

The Beef Bulletin

A Florida Agricultural Literacy Activity Book 3rd—5th Grade

- Native Florida cattle are often called cracker cattle. The term "cracker" comes from the old cowboys who used whips to make a "cracking" sound to herd their cattle.
- Florida is mostly a cow-calf (mother cows and baby calves) state.
- Today, there are more than 900,000 head of cattle and 15,000 beef producers in Florida.
- Florida has about 4,000,000 acres of pastureland.
- Florida is home to four of the United States' largest cow-calf operations.
- One Florida ranch owns the largest brood cattle (mother cows) herd in the United States.

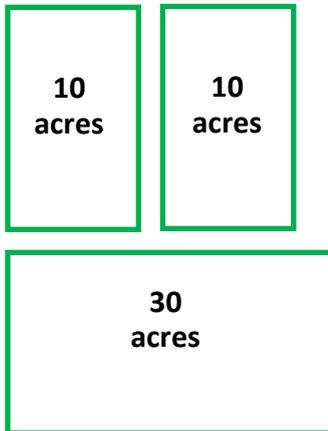


Nestled deep in our state's roots are a group of people that are extremely important to the foundation of the beef industry. The Seminole Indian tribe owns one of the largest cattle herds east of the Mississippi River. If it weren't for the hard work and perseverance of this tribe our states cattle industry might have a much different look/past. Cattle were brought to our state by Spanish settlers in 1521. That, in itself, was an amazing feat, but what the Seminole tribe did next was even more challenging.

Once the settlers moved on to explore other parts of the world, they left the horses and cattle behind. The Indian tribe collected the livestock and started taking care of and working the cattle. That is challenging enough today in our state, but can you imagine the hurdles they had to overcome in the 1500s. There was no technology, no vaccines or veterinarians, no cattle chutes, and no specially designed nutritious cattle feed. There wasn't even fencing around our state. They battled predators, disease, heat, moisture and even a steep learning curve of meeting the cattle's needs. They rose to the challenge and because of that there are still Florida Cracker Cattle in our state today! We tip our hats to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and will forever be thankful for a job well done!

Pasture Cow-culations

Pasture Group 1



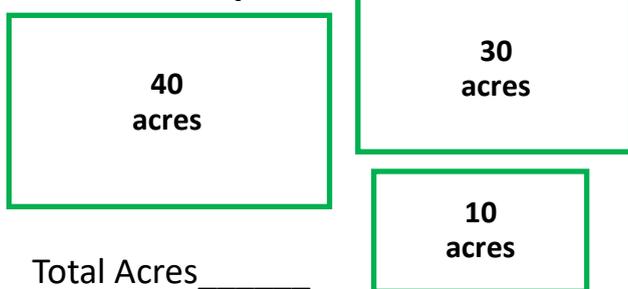
Total Acres _____

Pasture Group 2



Total Acres _____

Pasture Group 3



Total Acres _____

Beef cattle eat grass for most of their life. Grass gives them a balanced diet! Cattle eat grass on land that often could not be used to grow other crops. In fact, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the grazing land in the U.S. could not grow other crops! Cattle use this land to turn grass into food for people!

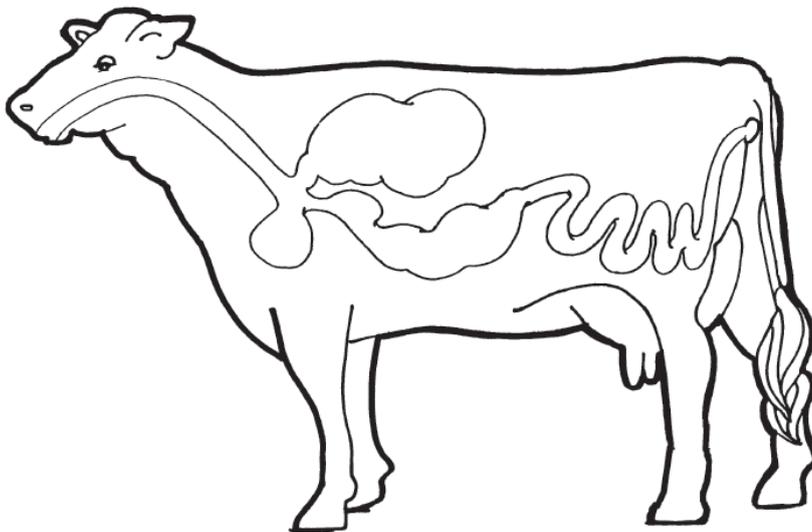
Cattle graze on large areas of land. Fences surround some land. This land is called a pasture. Pastures are measured in acres. One acre is about the size of a football field.

