

Cattlemans

THE MIDWEST

March 14, 2013 Volume 19 No. 3

GRASSLAND FARMING TODAY



Salers
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DEVELOPMENT OF REPLACEMENT HEIFERS IS CRITICAL



By Stephen B. Blezinger, PhD, PAS

Development of replacement heifers is a critical part of every commercial cow calf operation. While not every breeder raises the replacements that go back into the herd, those replacements have to be developed somewhere. A proper development plan focuses closely on health and nutrition with nutrition comprising a significant portion of the cost incurred in growing that heifer from weaning through breeding, calving and rebreeding.

Nutrition is the management tool that can have the greatest impact on the age at which heifers reach puberty. Heifers of a similar breed composition can reach puberty several months apart when fed different diets, particularly different amounts of energy. In addition, as referenced above, feed cost accounts for 60 to 70 percent of the costs of raising replacement heifers. Therefore, the financial impact of puberty onset is dictated by age at puberty, as well as the feed costs associated with reducing this age when the heifer can be bred. In other words, cost of feeding heifers to reach breeding age earlier should be considered against the income gained by increased conception rates and heavier weaning weights.

It has been long known that energy is the primary limiting factor in most replacement heifer diets. In an experiment reported by Montana researchers (Short and Bellows, 1971), heifers were fed for low (.5 lb/day), medium (1.0 lb/day) or high (1.5 lb/day) gain from weaning until breeding. The high-gain heifers reached puberty earlier than those in the other two groups. In addition, 60 percent of the heifers in the medium and high gain groups conceived in the first 20 days of the breeding season, and overall conception rates were greater for the medium- and high-gain heifers compared to those for the low-gain heifers (Table 1).

Results of this study and others have led to the recommendation that heifers should gain between 1.25 and 1.75 pounds per day between weaning and breeding. Depending on the size of the

heifer, the desired rate of gain, and feed intake, diets will need to contain between 62 and 70 percent TDN.

Protein availability can also influence age at puberty onset. By the start of the breeding season, only 40 percent of the heifers fed a low protein (nine percent crude protein, CP) diet had reached puberty compared to 90 percent of heifers fed adequate protein levels (11.5 to 13 percent). Added dietary energy (i.e., feeding increased levels of

	Feed Level		
	Low	Medium	High
Gain, lb/day	0.5	1.0	1.5
Age at first estrus, days	434	412	388
Weight at first estrus, lb	523	545	563
Conception rate first 20 days of breeding season, %	30	62	60
Overall conception rate, %	50	86	87

corn) could not overcome the protein deficiency. Similarly, additional protein could not overcome a lack of available energy.

Minerals and vitamins are also es-

sential for proper reproductive health. Symptoms of deficiencies in Vitamin A, copper, zinc and phosphorous often appear as decreased conception rates or delayed age at puberty. Iron, sulfur and

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MARCH 14, 2013 Volume 19 No. 3

GRASSLAND FARMING TODAY

NEW TAXES BURDENSOME FOR FARM AND RANCH FAMILIES

New Medicare taxes, the health insurance tax and penalties for failure to meet coverage requirements will harm the nation's farm and ranch families, the American Farm Bureau Federation told Congress recently.

The new Medicare Contribution Tax, which is a tax on unearned income such as capital gains, will burden farmers and ranchers more than many other taxpayers because farming and ranching is a capital-intensive business, AFBF noted in a statement submitted to the House Subcommittee on Oversight of the Ways and Means Committee.

Further, the imposition of the Medicare Contribution Tax when a farm or ranch is sold amounts to a "retirement tax" on agricultural producers because it will go into effect when farmers sell their businesses to fund retirement. Beginning farmers could be affected as well, as adding this tax on top of capital gains taxes will make it more difficult for them to acquire land needed to get started in business.

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LOWER CATTLE ON FEED NUMBERS

By Tim Petry, North Dakota State

USDA-NASS released the February Cattle on Feed report on February 22. Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the U.S. for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.1 million head on Feb. 1, 2013. The total was 738,000 head or about 6.2 percent lower than one year ago. Pre-report estimates of analysts by Dow-Jones and Bloomberg estimated about a 6.2 percent decline, so the lower numbers were no surprise to the industry.

Placements into feedlots during January totaled 1.88 million head, about 1.6 percent more than last year. The average of pre-report analyst's estimates was for just a slight increase. About half of the analysts expected smaller placements with the other half expecting larger placements up to 4 percent above last year. The variations in placement expectations somewhat coincided with actual state-by-state variations. There were 29,000 more head placed in the U.S., but Nebraska placed 45,000 head more and Kansas placed 20,000 head more than last year. Declines were noted in several states including Iowa, Texas, Idaho, and Washington. The increase in placements occurred in the heavy weight categories with the over 800 lbs. category increasing 54,000 head, 700-799 lbs. increasing 10,000 head, 600-699 lbs. declining 35,000 head and the under 600 lb. category staying the same.

Marketings of fed cattle totaled 79,000 head during January, up about 5.6 percent over last year and a little above analyst's expectations. However, when accounting for the extra slaughter day this year, marketings were up less than 1 percent.

Looking at the individual classes on feed, steers and heifers were down 3.2 percent from a year ago with heifers and heifer calves down 9.5 percent and cows and bulls also down about 9.5 percent.

The report also showed the total number of feedlots, inventory, and marketings by size of feedlot in the U.S. for 2011 and 2012. The number of feedlots with capacity of less than 1,000 head declined from 75,000 in 2011 to 73,000 in 2012. Feedlots with 1,000 head or more capacity declined from 2,120 to 2,100. The 1,000 head and over feedlots marketed 88.6 percent of fed cattle marketings in 2012, up from 87.7 percent in 2011 - a trend that has been discussed before.

OSU



OUTLOOK FOR THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY IN 2013

By Stu Ellis

While crop producers had production challenges in 2012, livestock producers had production cost challenges. High feed prices, due to short supplies of corn and soybean meal that were being rationed, caused production cutbacks and disrupted the orderly marketing of many meat animals.

There will be some moderate changes in that scenario in 2013, but not a return to normalcy according to livestock economist Shayle Shagam of USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board. And those projections are important for both livestock producers and the farmers who are producing feed for them.

Livestock and poultry producers will face higher feed prices for most of the year in 2013. The current outlook is for corn ranging in price from \$6.75 to \$7.65, and soybean meal from \$430 to \$460 per ton.

Shagam said feed prices should moderate moving into the 2013-

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RECORD PRICES WITH MORE VOLATILITY POSSIBLE

By Tim Petry, NDSU

For the third year (2010-2012), prices for all market classes of beef cattle set record annual highs in the U.S. Are record highs possible again in 2013 and even 2014?

The short answer to that is "yes." However, remember that prices for each market class of cattle have different seasonal patterns, so at times 2013 prices for some market classes (feeder calves in particular) likely will be below last year.

Furthermore, there are many fundamental factors that affect prices and some are unexpected. For example, in 2012, the lean, finely textured beef media event; another case of BSE in a U.S. cow; and the worst drought in the Corn Belt since 1988 all surfaced.

Smaller supplies of beef, competing meats and cattle will be supportive to prices in 2013. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is projecting beef produc-

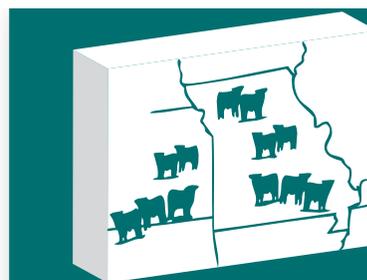
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U.S. BEEF EXPORTS IN 2012 LOWER AS U.S. SUPPLY TIGHTENS

U.S. beef and pork exports set value records during 2012, according to year-end USDA statistics compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). The value of beef exports hit an all-time high \$5.51 billion despite 12% less volume than 2011. Pork exports set both value and volume records, reaching \$6.3 billion on 2.26 million metric tons sold.

USMEF reports beef export values per head were \$216.73 last year, up \$10.36 from 2011. A new monthly record value of \$242.65 per head was set in December. For the year, U.S. beef exports accounted for 12.7% of beef production. The top five value markets for beef were Canada, Japan, Mexico, South Korea and Hong Kong.

