

Best Management Practices for Cow/Calf Operations

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One term Florida cattlemen will hear a lot over the next many years is BMP which is the acronym for "best management practices." The development and implementation of BMP's to maintain good water quality are being encouraged for all segments of Florida agriculture by Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS), and Water Management Districts. Florida cattlemen will be involved with BMP's associated with maintaining good water quality on cow/calf operations.

Under the leadership of Mike Milicevic, the Florida Cattlemen's Association has developed and published a BMP manual of which copies are available to its members. A copy can also be downloaded from the Florida Cattlemen's Association web site. Go to <http://www.floridacattlemen.org/> then click on LINKS and scroll down to reference materials.

Best management practices for cow/calf operations are really good old common sense procedures to maintain good quality of water within and exiting cattle ranches. Most BMP's are inexpensive to implement, like placing feed troughs, mineral feeders, shade structures, and working pens away from surface waters in streams, ditches, and canals. Others include following IFAS fertilizer recommendations for pasture grasses, which now include using no or small amounts of phosphorus. Still others, like planting grass filter strips around cow pens, feedlots, and barnyards, and grassed waterways to prevent waste runoff are just sound soil conservation practices.

Best management practices are being implemented in all walks of life. From highway construction (plastic barriers at work sites and water retention ditches) to supermarket parking lots (retention ponds). It is the responsibility of Florida cattlemen, the true environmentalists, to do our part to keep Florida waters clean. Obtain a copy of the Water Quality BMP for Cow/Calf Operations Manual from the Florida Cattlemen's Association or download off the internet and see if you are doing your part to protect our beautiful and unique Florida environment.

For questions or comments regarding this publication contact



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