

# Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association—Productivity and Quality



## Upcoming events:

- September 10—Farm to Feedlot Fall 2005 consignment deadline
- September 12—Southeastern Livestock Network ID Summit, Huntsville, AL
- September 12—Cattlemen's Exchange (Winona group): Branded beef programs, EE Ranches, Winona, MS, 7:00 p.m.
- September 22—Cattlemen's Exchange (Lafayette/Panola/Tate counties): Breeding season and cull cow marketing, Panola County Extension office, Batesville, MS, 6:30 p.m.
- October 25—Hinds Community College Bull Test begins, Raymond, MS
- October 29—Poplarville Beef Cattle Field Day, White Sand Unit, Poplarville, MS
- November 1, 8, 15—Beef Cattle Genetics Short Course, Distance education sites across MS, 6:00—9:00 p.m.
- November 10—BCIA Annual Fall Bull Sale, Raymond, MS, 12:00 p.m.
- April 18-21, 2006—Beef Improvement Federation annual meeting, Pearl River Resort, Choctaw, MS

## Inside this issue:

First Mississippi Cattle Tracking Demonstration in Tylertown	2
MBCIA Membership Application	4
BCIA Management Calendar	4

## Hurricane Katrina Relief Information

**Statement from Mississippi Cattlemen's Association Executive Vice-President, Sammy Blossom—August 31, 2005**

"Assessment of damage and needs of cattlemen in Mississippi is frustratingly slow. In meetings with the Commissioner of Agriculture and State Veterinarian today, we have very little firsthand news to report. Most of the southern half of the state remains without power or phone service and while many roads have been cleared, the fuel shortage caused by lack of electricity for the gas pumps has made travel by anyone except emergency personnel very limited.

This is our first day to have power in the office and already, offers of help have come in from individuals and cattlemen's associations as far away as New Mexico and Virginia as well as the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. While we cannot reach those most in need of supplies, the Commissioner has made the State Fairgrounds available to stage posts, wire, panels and other supplies until they can be moved to the southern counties.

Anyone wishing to make tax-deductible contributions to the relief efforts for effected cattlemen can send them marked 'Katrina

Relief' to: Mississippi Cattlemen's Foundation, 680 Monroe St., Jackson, MS 39202. Our office can be contacted at 601-354-8951 or missca1@bellsouth.net.

As more information is received, we will pass it along."

### Hurricane Recovery Tips for Cattlemen

- 1) Make human safety the first priority.
- 2) Keep cattle off of roadways as best possible. Numerous fences are down making this difficult for many ranchers. Downed power lines and other hazards are likely also abundant. Confining cattle protects both people and cattle. Watch for loose cattle on roadways. Cattle will often stay in herds, so move them by taking advantage of herding behavior.
- 3) Clean drinking water is the most important need for livestock. Flooded surface waters may contain chemicals and other contaminants that make it unsafe to drink. Also keep in mind that cattle require more water during hot conditions than in cooler weather.
- 4) Promptly dispose of livestock carcasses properly as feasible.
- 5) Provide help to neighbors and accept help from others when needed.

## Private Sector Involvement in National Animal ID System Enabled

The USDA announced on August 30 the guiding principles for development of a public/private partnership that enables the private sector to maintain animal movement data as part of the National Animal Identification System.

The four guiding principles are as follows:

- 1) The system must be able to allow tracking of animals from point of origin to processing within 48 hours without unnecessary burden to producers and other stakeholders.

- 2) The system's architecture must be developed without unduly increasing the size and role of government.
- 3) The system must be flexible enough to utilize existing technologies and incorporate new identification technologies as they are developed.
- 4) Animal movement data should be maintained in a private system that can be readily accessed when necessary by state and federal animal health authorities.



RFID tagged cow walking past a panel reader at Tylertown

## First Mississippi Cattle Tracking Demonstration in Tylertown

**Excerpts from an article by Lamar Adams, Walthall County Extension Director**

The Livestock Producers #1 Sale Facility in Tylertown hosted the first NAIS animal tracking project demonstration in Mississippi on August 16. Mike Pigott, Manager of Livestock Producers Association, is working closely with Dr. Jim Watson, State Veterinarian with the Mississippi Board of Animal Health, and officials of the Southeastern Livestock Network (SLN) and FPL Foods to develop functional animal identification systems and demonstrate how they work to area farmers.