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Grass Farmer, but in a recent video presentation I was able to put the name with a face and discovered the man's brilliance that has captured the attention of so many others interested in grazing for quite a long time. As it turns out Savory is a man who has come full circle from a typical academic – to use his words “hating livestock” to a respected researcher who now says that grazing livestock is the “single – most simple solution” to one of the world's greatest challenges - desertification. This ‘cancer’ he calls it, soils becoming ‘bare’ and turning into ‘desert’ because of excessive ‘run-off’ and evaporation, is happening at an alarming rate on two-thirds of the world's soil surface. Let that soak in for a moment.

Savory begins his presentation: “The most massive tsunami, perfect storm, is bearing down upon us. This perfect storm is mounting an increasingly grim reality – as a result of our rising population –rising towards 10 billion people, land turning to desert and climate change.” According to Savory, about two-thirds of the earth's lands are turning to desert, accelerating climate change and causing traditional grazing societies to descend into social chaos. Soils turning to desert do not hold water and damaged soils release carbon instead of holding it. Savory believes man has

never understood this process, why it has accelerated recently, or how by itself this process, greatly increasing the amount of ‘bare ground’ on over half of the world's soil surface, has affected the earth's climate.

To prevent or reverse this process soils must be covered with grass or plants of some kind. But this plant material must be removed every season or plants will die and the soils once again will be exposed – releasing carbon. ‘Burning’ removes this dead material and allows the grass to grow, so man has used ‘fire’ for centuries to manage grasslands in the place of large roaming herds of animals. But according to Savory, burning one acre gives off more, and more damaging, pollutants than 3000 cars. He goes on to explain that in Africa, every year, man is burning over 2 billion acres which accelerates desertification and climate change.

According to Savory, “there is nothing left for climatologists and scientists to do (on a high percentage of the world's soils) that will not cause desertification and climate change. There is only one option, and that is to do the ‘unthinkable’... and to use livestock – bunched and moving – to mimic nature. There is no other alternative left to mankind.”

Using this system, Savory says they have “documented over a 50 % increase in production the first year.” In some areas, men are realizing that

this approach is “the only hope they have in saving their families and their culture.” Most of the world's land (95%) can only feed people from animals.

Savory believes that desertification is “causing climate change as much or perhaps even more than the use of fossil fuels, but worse than that, it is causing hunger, poverty, violence, social breakdown, war, human suffering and death. And if this continues –we will be unable to stop the climate changing – even after we have eliminated the use of fossil fuels.”

If you are paying close attention, you'll observe that this is the second time in as many issues that I have suggested that you watch a video on-line. If this short summary has sparked your interest at all, I assure you that Savory's presentation, which lasts only a few minutes, will be memorable. It was for me – I shared it with several family members and we're still talking about it!

I don't know about you, but I think I'll learn more about Allan Savory and his research. It feels pretty good to hear that you've gone from being the cause of all the world's problems to being a part of the “single option left to saving mankind”... nice indeed!

You can locate this video on the web. Just search: Allan Savory – How to green the world's deserts.

KwC



If you have been around in the cattle business very long, you have no doubt heard from some source, be it from a ‘protestor’ at a fair somewhere or from a university professor, that cows are simply bad for the environment. “Hamburgers are the Hummers of food. That's because beef is an inefficient food to produce and cows release a large amount of methane”... You may hear from one academic. “Switching to no red meat and no dairy products is the equivalent of (cutting out) 8,100 miles driven in a car” says another. Just when you think one issue has blown over, out comes another expert or report attacking the industry again.

ENTER: Allan Savory.

Now Allan Savory is a name I'd heard before, from grazing presentations or from reading The Stockman



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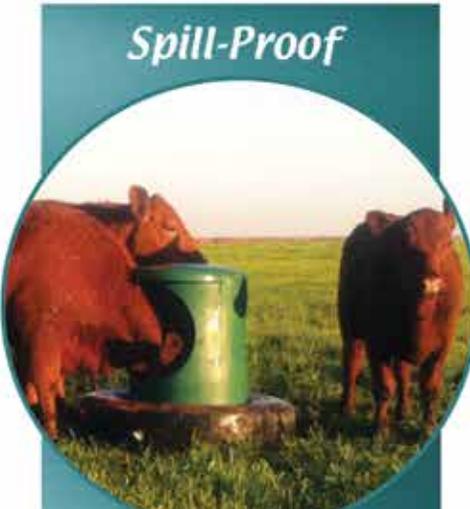
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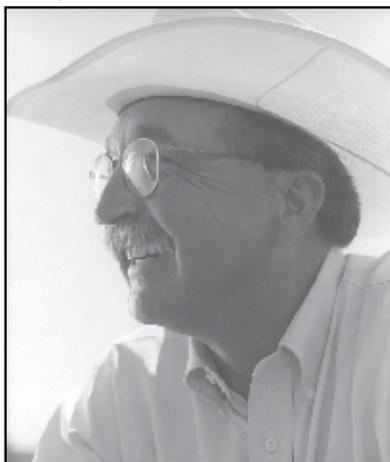


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Cattle theft has been a problem for as long as cattle have been domesticated. The severity of the problem comes and goes with the fluctuating prices of livestock. Right now, it's as bad as I've ever seen it and, considering the current high prices of beef cattle, I guess we shouldn't be surprised.

In the 1800's, the thieves were relatively easy to catch. Since the stolen property had to be rounded up on horseback and driven, on foot, to a holding pen or market, a good tracker could follow the signs and catch up with the bad

guys—barring hoof prints being washed away by rain or dust storms. Once caught, justice was swift and permanent with only a body left hanging from a low-lying limb of an oak tree to serve as carrion for the vultures and other varmints.

You see, to steal someone's cattle is to steal that farmer's reason for living. The typical beef farmer spends the entire year feeding, tending, and doc-

toring the animals in hopes of reaching that one (maybe two, if they calve in both spring and fall) payday that allows them to carry on their way of life for another twelve months. They do their work in all kinds of weather, every day (and night) of the week, to try to make enough money to keep doing the job they love. When someone disrupts their chances for a profit, they take

it VERY seriously.

In my part of the country, the thieves seem to be very sophisticated and savvy. Of course, with today's technology, anyone with access to the internet can pull up very clear and detailed satellite images of where my cattle are located and how many fences they'll have to cut through to reach

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Keith Carmichael
417-644-2993 Fax 417-644-7748
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Plain Talk on Cattle

LOOKING AT THE DOWN SIDE

By Ron Plain, Extension Economist, UMC



With the U.S. cattle herd smaller than any time in the last 60 years, it is very easy to be optimistic about cattle prices. The futures market is predicting a fourth consecutive record year with fed cattle prices up \$2-3/cwt from last year. Most likely, there are many more months of record high prices in front of us. But, it is a good idea to keep in mind the potential risks. There are a number of things that just might go wrong.

Although the odds are always against a major drought, they do occur. It may not rain this summer either. That will mean little

grazing and more record feed costs. For every dime increase in corn prices, the value of feeder cattle decreases by roughly \$6 per head. Grain stocks and hay supplies are extremely low and a dry summer with a poor corn crop will be disastrous for the livestock and poultry industries. Good summer rains and fall corn prices may well be \$2 per bushel lower than today.

Slaughter weights are increasing fast. 2012 steer slaughter was down 2.3%, but average steer weight was up 2.2%. Thus, beef production from steers was down only 0.1% in 2012. Thus far in 2013, slaughter weights are well above year-earlier levels. So it looks like 2013 will be a repeat of last year with most of the tonnage benefit from reduced fed cattle slaughter being offset by heavier slaughter weights.

Much of the decline in 2013 beef production is expected to come from reduced female slaughter. If pastures don't rebound from the 2012 drought, cows and heifers may be forced to market.

Each month the U.S. exports roughly 10% of U.S. beef production. The 2003 mad cow disease scare drove U.S. beef exports from

10% of production to 0% over night. Foreign markets can be very lucrative, but they are also very risky. A foreign animal disease outbreak can close foreign markets immediately. Trade disputes often arise over minor issues. Russia has stopped buying U.S. beef over a dispute about racotopamine.

