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& M. UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING.

“Agronomy Notes” is prepared by R. Gilbert, Chair. Produced by F. Fishel and L. Kubitz, Pesticide Information Office. Contributors include J. Ferrell, Extension Weed Specialist; F. Fishel, Director, Pesticide Information Office; R. Leon, Extension Weed Specialist; B. Sellers, Extension Weed Specialist; M. Durham, Extension Weed Specialist; H. Smith, Extension Weed Specialist; D. Wright, Extension Crop Specialist; J. Dubeux, Forage Management Specialist; P. Munoz, Forage Breeder; A. Blount, Forage Breeder; K. Quesenberry, Forage Breeder; and H. Sandhu, Crop Management Specialist. The use of trade names does not constitute a guarantee or warrant of products named and does not signify approval to the exclusion of similar products.
Plan Now for Winter Weeds in the Pasture

This past summer will long be remembered for the consistency and amount of rainfall received. This was a great benefit for the crop farmer, but made life exceedingly difficult for the hay farmer. With all this rain I saw many pastures that were “soggy” all summer.

Bahiagrass is a durable and highly persistent grass that can tolerate periodic flooding.

But this past summer provided weeks to months of water standing on the pasture, or just below the surface.

In this environment, roots begin to die off and the overall vigor of the pasture declines.

These conditions allow open spots to form in the grass and create an ideal environment for weed encroachment.

The weeds I am beginning to see are thistles, red sorrel, and wild radish/mustard. Though we see these every year, I anticipate that they will be more numerous this year. We have hardly been cold enough for these weeds to get started, but trust me – they are coming.

Therefore, I suggest that you plan now to scout early and spray. Generally speaking, spraying small weeds will translate into better control at a lower cost than waiting until the weeds are large. So plan ahead.

There is no reason to bale weedy “cow hay” for the first cutting when a herbicide application in March could control those weeds. As long as daytime temperatures are 60-65 F (or higher), the herbicides will work fine. At these cooler temperatures, switching to a 2,4-D ester instead of an amine will also provide a positive herbicide benefit.

A proactive weed management strategy will allow the pasture to transition from winter dormancy without weed competition. This will provide a good environment for the grass to reestablish itself. Another benefit will be to improve the first hay cutting.

For specifics on which herbicides fit your specific weed spectrum, please consult Weed Management in Pasture and Rangeland [https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wg006](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wg006).
Crop Science
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Alfalfa Production in North and Central Florida

Alfalfa hay is a valued commodity used in Florida by the livestock industry. Most of the alfalfa hay purchased in Florida, however, comes from distant locations (e.g., Midwest US), increasing the final price. Pest and disease pressure, humidity, and warm temperatures prevailing in Florida during the summer require adapted alfalfa varieties. In this research, we studied six alfalfa varieties (Ameristand 855T RR, Ameristand 901 TS, Ameristand 915 TS RR, Bulldog 805, FL 77, and FL 99) in North Florida at UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center in Marianna, FL and four varieties in Central Florida at the UF/IFAS Plant Science Research and Education Unit in Citra, FL.

These varieties were tested under two harvest intensities, 2 and 4 inches. Alfalfa plots were established in November 2013 and harvested for two consecutive years. Alfalfa varieties performed similarly in Citra and Marianna, with FL99, FL77, and Bulldog 805 being the best options. Productivity under irrigated conditions was greater than in the rainfed system. In North Florida, alfalfa productivity declined after the first spring cut. In Central Florida, alfalfa productivity declined from spring to summer, but recovered in the fall harvest. The trend was similar in both years. Shorter longevity of alfalfa stands observed in Florida compared with the Midwest production regions might be compensated for by the additional price paid in Florida for alfalfa hay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Marianna</th>
<th>Citra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ameristand 901 TS</td>
<td>695 abf</td>
<td>1145 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulldog 805</td>
<td>753 ab</td>
<td>1214 ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL 77</td>
<td>758 ab</td>
<td>1198 ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL 99</td>
<td>795 a</td>
<td>1325 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ameristand 855T RR</td>
<td>693 ab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ameristand 915 TS RR</td>
<td>654 b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*Means followed by the same letter in the same column do not differ (P > 0.05) by the Pdiff procedure from SAS adjusted by Tukey.
A New Sugarcane Cultivar ‘CP 07-2137’ for Sandy Soils in Florida

Sugarcane in Florida is grown on 410,000 acres with 78% of this area on muck soil (organic soil) and 22% on low fertility sandy soil (mineral soil) with low organic matter. Although, the current sugarcane acreage on sandy soil is comparatively lower than muck soil in Florida, the sugarcane area is expanding on sand and has potential to expand more in coming years due to downfall in citrus industry and limited scope of expansion on muck soils.