The goal of the demonstration conducted on August 16 was to demonstrate how “Radio Frequency Identification” (RFID) ear tags and electronic reading devices currently available on the market can be utilized to track cattle from the farm, through the sale barn, and into the processing plant. RFID ear tags were placed in the left ear of several animals as they were processed for the sale (current NAIS recommendations are for RFID tags to be placed in the left ear of animals to ensure consistency throughout all animal agriculture industries and standard procedure for positioning electronic tag reading devices within animal handling facilities). An electronic “panel reader” was utilized in the cattle chute to record each RFID tagged animal as it passed through the chute. This information (including the Premises ID of cooperating farms, the Sale Barn Premises ID, and each individual animal’s RFID ear tag number) was saved in the SLN Data Management System computer database to provide farm to harvest tracking of the animals. Animals tagged for this demonstration will be processed at a facility in Georgia – where they will be scanned via their RFID tag to complete the farm to harvest tracking demonstration exercise. The tags, reader, and computer equipment worked extremely well at Livestock Producers #1 Sale Facility – helping dispel some concerns that metal fencing at the barn might interfere with radio frequency signals between the electronic chip within each RFID ear tag and the panel reader.

An additional goal of the August 16 demonstration at the Tylertown Sale Barn was to

encourage Mississippi producers to complete and submit the “NAIS Premises Registration Form” to the Mississippi Board of Animal Health Office in Jackson. Louisiana Producers were encouraged to submit the form applicable to their state to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Office of Animal Health Services in Baton Rouge.

Currently, registering your farm to obtain an NAIS Premises ID number is a voluntary process. However, I strongly encourage everyone who maintains farm animals on their property to take full advantage of securing your Premises ID number while it remains a voluntary process. Securing your Premises ID now will enable you to be fully prepared to sell your animals without any problems when NAIS Premises ID becomes a requirement (currently scheduled for January 1, 2008). Without the Premise ID, you will not be able to sell animals when the NAIS becomes fully implemented. Hence, I again urge all producers of farm animals to complete and submit their “NAIS Premises Registration Form” as soon as possible. Forms are available at County Mississippi State University Extension Service Offices and many sale facilities and veterinary clinics. Mississippi producers may access the form from the Mississippi Board of Animal Health website by logging on to the following url: [http://www.mbah.state.ms.us/AnimalID/watson\\_app.htm](http://www.mbah.state.ms.us/AnimalID/watson_app.htm).

Although the USDA continues working to develop several fine points of implementing and administering the NAIS, current plans are on track for farm Premises ID to be required for all farm animal producers by January 1, 2008; animal identification (individual or group) to be required shortly thereafter; and full implementation of the animal tracking system to be initiated and maintained from that point forward. Bearing in mind that several details of the NAIS are still evolving, the remainder of this article discusses the course for implementing the NAIS according to USDA’s current timetable.

Currently, NAIS is composed of three segments: (1) premises identification; (2) animal identification; and (3) animal tracking. Animal health officials being able to trace

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*“The tags, reader, and computer equipment worked extremely well (at the cow tracking demonstration in Tylertown). . .”*

## Cattle Tracking (Cont.)

the origin and lifetime movement of an animal displaying disease symptoms within 48 hours of the disease diagnosis is the ultimate goal of the NAIS. Implementing a program to accomplish this task will be a major undertaking for farmers, sale barns, feed yards, food processors, animal health officials, and the USDA. Full implementation of the program will cost several million dollars – with everyone involved in farm animal agriculture (including producers, consumers, and the government) being called upon to cover these costs. Although the costs may seem staggering on first observation, it is important to note that all efforts to ensure consumers will be able to purchase and enjoy safe, wholesome, nutritious and delicious animal food products will pay tremendous dividends in the marketplace in years to come.

Premises ID is the initial segment to lay the foundation upon which the entire NAIS will operate. Each state is responsible for administering the Premises ID portion of the NAIS. Each State Veterinarian is developing the program and procedures to allow producers to register their farm(s). The status of this process varies from state to state, but we are proud to say Mississippi is ahead of many states since we accept Premises ID registration forms to help producers take full advantage of accomplishing the task while it remains a voluntary process. Remember, all farm animal producers will be required to complete Premises ID registration in the very near future – so why not get this task behind you by completing the paperwork now. Information you will need to register your farm premises includes: contact information for the owner and manager of the farm, the physical address of the farm, and information about the type of operation. All phases of livestock production will be required to have a Premises ID number – including farms, sale barns, order buyers, and veterinary clinics.

Upon completion of the “NAIS Premises Registration Form,” each producer’s physical premises (farm) address will be submitted to a USDA computer database and a unique 7 digit alphanumeric “Premises ID Number” will be assigned to that premises. Once each Premises ID number is assigned by USDA,

the information will be added to the computer database maintained by the State Veterinarian. Your Premises ID number is based on the farm’s 911 address. Geolocation (GIS) coordinates will be accepted for premises that do not have an assigned 911 address.