Domestic meat demand may soften. The U.S. economy is weak and appears likely to stay that way until the next recession. We've had four years of slow economic growth since the 2008 recession. On average, recessions show up every 6 or 7 years. Rather than looking forward optimistically to faster growth, it may be time to start anticipating the next recession. People don't stop eating during tough times, but they do spend less money on meat.

The cattle herd has been declining for several years. Fewer cattle mean less need for slaughter plants. In small part, the record fed cattle price last year was due to extremely tight packer margins. A shortage of cattle and tight margins caused Cargill to close their Plainview, Texas slaughter plant. More plant closures and packer margins will widen at the expense of cattle prices.

USDA is forecasting the 2013 supply of pork, chicken and turkey will each be more plentiful than

last year. When corn prices finally do decline, these competing meats will be able to expand production much faster than beef can. USDA expects 2013 beef production to be down 3.2% from last year. That should mean higher beef prices, unless too many consumers shift to other meats.

One never knows when the next food scare will occur and whether it will be beef or some other food that faces adverse consumer reaction to negative publicity. Most consumers know little about how their food is produced or about all the safeguards that make it wholesome and safe. This lack of knowledge makes it easy to scare people. Fortunately, most food scares eventually pass with no long lasting harm to demand.

In addition to these market moving risks, there is an equally long list of potential pitfalls for the individual cattle producer. Low calving rate, high death loss, poor gains, or rustling can each take away all the hoped for profits for the year.

The odds are on the side of cattlemen for rising cattle prices and declining feed costs. But, we have a long ways to go before 2013's profits are in the bank.



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DON'T LET THOSE HEIFERS SLIP NOW

By Glenn Selk,
Oklahoma State University

As we get closer to April and the breeding season for replacement heifers that are destined for a spring calving herd, proper nutritional management is more important than ever. In a "normal" year, (with fall rains and winter snows) cattle have been removed from wheat pasture at this time to maintain optimum grain yield. In most cases this winter the heifers have been fed supplement and hay. They will be turned in with the bulls or put on a synchronization program to be bred in April. In some cases this means that the heifers must be moved from one location to another that is closer to working facilities. The trick, of course, is to not let those heifers go on a steep downslide in body condition as we approach the breeding season. Research has shown that if heifers (near the time of reaching puberty) undergo a severe reduction in dietary intake of protein and especially energy, breeding success may be disappointing.

Oklahoma State University researchers have studied the impact of short-term energy restriction on ovulation rates of cycling replacement heifers. This trial is reported in the 2001 OSU Animal Science Research Report. The effects of acutely restricting nutrition on ovulation and metabolic hormones were evaluated in Angus x Hereford heifers. All of the heifers were housed in individual pens in a barn and fed a diet supplying 120% of their maintenance requirements for protein and energy (1.2 M) for 10 days to allow time to adjust to the environment and diet. All of the heifers were determined to be cycling at the conclusion of this adjustment period. Then the heifers were split into two groups. Half of the heifers were fed a diet supplying 40% of their maintenance requirements (.4 M). The other half of the heifers were continued on the original diet that supplied 120% (1.2 M) of the maintenance require-

ments. All heifers were injected with prostaglandin so they should ovulate on about day 14 of the trial. Seventy percent (7 of 10) of .4 M heifers did not ovulate as a response to the injection, whereas all of the 1.2 M heifers had normal ovulation.

In this study, restricting nutrient intake for 14 days prevented ovulation in a large percentage of beef heifers without altering visible body condition. Heifers



should be managed to avoid short-term nutrient restriction to maintain normal estrous cycles.



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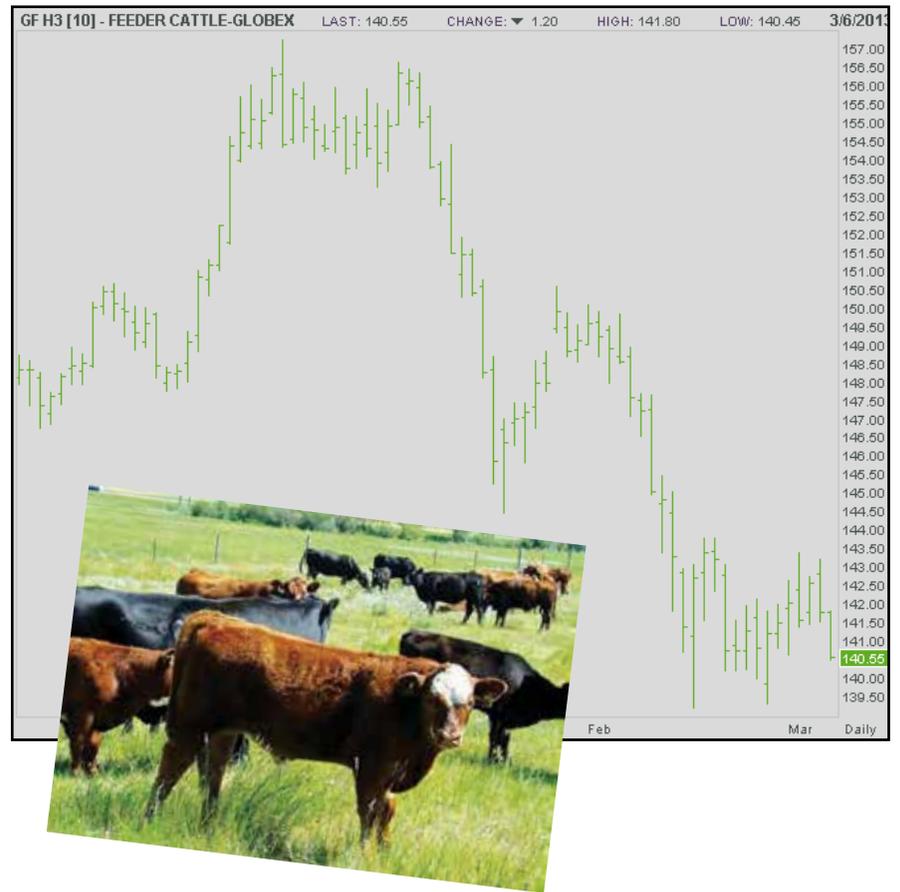
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Live Cattle:

For the most part, assessing a market is pretty much knowing about the supply side and the demand side. The demand side can always throw you for a surprise, but that is usually short term. What totally wrecks havoc on a market is when the “Omniscient” folks in the government start throwing their weight around. The latest decree from the USDA concerning the “supposed” furlough of the meat inspectors is a laughable abomination. Just look at the havoc it has played on the live cattle market! In the government’s infinite wisdom, they are destroying an entire food industry by their total lack of concern for the American people. I agree that meat inspectors are needed because that’s the law. However, whenever you have a law that is not enforceable (meat inspectors not on the job) is it REALLY a law at that point? Why disrupt the food chain because of a dysfunctional bureaucracy? It’s insane. (Note the spelling of the last part of bureaucracy... could easily be spelled “crazy”) In essence what we see happening to the cattle market is a concern about some type of “unnatural” packing plant shutdowns. How do you determine or discover a price when this happens? You don’t. It’s impossible to do because no one knows the implications of the “government gods” decisions. In the interim, we sit and wait and watch the market go down. Our Secretary of Agriculture should be fired and his boss impeached. Their recent actions regarding/affecting the meat industry are debased, distorted, and are a grossly inferior imitation of leadership.

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13039 Millsford Dr,
Pilot Grove, MO 65276
660-834-5625 (Office)
crk102749@yahoo.com



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What Does this Report Mean to Me?

Q: Is there any good news associated with the declaration of meat inspector furloughs?

A: Yes. The USDA intends to pass the ball on down the line (into the last fiscal quarter, July, August and Sept) in hopes of there being a deal made on spending cuts and taxes. It is total denial on their part. This helps the nearby fat cattle and feeder markets.

Q: Is their additional “bad” news?

A: Yes. If the inspectors had taken their furloughs over the course of six months rather than three, the market implications would have been much less troublesome. Few if any people actually believe that the government can reach a conclusive decision, thus the potential exists for “absolute chaos” within the industry.