DIRECTIONS

A rancher wants to combine some of their pastures. Look at each group of pastures. Add up the acres in the pastures to find out the number of total acres.

Activity courtesy of: American Farm Bureau

One Bite, Chew Twice



1. Use a **green** crayon to trace from the mouth to the rumen to the reticulum.
2. Use a **yellow** crayon to trace the path back to the mouth.
3. Use a **blue** crayon to trace from the mouth to the omasum to the abomasum to the intestine.

Have you ever noticed, whenever you see a cow, it always seems to be chewing? That is because a cow has to chew its food twice. What you are watching is the cow “chewing its cud.” A cow is a ruminant, which means its stomach is divided into four parts; the rumen, reticulum, omasum, and abomasum. Each part has a different function. Because of these extra parts a cow can digest and use food that humans cannot, like grass and hay. Some examples of other ruminants include deer, giraffes, and sheep.

First the cow (ruminant) takes a bite of food, and the food moves to the rumen. It is partially digested by bacteria that live in the rumen. It then goes to the reticulum, which has ridges like a honeycomb. The ridges break the food down into smaller pieces. The cow then regurgitates (throws up) those pieces so it can chew them again. The food that comes back up is called “cud.” The cow rechews the food with the strong back teeth and they break it down even more. The cow is now “chewing its cud.” The cow swallows the food again and it heads into the omasum, the third section of the stomach. In the omasum, the food breaks down into vitamins and nutrients that the cow’s body needs. The fourth part of the cow’s stomach is the abomasum, and the last part of the digestive process takes place. In the abomasum, the cow’s body gets all the good stuff that’s left. Then it passes through the intestines and eventually out of the body.

The Hamburger Paragraph

Top Bun: Introduction – Every hamburger needs a top bun; every paragraph needs an introduction.

Hamburger: The Topic Sentence- The most important part. You cannot have a hamburger or paragraph without it!

The Fixings: Supporting Details- Supporting details support or describe the topic sentence. They make the paragraph more interesting to read, just as ketchup, mustard, pickles make a hamburger more interesting to eat.

Bottom Bun: Conclusion- A conclusion finishes a paragraph and leaves you with a final thought or idea. A paragraph is unfinished without a good conclusion, just as a hamburger without a bottom bun. Your burger would fall apart and so would your paragraph.

Information Courtesy of: Illinois Ag in The Classroom

How do you eat your hamburger? Do you like lots of toppings, like pickles, ketchup, lettuce, or tomato? Why do we put toppings on hamburgers? To make it taste better! Writing a paragraph is just like making a hamburger!
Topic: How do you prepare the best hamburger?

Introduction

Topic Sentence

Supporting
Details

Supporting
Details

Conclusion

Cattle Herding Game

Directions for the game:

1. Provide each student with three white balloons. These represent the student's "cattle herd."
2. Students will blow up the balloons. Balloons that pop will be considered a loss to the cattleman.
3. Students will use markers to draw their "brands" on their "cattle" (balloons).
4. When all the cattle are branded, they must be "trucked" to the range. Students will decide how many cattle will fit comfortably in each truck (large plastic garbage bags). Then students must figure out how many "trucks" they will need to transport all the cattle. Explain that overcrowding will cause distress and the possible death of an animal. Too few animals could allow too much movement, which could result in an animal slipping and hurting itself.
5. After all the cattle are turned out on the "range" (playground, cafeteria, gym, etc.) and allowed to graze for awhile (Move the balloons around to mix them up, similar to what they would do on an open range.) the ranchers must gather their cattle. The first cattleman to successfully gather all his/her cattle wins. Remember that a popped balloon at any time is a loss to the rancher.

Activity created by Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom



Florida Agriculture in the Classroom is funded by the sale of the specialty license plate, the AgTag.

Visit Florida Agriculture in the Classroom's website AgTag.org for the answer key and more information about the resources and grant money Florida Agriculture in the Classroom offers teachers.