Farmers may elect to register more than one premises if they so desire for ease of record-keeping and management purposes. For example, a producer with two separate operations – such as a herd of commercial cattle and a purebred cattle herd – may elect to have a separate Premises ID for the physical location of each herd. The NAIS is not designed nor intended to register every piece of property a producer may own – but rather to establish one primary Premises ID number and contact information for that premises. Simplified: all properties that share animal movements under the producer’s control are considered one premises – unless the farmer desires to register them separately for management purposes.

At this time, I strongly encourage everyone with farm animals on your property to take advantage of the voluntary status of registering your farm to secure a Premises ID. It is important for all producers and the general public to understand the NAIS is being developed to ensure protection of our U.S. farm animals and continued production of safe food products. This is not an attempt by the government to “put their nose into your business.” The confidentiality and security of your personal information is of the highest concern in developing and implementing the NAIS so that it does what it is supposed to do – ensure animal health and consumer confidence – rather than expose producers to unnecessary scrutiny from the government, the Internal Revenue Service, or anyone else.

Again, I highly encourage all persons with farm animals on your property to complete the “NAIS Premises Registration Form” and submit it to the Mississippi Board of Animal Health Office in Jackson as soon as possible. You will be glad you acted voluntarily when January 1, 2008 rolls around – and probably well before that date since you will not be concerned about being able to sell your animals when the NAIS is fully implemented.

**Premises  
Registered in the  
United States as  
part of the  
National Animal  
Identification  
System**

**105,823  
as of 08/22/05**



RFID tag in the left ear of a cow in a second tracking demonstration at Lucedale


*Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement  
Association—Productivity and Quality*

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Send questions or comments about this  
newsletter to Jane Parish, Extension Beef  
Specialist, Mississippi State University  
Extension Service

*Jane Parish*   
Mississippi State  
University does not discriminate on  
the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex,  
sexual orientation or group affiliation, age, disability,

**Visit MBCIA online at  
[http://msucares.com/  
livestock/beef/mbcia/](http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/mbcia/)**

## **MBCIA Membership Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

(Check one) Seedstock:  Commercial:

Cattle breed(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Completed applications and \$5 annual dues payable to  
Mississippi BCIA should be mailed to:

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association  
c/o Jane Parish, Extension Beef Specialist  
Box 9815, Mississippi State, MS 39762

## **BCIA Management Calendar—September 2005**

### **GENERAL**

It is not too early to determine winter supplementation needs based on forage situation. Plan winter grazing and feeding programs. Watch commodity prices, and purchase supplemental feed for winter as appropriate. Take inventory of hay, forage testing each cutting. Store hay to minimize storage losses and allow matching of forage test results with individual lots of hay. Graze or clip pastures closely where winter annuals will be overseeded before planting. Watch for armyworms. Plant and fertilize cool-season forages. Apply lime as needed. Keep proper free-choice minerals, adequate shade, and clean water available for cattle at all times, and check mineral and water supplies often. Remove fly tags as they become ineffective. Maintain a complete herd health program in consultation with a veterinarian including internal and external parasite control and vaccinations. Continue good production and financial record keeping. Secure a premises identification number for your farm or ranch from the Mississippi Board of Animal Health.

### **SPRING CALVING—January, February, March**

Pregnancy check herd females 60 to 90 days after the end of the breeding season and identify and cull less productive or problem cattle. Prepare for fall cattle working by determining vaccination, deworming, and implant needs and acquiring supplies ahead of time. Check and repair working facilities for weaning. Wean calves based on market and pasture conditions using weaning strategies that minimize calf stress. Monitor herd performance and nutritional status by recording weights and cow body

condition scores at weaning. Implement a nutritional program to get thin cows in proper body condition before next calving. Weigh calves and calculate adjusted weaning weights and ratios. Assess weaning percentage (calves weaned/cows exposed to breeding). Identify and cull bulls that have sired calf groups that are well below the herd average for growth performance and carcass traits. Seedstock producers should send weaning records to breed associations for processing. Use weaning weights to put a heifer selection and development program in action to reach target breeding weights (65% of expected mature weight) by the start of the next breeding season. Heifers will likely need to grow at a rate of 1 to 1.5 lbs. per day. Establish permanent identification (tattoos or brands) for bred heifers that will remain in the herd. Implement calf preconditioning, marketing, or retained ownership plans as appropriate considering seasonal price risks and breakevens on calves.

### **FALL CALVING—October, November, December**

Prepare for fall calving separating the cow herd into calving and nutritional management groups. Cows need to be in moderately good condition prior to calving. Assemble calving supplies including calf identification tags and obstetric equipment. Move fall-calving heifers and cows close to handling facilities and observe cattle frequently. After calving, plan to move cow-calf pairs to clean pasture. Consult with a veterinarian for scheduling pre-breeding vaccination needs. Weigh yearling cattle and calculate adjusted weights and ratios. Prepare for herd sire selection and procurement considering the November BCIA bull sale as a source of bulls with performance information.