TEN IDEAS TO IMPROVE YOUR HERD'S CATTLE HEALTH THIS YEAR

By W. Dee Whittier, VA Tech

Like in any other part of our cattle operations, resolving to do some things better for the health programs we have on our beef cattle operations might pay us dividends. So here is my list of top 10:

1. Inspect cattle often to look for ones with health problems. Probably nothing else improves the odds for a good outcome from a health event more than early discovery and treatment.

2. Develop a relationship with your veterinarian. He/she is a lot more likely to make the trip to help you with your midnight calving if you've used them to buy some products and perform some routine vet work. Investing in veterinary inputs into keeping our high-priced cattle healthy is a sound financial practice.

3. Use your veterinarian to help you with sick animals. We have sometimes developed a mindset that we couldn't afford a vet when cull cows were worth \$200. With \$1000 cull cows and weaned calves, an investment in veterinary care for beef cows makes a lot more sense.

4. Prevent exposure to any disease you can. This means carefully considering how you introduce herd additions. It often also means thinking about how you feed and manage calving cows so that scour bugs don't build up in your calving lots or barns.

5. Administer dewormers with a plan. Not every deworming makes economic or control sense. For example, midsummer deworming of spring born calves and two spring dewormers given at the right times to yearling replacements and stocker calves can give returns of \$10 to \$30 per dollar spent on a dewormer.

6. Give calving cows lots of attention. If there appears to be a problem, examine them early. Getting cows and calves successfully through the calving season has never paid bigger dividends.

7. Give newborn calves lots of attention. National figures show newborn losses to be nearly 5%. Dealing with chilling, inadequate colostrum consumption, too little milk, mis-mothering, scours and pneumonia has never been more important.

8. Vaccinate with a plan. Poorly chosen or improperly timed vaccinations may afford no benefit and even make things worse if vaccines add to the stress of already sick cattle. Well-timed vaccines against the right diseases give huge advantages in keeping cattle healthy.

9. Make a plan to market the vaccination program that you have given. Calf buyers will pay premiums

for well-vaccinated calves if they are marketed through a program like VQA or on the Tel-O-Auction where the vaccination information can be passed along and there is a way to get a competitive bid.

10. Follow the rules in using antibiotics to treat cattle.

Not only are many antibiotics expensive, but their use is a concern to our consumers. Consumers generally agree that it is good to treat animals with infections with anti-

biotics. But they want us to be sure we follow withdrawal times and only treat when necessary.

Applying good health management practices in our herds help insure a profit, make cattle production more satisfying and help out the whole beef industry by maintaining our image as responsible keepers of cattle.

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NEW TAXES

continued from page 3

Farm Bureau supports repeal of the 3.8 percent Medicare Contribution Tax that will be applied to "unearned" income of so-called high-income taxpayers and the new 0.9 percent Medicare tax that will be imposed on wages and self-employment income above established thresholds for high-income individuals.

Farm Bureau also supports legislation to repeal the Health Insurance Tax as it will raise insurance costs, making it harder for farmers and ranchers to purchase coverage for themselves, their families and their employees.

In addition, the health insurance coverage mandate accompanied by the threat of a tax penalty for noncompliance is only making the situation worse for people unable to afford health care coverage in the first place, according to AFBF.

"Rural American families already pay a greater percentage of their after-tax family income on health insurance than urban American families," noted AFBF. According to the Council of Economic Advisors, nearly one-quarter of families in rural areas spend more than 10 percent of their income on health insurance coverage, compared with 18 percent in urban areas.

Protecting farmers' and ranchers' interests in debates on tax reform is a priority included in AFBF's strategic action plan for 2013.

American Farm Bureau



RECORD

continued from page 3

tion to decline 4 percent in 2013 and all red meat and poultry supplies to be down 2 percent.

Due to drought in the southern Plains in 2011 and more widespread drought in 2012, the beef cow herd likely will be down 1 to 2 percent in 2013 and result in a correspondingly smaller calf crop.

On Feb. 1, the USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service will release its cattle report that will document the number of each market class of cattle in the U.S. as of Jan. 1, 2013.

Besides the smaller calf crop, two additional factors will contribute to lower trending U.S. supplies of feeder and slaughter cattle. There likely will be fewer feeder cattle imports in 2013 (especially from Mexico), and there could be increased retention of heifers and cows for breeding purposes if better moisture conditions in the U.S. return.

Live cattle futures are indicating another record year for fed-cattle prices.

Strong hide and offal values and beef export values will be supportive to fed-cattle prices. However, the U.S. economy continues to struggle and will need to improve in 2013 to support fed-cattle prices at the projected futures market price levels.

Cow prices were at a record high throughout 2012 and likely will continue to be at a record high, especially if normal moisture levels prevail and beef cow slaughter declines.

A cyclical buildup in the beef cow herd could cause lower cow beef production for several years. Also, the demand for 90 percent lean, boneless beef is expected to stay strong because U.S. consumers have a big appetite for hamburger.

Steer calf prices ended 2012 near

the previous year's record levels. However, prices likely will not be as high as last year early in 2013 due to the drought that continues to plague much of the country. Should the drought subside, and spring and early summer grazing conditions improve significantly, calf prices could challenge last year's levels by April or May.

Fall 2013 calf prices are dependent on corn prices. A good corn crop and lower corn prices would support calf prices at higher levels. However, another poor corn crop and higher corn prices could cause lower calf prices than what we had the last two years.

Both calf and feeder cattle prices are expected to be volatile in 2013 because of the expectation of continued volatility in corn prices. With good growing conditions, there likely will be enough corn acres planted in 2013 to produce a 15 billion bushel corn crop, but another drought year could result in an even smaller crop than the 10.8 billion bushels produced in 2012.

That wide range in production potential could lead to corn prices ranging from less than \$5 per bushel to more than \$9 in the fall. As news of the potential size of the corn crop materializes, prices will adjust accordingly and relatively quickly.

Remember back to mid-June 2012 when November feeder cattle futures prices were \$164 per hundredweight (cwt) and December corn futures prices were \$5.25 per bushel? One month later, corn futures had climbed to \$8 per bushel due to the drought and feeder cattle futures had declined to \$140 cwt.

Volatile prices increase the risk but also opportunities, so producers need to have a good marketing plan with risk management strategies in place.

TSLN



OUTLOOK

continued from page 3

2014 marketing year. Overall 2013 will bring beef and lamb production lower, with pork, broilers, and turkey production higher. Total meat production will be down 0.4% in 2013. With lower meat production, total exports will remain steady, without seeing any growth in beef, pork, or broilers.

Exports

The lack of export growth can be attributed to several factors, according to Shagam. Rising incomes around the world fuel increased demand for meat protein. Global GDP is expected to rise 2-3% in 2013. However, higher prices for US meats will foster production growth in some markets, and that will increase competition for US livestock producers.

Additionally, trade issues with Russia and Japan will stymie export growth. Another problem will be exchange rates between the dollar and other currencies. With higher prices for beef, even higher prices will have to be paid by foreign consumers using the Yen, Peso, and Won.

The export value for pork will be dropping, which will be a benefit for consumers using the US dollar and the Won. However, Japanese consumers will have to pay more, and Peso users will be paying about the same.

Domestically, US consumers will be eating less meat and the per capita consumption will be just under 202 pounds. Broiler meat will see a more constant consumption rate with pork; however beef consumption will decline.

The latter have been on a declining trend for the past 10 years. The reason for declines in beef consumption will be the record high prices that will exceed \$5 per pound. Broiler prices will also have a slight increase to \$1.89 per pound, with pork remaining steady at \$4.69.

Beef declining

Due to the disruption of orderly marketing for beef, curtailment of normal breeding patterns, and other factors, beef production will decline from 25.9 to 25.1 billion pounds in

2013. While there has been a steady decline from the recent peak of 26.5 billion pounds in 2008, the forecast drop for 2013 is a significant cut.

The major reason for declining beef production is the fact that 69% of the domestic cattle inventory is within a region experiencing drought. The cattle herd was 89.3 million head at the first of the year and USDA expects a continued contraction into 2014. The 3% decline in the number of beef cows puts them at the lowest point since 1962.

