass and forage shall be the feed source consumed for the lifetime of the ruminant animal, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. The diet shall be derived solely from forage consisting of grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g., legumes, *Brassica*), browse, or cereal grain crops in the vegetative (pre-grain) state. Animals cannot be fed grain or grain byproducts and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season. Hay, haylage, baleage, silage, crop residue without grain, and other roughage sources may also be included as acceptable feed sources. Routine mineral and vitamin supplementation may also be included in the feeding regimen. If incidental supplementation occurs due to inadvertent exposure to non-forage feedstuffs or to ensure **the animal's well being at all times during adverse environmental or physical** conditions, the producer must fully document (e.g., receipts, ingredients, and tear tags) the supplementation that occurs including the amount, the frequency, and the supplements provided.



# Grass-fed vs Pasture-finished

## ☞ Legal Standards

### ■ Pasture-finished ???

- Feeding a concentrate to cattle on pasture



# Dressing %

- ➔ 56-57 vs 61-62
- ➔ 1,100-pound calf = 50 pounds of carcass weight



# Forage Program

- ☞ Several periods of limited quality and/or quantity
  - Pasture-finished - supplement
  - Grass-fed – haylage ??



# Management Skills

- Grass-fed – forage
- Pasture-finished - feedbunk



# Implants/Antibiotics

- Implants - \$1 = 20 pounds
- Ionophores – Improved performance
- Recoup decreased production by increased price for product



# Direct Marketing

- Market as many as possible by 18 to 20 months of age
- Genetics that fit the system
- Tight calving season





# Direct Marketing

- Develop a customer base that prefers YOUR beef
- Younger age provides more insurance for tender beef
- Genetic type = marbling, size, temperament



# Calving Season

- 👉 Herd nutrition
- 👉 Observations at calving
- 👉 Time management



# What will you sell?

- Halves and quarters
- \$50 packages
- Slaughter facility that meets your needs
- Rules & regs – Do your homework!!



# More Obstacles

## ☞ Freezer Space

- Rent

- Establish and maintain on farm \$\$

- High electrical usage
- Power outage

## ☞ Not something you normally give much thought to



# Advantages

- Price setter NOT price taker
- Reasonable income from a moderate-sized operation
- Minimal health problems
- Success (failure) is on YOU
- American Pride!!



# Questions