CP 07-2137’ cultivar was released in September 2014 to be cultivated on sandy soils in Florida. CP 07-2137 was developed through a collaborative cultivar development program of the USDA-ARS, the University of Florida, and the Florida Sugar Cane League, Inc. based at Canal Point.

The female parent of CP 07-2137 is CP 01-2390, a promising clone on sand but it was not released commercially. The male parent is a commercial sugarcane cultivar CP 84-1198, cultivated on both muck and sand.

CP 07-2137 was released due to its significantly greater cane biomass yield, sucrose yield and economic index than reference check, CP 78-1628. Overall mean cane biomass yield, sucrose yield and economic index in CP 07-2137 were 37, 44, and 31 % greater than CP 78-1628, respectively. CP 07-2137 is also resistant to orange rust caused by Puccinia kuehnii and leaf scald caused by Xanthomonas, and moderately resistant against brown rust caused by Puccinia melanocephala and ratoon stunt disease in Florida. Although Bru 1 gene is absent, CP 07-2137 is moderately resistant to brown rust caused by Puccinia melanocephala. CP 07-2137 had poor freeze tolerance with its rank 48th in plant cane and 40th in first ratoon among 54 genotypes tested for their deterioration in sucrose content after exposure to freezing temperatures in plant cane.
EPA Releases the First of Four Preliminary Risk Assessments for Insecticides Potentially Harmful to Bees

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced a preliminary pollinator risk assessment for the neonicotinoid insecticide, imidacloprid, which shows a threat to some pollinators. EPA’s assessment, prepared in collaboration with California’s Department of Pesticide Regulation, indicates that imidacloprid potentially poses risk to hives when the pesticide comes in contact with certain crops that attract pollinators. “Delivering on the President’s National Pollinator Strategy means EPA is committed not only to protecting bees and reversing bee loss, but for the first time assessing the health of the colony for the neonicotinoid pesticides,” said Jim Jones Assistant Administrator of the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. “Using science as our guide, this preliminary assessment reflects our collaboration with the State of California and Canada to assess the results of the most recent testing required by EPA.”

The preliminary risk assessment identified a residue level for imidacloprid of 25 ppb, which sets a threshold above which effects on pollinator hives are likely to be seen, and at that level and below which effects are unlikely. These effects include decreases in pollinators as well as less honey produced. For example, data show that citrus and cotton may have residues of the pesticide in pollen and nectar above the threshold level. Other crops such as corn and leafy vegetables either do not produce nectar or have residues below the threshold. Additional data is being generated on these and other crops to help EPA evaluate whether imidacloprid poses a risk to hives.

The imidacloprid assessment is the first of four preliminary pollinator risk assessments for the neonicotinoid insecticides. Preliminary pollinator risk assessments for three other neonicotinoids, clothianidin, thiamethoxam, and dinotefuran, are scheduled to be released for public comment in December 2016. A preliminary risk assessment of all ecological effects for imidacloprid, including a revised pollinator assessment and impacts on other species such as aquatic and terrestrial animals and plants will also be released in December 2016.

The 60-day public comment period will begin upon publication in the Federal Register. After the comment period ends, EPA may revise the pollinator assessment based on comments received and, if necessary, take action to reduce risks from the insecticide. In 2015, EPA proposed to prohibit the use of pesticides that are toxic to bees, including the neonicotinoids, when crops are in bloom and bees are under contract for pollination services. The Agency temporarily halted the approval of new outdoor neonicotinoid pesticide uses until new bee data is submitted and pollinator risk assessments are complete. EPA encourages stakeholders and interested members of the public to visit the imidacloprid docket and sign up for email alerts to be automatically notified when the agency opens the public comment period for the pollinator-only risk assessment.
Calendar of Events

To follow the link, press “Ctrl” and put cursor over link, and “click.”

May 2-5, 2016 Aquatic Weed Short Course Coral Springs, Florida http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu.aw/

September 15-17, 2016 The Landscape Show Orlando, Florida http://www.fngla.org/thelandscapeshow/

October 18-20, 2016 Sunbelt Ag Expo Moultrie, Georgia http://sunbeltexpo.com/