Along with cattle production, cattle imports will also decline from both Canada and Mexico. Total imports will be 1.95 million head. Beef exports will fade briefly from 2012 to 2.46 billion pounds. Beef imports will increase some 16% to 2.6 billion pounds as US cow slaughter declines at an inversely proportional rate. 2013 will bring higher cattle prices to the beef industry as the average price per cwt will increase from \$125 to \$134 gradually throughout the year.

Pork building

Conversely, pork production will increase to a record of 23.4 billion pounds in 2013, despite the fact that the hog inventory is unchanged at 66.4 million head. USDA anticipates a significant increase in 2014 to 67.3 million head. The increase will come despite only a 0.9% increase in the number of sows farrowing. However the growth will be due to the strong trend in more pigs per litter, which should reach 10.1 in 2013 and 10.3 in 2014. Pork exports reached a record of 5.38 billion pounds in 2012 and 2013 should see a relative stable 5.4 billion pounds of exports. Hog prices are expected to average \$61 to \$65 per cwt, with the highest rates in the second and third quarters of the year.

Summary:

2013 will continue to pose challenges for the livestock industry with high feed costs until the 2013 crop is harvested. The disruption of the cattle cycle due to the drought will reduce marketings and beef production during 2013, with record high prices for beef.

FarmGate



U.S. BEEF

continued from page 3

Pork exports contributed a yearly average of \$55.87 per head to hog values. Export values accounted for 27% of total pork production during 2012. The top five pork value markets last year were Japan, Mexico, China/Hong Kong, Canada and South Korea.

USMEF President and Chief Executive Officer Phil Seng said further opening of the Japanese

market will contribute to projected growth that pushes the total value of beef exports over \$6 billion in 2013. He said that amount might be tempered if issues with exports to Russia are not resolved. Pork exports are projected to be steady to slightly stronger, surpassing \$6 billion again.

KLA



BEEF PRODUCERS LEARN FINER POINTS OF BULL SELECTION

Purchasing a bull can be a difficult and sometimes expensive proposition for a beef cattle producer. However, ranchers got an inside look at how to overcome some of these challenges at a recent workshop held in College Station by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

"We have a lot of breeds of cattle in the U.S. and different cattle work well in different environments," said Dr. Jason Cleere, AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist, who co-lead the workshop with Dr. Jason Banta, AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist at Overton.

Approximately 50 producers attended the workshop, and organizers said the strong numbers will lead to organizing a fall workshop. Cleere discussed the different types of retail beef available to consumers – prime, choice and select – which is more prevalent at grocery stores, he said.

When selecting a bull, Cleere said, "I encourage you to look at the big picture."

Fertility and potential calf birth weights were just a few of several points to study, he said.

"Genetic potential for growth and price per pound are other things to consider," he said.

Cleere advised producers to avoid buying bulls with an unknown background. He said producers should consider buying from a breeder that specializes in producing quality genetics for commercial operations.

Next, consider how much you are willing to pay for a bull.

"How much do I spend? I like to turn this around and say how much do I invest in a bull?" Cleere said. Half of the genetics from a cow herd will be generated from the female and the other half from the bull.

"That bull is over half of your calf crop," Cleere said. "Folks spend \$1,500 to \$2,000 on replacement females and then gripe about spending \$1,500 on a bull. He makes a huge impact on the genetics of a commercial cow herd."

Dr. Jason Banta, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service beef cattle specialist at Overton, discussed how cattle producers can use performance data when selecting the right bull for their operation. Banta said beef producers must identify the goal of their operation before selecting a bull. How you use the provided data for bulls depends upon your goals, Banta said.

He said breed type, individual

performance data, pedigree and visual appraisal are some of the items to consider when purchasing a bull.

"You are not going to use all of it during selection, but those that apply to the goals of your operation," he said.

Expected Progeny Differences or EPDs are also used in bull selection. These are an estimated measure of the genetic impact of a

parent on the offspring. EPDs provide an average number for birth weight, yearling weight and milk weight for an animal and vary depending on breed type.

Another point to consider is what is the best breed type?

"That's the million dollar question," Cleere said. "Because we don't have a controlled environment in Texas, we have different types of cattle that are best suited for different parts of the state."

Those are the Trans-Pecos, High Plains, Central Texas, East Texas,

Gulf Coast and South Texas areas, he said.

"There are different types and kinds of cattle as we move across the state," Cleere said. "We end up with different types of calves."

Heterosis or hybrid vigor also plays a big role in cattle selection for Texas ranchers, he added.

"The more harsh your environmental conditions are, the more important heterosis is," Cleere said. "Hybrid vigor is very important."

Cattle Today



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molybdenum may be found in high levels in certain soils and are antagonistic to copper uptake or absorption. It is always wise to test forages for high levels of these minerals if copper deficiencies or reproductive problems are observed. Forages and other feed ingredients should be tested before formulating a mineral mix. Use of a mineral and vitamin supplement specific to the forage base has been shown to improve reproductive responses in virgin heifers. Feeding management can also affect both age at puberty and feed costs. Separating developing replacement heifers into heavy and light weaning weight groups for better feeding management can result in a 20 to 30 percent increase in cycling and conception rates in light-weight heifers.

Additionally, timing of supplementation of grazing cattle will influence feed costs. Cattle supplemented in morning or late afternoon will stop grazing to eat supplement, while cattle that are supplemented during their normal rest period (around noon) require less supplement for similar gains or performance.

Nutritional Tools – Ionophores, Direct-Fed Microbials and Implants

As mentioned, age at puberty can be reduced by increased growth rates as a result of improved nutrition. Subsequently, producers are often interested in the effects of nutritional management tools such as growth promoting implants and feed additives. Although results may be similar (increased growth rate), ionophores (Rumensin®, Bovatec®) and growth implants work quite differently, in different areas of the animal's physiology. This said, the effect on reproduction can be different.

Ionophores act by altering microbes in the rumen, thereby enhancing digestion and growth rate.

Addition of ionophores to replacement heifer diets can reduce age at puberty by 15 to 30 days while increasing growth rate (average daily gain). Although some of the effect may be due to ionophore action in the rumen, which causes a shift in microbial fermentation patterns, more recent research suggests that there may be systemic actions as well. The response to feeding an ionophore appears to be less dramatic in lightweight or poorly fed heifers.

Other additives such as direct-fed microbials including yeasts, microbial fermentation product or blends of these can also provide positive growth responses. The all-natural feed ingredients work in the rumen and in the intestine to improve fiber and other nutrient digestion as well as stabilize rumen activity.

This aids in creating a healthier, more efficient rumen as well as a more functional intestinal tract exhibiting increased absorption of critical nutrients. These products are generally a source of enzymes such as cellulase, -amylase and protease which serve to increase fiber and feed digestibility.

Most growth implants are steroids (estrogens or androgens) or have steroid-like activity. Steroids increase the release of growth hormones to improve muscle and bone growth, but they also affect the reproductive system. Therefore, if given at the wrong time or in improper doses, growth implants can have a detrimental effect on reproduction. Many different studies have investigated implants and reproduction and results are varied. Effects on replacement heifers can be summarized as follows:

1. Implanting before two months of age dramatically decreased fertility in heifers.
2. One implant during the heifer's lifetime appears to improve growth rate without hurting reproduction.
3. One implant after weaning appears to be less risky than an implant before weaning.

It is strongly recommended to research the use of an implant program in heifers to be used for replacements carefully before implementing this practice. In general, however, avoiding implanting heifers to be used for replacement purposes makes the most sense.

Management of Nutrition

Heifers should be fed in at least two separate weight groups (heavy and light) from weaning until breeding, if at all possible. Diets should be formulated to contain 12 to 13.5 percent Crude Protein and sufficient energy to achieve gains of 1.50 to 1.75 pounds per day, depending on weaning weight and expected mature weight of the animal. Diets should also include a balanced mineral and vitamin supplement that contains trace minerals, vitamins A, D and E, an ionophore and a direct-fed microbial product.

It is important to avoid overfeeding protein. In current markets it is expensive and some researchers believe high levels of protein in breeding animals have negative effects on conception. Overfeeding energy should also be avoided because fat heifers tend to be less fertile and have more calving difficulty. This is a particular problem for heifers that have been fed for and shown extensively.

The goal is to have heifers reach 60 to 65 percent of their projected mature weight 30 to 45 days before the target breeding season. This is known as the Target Weight concept. Target weight for exotic breed (Simmental, Charolais, Limousin, etc.) heifers is usually 65 to 70 percent of their projected mature weight, a bit larger than English breeds. By using a target weight, producers can calculate the rate of gain heifers need to achieve before the breeding season. Diets can then be formulated based on desired gains, and heifers monitored by periodic weighing. Let's consider an example of the target weight system.

Let's say we are feeding a group of Angus X Hereford heifers averaging 500 pounds at weaning in a herd where the mature females average 1,200 pounds with a body condition score 5 or 6. The heifers are weaned on October 1 and we want to begin breeding on May 1. We have decided that the target for

this herd will be 65 percent of mature weight by May 1 (approximately 62 percent if April 1).

Target Weight Calculation

- Target Weight by May 1 = 1200 lb x .65 = 780 lb
- Total weight gain needed = 780 - 500 = 280 lb Days to May 1 = 211
- Average daily gain needed to reach Target Weight = 280 lb, 211 days = 1.32 lb/day

The related feeding program may be structured as follows:

- A winter diet is fed from October 1 to March 15 (166 days) that gives a daily gain of 1.25 pounds resulting in cattle weighing approximately 707 pounds on March 15.
- The spring diet will be fed from March 16 to May 1 (45 days). The heifers need to gain an additional 73 pounds to reach the target weight for breeding. The spring diet will need to be formulated to provide an ADG of 1.61 pounds (73 lb, 45 days).
- Ideally, heifers should be weighed and rations adjusted at least four times between weaning and breeding dates.

Adapted from Hall, J. B., VA Polytech University.

Ten Tips for Better Replacement Heifers

Finally, some basic guidelines:

1. Weigh and condition score heifers at weaning, mid-winter, pre-breeding and breeding to keep growth rate on track.
2. Feed heifers to gain 1.5 to 1.75 pounds per day from weaning until breeding. Remember to include a complete mineral and vitamin mix.
3. Sort heifers into light and heavy weight groups at weaning.
4. Use the target weight concept, i.e. 65 to 70 percent of mature weight by breeding.
5. Include ionophores and direct-fed microbials in diets, but avoid growth implants.
6. Measure and use pelvic areas and reproductive tract scores to cull heifers prior to breeding.
7. Feed MGA and/or use hormone programs to synchronize estrus in heifers. Or use other synchronization programs to tighten breeding and calving periods.
8. Breed heifers to low birth weight bulls.
9. Feed pregnant heifers to calve in body condition score 6.
10. Monitor heifer calvings and provide assistance early if necessary.

Conclusions

Developing heifers can require a higher degree of management than other classes of cattle. But since these animals are the future of the herd, this time and attention is well spent. A good heifer development and feeding program helps insure long term herd productivity and efficiency.

Dr. Steve Blezinger is a management and nutritional consultant with an office in Sulphur Springs, TX. He can be reached at sblez@verizon.net or at (903) 352-3475.

Cattle Today



LIFE IS SIMPLE

continued from page 5

the pen or corral that they see on their high-definition computer screen. Still, they have to know the timing and terrain well enough to pull off their crime in the dark of night without alerting anyone. I'm amazed at how well they have been able to do it.

Visiting with a group of friends at the stockyards a couple of weeks ago, our conversation soon turned to the rustling problem and what each of us would do, should we come upon someone attempting to steal our cattle...

The first rancher, a mild-mannered gentleman in his fifties, stated that he'd call 911 on his cell phone and wait until the sheriff arrived. A crusty, old-timer in the group asked, "And what would you do if they took off while you were waiting for the law?"

The first gentleman replied, "I guess I'd take off after them while still on the phone with the sheriff's office."

"Not me," the old man replied angrily, "I'd drive in with guns blazing and let the Good Lord sort it out when the dust settled."

Another friend, who has actually had some cattle stolen during this past year, said he would hold them at gunpoint until help arrived, but he'd sure give them a cussing while they waited and, if one of them even moved, he would be more than happy to, "Blow their heads off!"

The last one of our groups' cattlemen said he would just want some time alone with them. "So you could beat the tar out of them?" asked the crusty, old rancher.

"Nope," he replied calmly, "I just want to learn how they got so good at handling strange cattle—in strange conditions—in the absolute dark of nighttime. I can't even catch my own cattle in the daytime when conditions are perfect!"

Cattle and beef markets find some footing

By Derrell Peel, OSU



Cattle and beef markets weakened throughout January and February as a combination of weak demand and looming drought weighed heavily on feeder, fed and boxed beef markets. Beef demand has no doubt been negatively impacted by a series of storms, dating back to Hurricane Sandy, which impacted population centers in the northeast. Choice boxed beef dropped from roughly \$194/cwt. in early January to a late February low of \$182/cwt. Fed cattle likewise dropped from \$128/cwt. at the beginning of the year to a recent low under \$122/cwt. Oklahoma prices for both stocker calves and heavy feeder cattle dropped through February as well.

However, market conditions appear to be improving in several different areas. Low boxed beef prices finally spurred sales and combined with recent slaughter reductions and decreasing carcass weights to push Choice boxed beef prices up to \$188, up over \$5/cwt. from the previous Friday. Fed cattle prices also jumped, buoyed by stronger boxed beef prices and winter storms that disrupted cattle shipments and caused production losses and increased death loss in central and southern plains feedlots. The winter weather impacts will likely continue for several weeks. During the same time feedlot supplies should be tightening as a reflection of the limited placements in the second half of 2012. Fed

cattle prices should be strongly supported well into the second quarter of 2013, with the key being boxed beef prices depending on stronger consumer demand.

Feeder cattle markets, also disrupted by winter weather, remained weak but are expected to bounce back soon. Recent moisture in Oklahoma significantly improved the

immediate drought situation and will likely stabilize feeder markets. Though much more moisture is needed to eliminate the drought, the assurance of initial moisture to begin forage growth is a great help to cattle producers. Cool season grasses and winter wheat are already responding to improved moisture with

new growth. Water concerns remain high as little pond recharge has occurred thus far. The recent moisture is only a small deposit on what is needed to fix the drought but it is a start and that is encouraging for producers.



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REA	0.09
FAT	-0.01
MARB	0.02
%CEZ	5.57
%F	52.73
%Bmi	37.85

BW: 90 lbs.;
Adj. 205: 742 lbs.

CEM	CWT	REA	FAT	MARB	%CEZ	%F	%Bmi
3.0	16	0.09	-0.01	0.02	5.57	52.73	37.85

Waukaru Architect 2096 *x4188112



CEM	-2.0
CWT	4
REA	0.03
FAT	-0.02
MARB	0.12
%CEZ	6.68
%F	44.58
%Bmi	32.36

BW: 91 lbs.;
Adj. 205: 697 lbs.

CEM	CWT	REA	FAT	MARB	%CEZ	%F	%Bmi
-2.0	4	0.03	-0.02	0.12	6.68	44.58	32.36

Waukaru Colossal 2093 ET x4188176



CEM	0.0
CWT	15
REA	0.13
FAT	-0.01
MARB	-0.01
%CEZ	2.14
%F	44.46
%Bmi	32.27

BW: 92 lbs.;
Adj. 205: 690 lbs.

CEM	CWT	REA	FAT	MARB	%CEZ	%F	%Bmi
0.0	15	0.13	-0.01	-0.01	2.14	44.46	32.27

Waukaru Lucas 2036 4189963



CEM	0.6
CWT	13
REA	0.04
FAT	-0.02
MARB	0.05
%CEZ	11.90
%F	46.95
%Bmi	35.42

BW: 80 lbs.;
Adj. 205: 658 lbs.

CEM	CWT	REA	FAT	MARB	%CEZ	%F	%Bmi
0.6	13	0.04	-0.02	0.05	11.90	46.95	35.42



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FINDING COST SAVINGS IN THE BEEF COW-CALF BUDGET

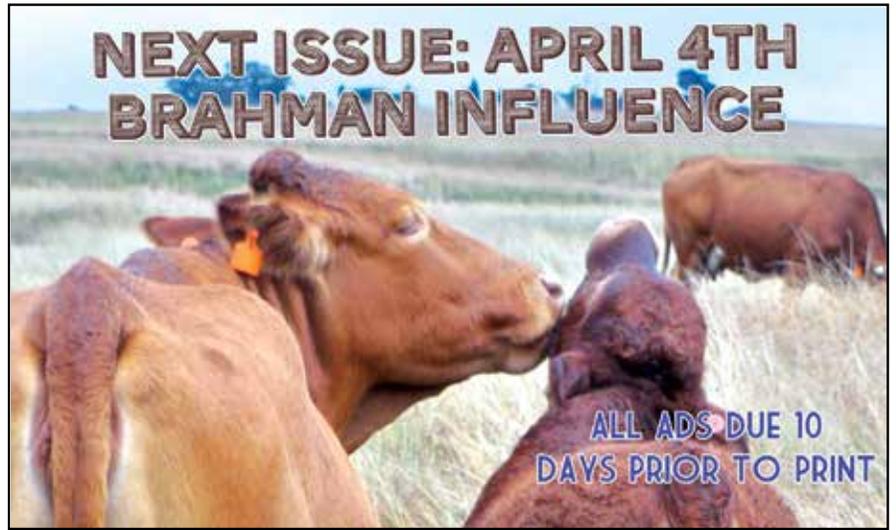
Beef cow-calf producers have seen a drastic increase in the prices they receive for cattle over the last 10 years. Unfortunately, the cost of production has risen at a comparable rate over this same time frame. Cost of fuel, fertilizer, machinery and drought have driven feed production costs to levels, offsetting profit. Critical cost of production analysis can give producers an opportunity to find expenses that can be reduced.

Pasture rates should be evaluated. The cost of renting pasture has risen across much of the Midwest due to pressure from grain and forage production. As cost of pasture increases, the need to intensively manage those acres increases. Utilizing manage-

ment intensive grazing practices is an important aspect of increasing productivity of those acres. Better grazing practices will improve quality of the forage and increase yield. Cows will gain condition and weight, which can lead to better pregnancy conception rates and put cows in position to allow for marginal forages to be fed through the winter months. Better pastures allow better calf gains and higher gross sales.

In various locations of the country, rental rates have not been pressured to the same extent. In these situations, pasture yield can be increased by renting more acres. Practices, such as fertilization, should be evaluated to determine cost effectiveness. If pasture costs

continued on page 15



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FINDING

continued from page 14

are at a premium, increasing productivity is important. In areas where pasture acres are readily available and not overly expensive, simply renting more acres may be a more economical decision.

Decreasing hay production by extending the grazing season can have major impact on the cost of feeding the cow herd. As a Michigan State University Extension ruminant educator, I have worked with producers across the Midwest who continually implement production practices that allow cattle to graze farther into the winter and earlier in the spring. Even in the northern regions across Wisconsin, Minnesota and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, some producers are feeding stored feeds for as little as 120-135 days. Planting crops for grazing into the fall, winter and spring can greatly shorten the feeding period of stored feeds such as: Brassi-

cas or corn planted after harvest of small grains; Winter rye or other cereal grains planted after soybeans or corn silage for late fall and early spring grazing; Planting corn for later grazing during the winter months allows for high quality forage consumption, even with significant snow cover. Grazing planted crops is best accomplished with strip grazing to limit access and improve grazing efficiency.

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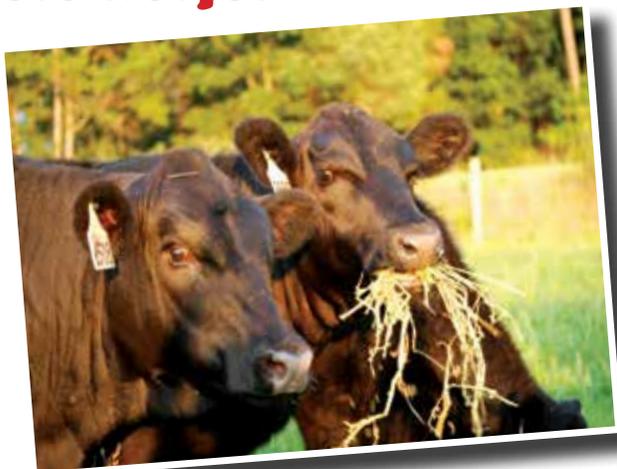
Hay quality affects heifer calving success for next 2 years

The quality of hay fed to a beef heifer during winter will determine the vigor of her calf to be born in the spring—and whether she can rebreed to calve the next year.

The amount of fat on a heifer's back determines the care she needs, says Justin Sexten, University of Missouri Extension beef nutritionist. His concern includes condition of cows in a herd, but heifers pregnant with first calves need extra nutrition.

Sexten is concerned about the coming calf crop—for the next two years—because of drought last summer. Too many beef females went into winter without protective layers of fat that help carry them through until spring grass.

For some, hay supplies are limited and quality low. A ration rich in nutrients allows cows to maintain body condition, keep the fat layer and develop a calf. Normally hay does that.



“Unfortunately, much forage harvested last season does not meet base requirements,” Sexten says. Grain supplement will be needed if hay is not of adequate quality.

Herd owners judge the amount and what kind of feed that will be needed from body condition scores (BCS) of cows.

By rule of thumb, a heifer should calve at 85 percent of her mature body weight. Most herds target 1,300-pound mature cows. That mature weight is based on 5- to 8-year old cows at BCS 5 on a scale of 1 to 9. That means a goal of 1,200 pounds at calving for

heifers—1,100 pounds of body mass plus 100 pounds of condition.

Growing heifers need more and better feed than mature cows. They should be fed separately from the cows, Sex-

ten says.

Body condition scores are measured in 100-pound increments. Scoring estimates fat on the cow's body. If she is flat across the back with no backbone or ribs showing, she scores BCS 6 or better, a desired condition for calving.

However, if her backbone “splits a raindrop,” she needs feed to add body fat before calving, Sexten says.

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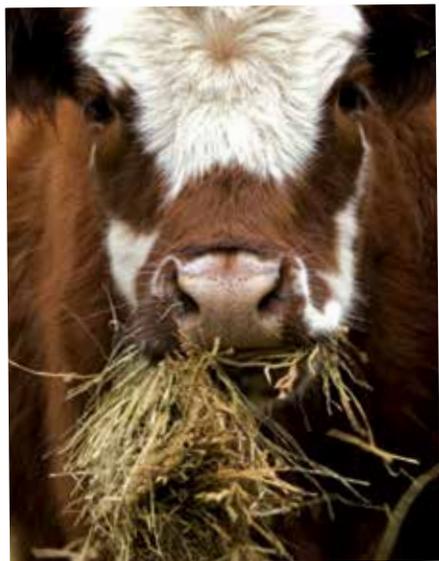
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DON'T FEED HEIFERS LIKE COWS

By Geni Wren



uct feed (for example 4.5 pounds per day dried distiller's grain). "Often the forage available is moderate to poor quality and heifers on those forages will require even more supplemental feed to meet their gain requirements to reach appropriate breeding weight." Leading up to the breeding season, the primary difference between growing heifers and maintaining cows that are in good body condition is that good quality forage alone will

usually provide appropriate levels of energy and protein for cows, but is not adequate for growing heifers.

Bovine Veterinarian Magazine



Heifers are not cows, especially when it comes to their nutritional needs prior to breeding. Bob Larson, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACT, Dipl. ACVPM, Kansas State University, told participants at last month's 2013 K-State Cow-Calf Conference that the important difference between pre-breeding cows and heifers is that heifers are still using nutrients to grow and mature in addition to putting on body weight so that they can prepare for breeding.

Larson gave an example of beef heifers weaned on Oct. 25 at 500 pounds. "The target at breeding would be 780 pounds, which is 65% of their mature cow weight (approximately 1,200 pounds) by May 1," he said.

So from weaning to breeding, heifers need to gain 1.5 pounds per day. "While heifers may meet this goal on high-quality green grass, they will fall far short of that gain if grazing dormant forage or fed moderate to good quality hay," he explained.

To get them to gain 1.5 pounds per day, even if good quality forage is available, will require a small amount of supplemental grain or by-prod-



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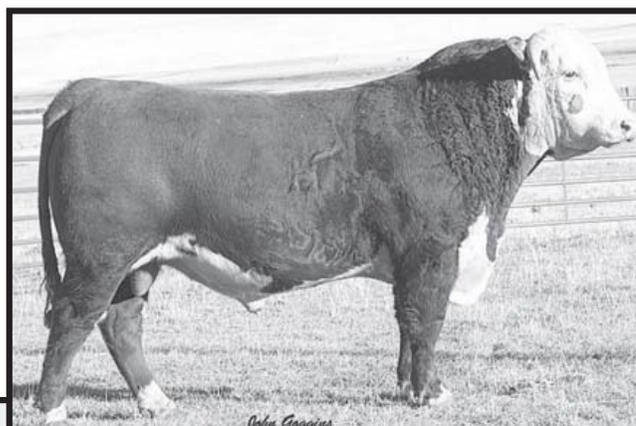
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Impacts of Nutrition On Health of Newly Received Calves

By Dr. Brandi B. Karisch,
Mississippi State University

Most beef producers are well aware that if growing calves don't eat or don't have enough to eat that they won't gain, and won't make a profit. However, most producers don't realize that what that calf eats, or doesn't eat, also has a big impact on the health status of that calf. Every year, the beef industry loses a large amount of money due to death (mortality) and sickness (morbidity) of growing calves. Often the cost of treatment and lost production due to respiratory disease is greater than actual death loss. A good nutrition program is vital to the success of a good health program.

Lightweight, newly received calves often face nutritional deficiencies due to either an ongoing deficiency pre-weaning, or simply the fact that those calves eat less or not at all due to the stress of the weaning, processing, and transportation. When these two nutritional deficiencies are combined, the low intake of new calves makes correcting any previous problems impossible, and this further makes these calves more susceptible to infections. Typically older, heavier cattle don't see as drastic a reduction in intake as lightweight calves.

Beef producers are well aware of how important nutrition of the cowherd is for breeding

purposes. Producers are also well aware of how important it is to give calves a good start in life, but often it is easy to forget the impact that a good (or bad) start in life may have on that calf's health and performance after leaving his dam. It is well known that the transfer of immunoglobulins from colostrum is important to the short-term health and survival of calves, but it also can have a long-term impact on health and performance.

The nutritional status of the dam, and its effect on the future performance and health of that calf has become a popular topic for research in recent years. Human medicine has realized the impact that malnutrition of the mother can have on her children for years, and recognizes that low birth weight is a major risk factor for many diseases later in life. This only serves to reemphasize the importance of proper nutrition for the cowherd, as it may impact the performance and health of calves years down the road.

The stress of weaning, processing, and transportation can have a negative impact on feed intake, performance, and in turn health of calves. Typically, unstressed calves will consume enough feed to meet their energy needs, and increasing roughage or bulky feeds will increase their intake to the point where fill becomes limiting. The op-

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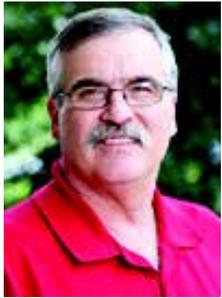
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These Are All Ranch Raised

Cow herd rebuilding takes time

By Steve Swigert



With the Jan. 1, 2013, total of all cattle and calves at 89.3 million head - the lowest reported number in over 60 years - the industry is very short on calf supply. In addition,

lack of moisture has created poor pasture conditions in most areas, driving the demand for high priced feed. Together, these conditions have driven cow costs to all time highs. With most producers' costs between \$500 and \$600 per cow or even more, not much incentive exists to expand the cow herd. The result is a decline in beef cow numbers of 3 percent to 29.3 million cows in 2012 and a calf crop for 2012 that declined an estimated 3 percent from 2011.

What kinds of challenges and opportunities does this bring to producers trying to decide whether or not to be in the cattle business?

Cow/calf producer considerations

•Higher calf prices

If the 2013 corn crop yields improve from 2012 to near long-term averages in 2013, then the price of calves will move higher. This will make it very difficult to keep heifers for replacements.

•Lack of supply for replacement females

With the value of a yearling heifer near \$1,000 and the prospects of investing another \$500 in the heifer before getting a calf, it becomes challenging to keep a heifer for a cow.

•Challenges borrowing money

With the price of cows at near record highs and prospects of moving higher, many producers are struggling to obtain financing.

•Greater margins

If cow costs are kept in check and good calves are

raised, then margins should be good for the cow inventory for the next few years.

Production time frame for heifers retained at market highs

Typically, heifers retained at a time of high calf prices are at peak production when prices are lower.

Stocker operator considerations

•Higher purchase prices

With fewer calves available, the purchase price for calves should be higher.

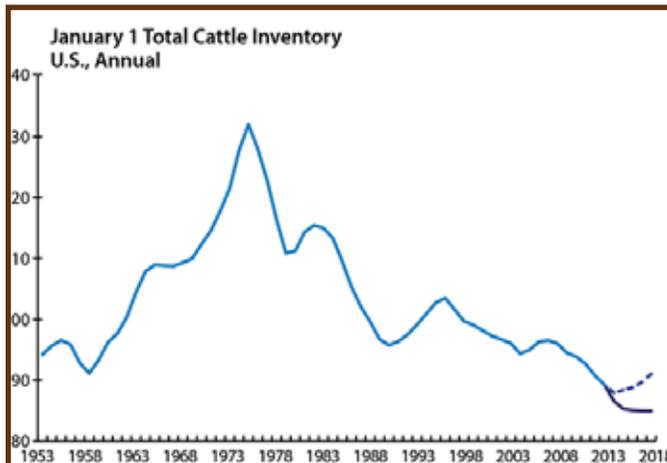
•More risk

Higher prices bring more risk. Health and price risks will be challenging as the value of each calf is greater.

•Opportunities in value of gain

With feedyard costs of gain exceeding \$1 per pound, there will be profits for those operations with grass or cheap

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Value-based cattle marketing dominates

By Miranda Reiman

Selling fed cattle on a live basis is no longer standard practice, and some day it could end up as no more than historical reference.



"The old selling-them-live method has given way to formula sales," says Mark McCully, assistant vice president for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB).

Data from Cattle-Fax and the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows a sharp decline in cash sales in the past seven years, from 52.1% in 2005 to just 26% in 2012. The inverse of that is the steep gain in negoti-

ated sales, like grid marketing and other arrangements, which moved up from less than half of sales to more than three-quarters during those years.

"This is a clear signal the industry is moving away from pricing on averages, and instead pricing cattle on their individual merits," McCully says.



Amy Radunz is an animal scientist at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, where informal surveys show nearly two-thirds of

However, there are some regional variations to this trend.

the state's farmer-feeders still market finished cattle through the salebarn.

"Buyers are sitting there in the auction barn essentially putting those cattle on a grid," she says. "As they are determining price on those cattle, they are trying to determine things like dressing percent, how the cattle will likely grade and how much risk they're willing to assume."

Packer buyers try to gather as much information as they can to reduce the "unknowns" on a set of cattle.

"Quality grade gets more

challenging," Radunz says. "They're either going by reputation, breed composition or fat thickness to assess that."

McCully says that's proof even those who don't use grid marketing are impacted by this recent, dramatic trend.

"It forces feeders to look more carefully at source," he says. "That marketing philosophy eventually trickles down to the cow-calf level."

The spread in value difference between superior calves and the inferior ones will likely continue to grow, he predicts.

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Forage more valuable today

Winter feeding and care always have been a critical aspect of cattle production in the northern Plains.

Meeting the most basic needs of the stock - adequate feed for efficient production and well-being - represents the major cost to and activity of producers.

"That makes hay and forage, the basic feed for cattle, more valuable today, whether it is standing in the pasture, rolled into a bale or packed into a bunker," says John Dhuyvetter, area Extension livestock specialist at North Dakota State University's North Central Research Extension Center near Minot.

"As such, it may deserve greater attention in valuing its costs, and maximizing its use and value."

Historically, hay and forage have been abundant and inexpensive, but that's not the case now. The opportunity to harvest low-quality, low-cost hay on Conservation Reserve Program land is disappearing fast, and producers do not want to raise a forage crop on high-rent land capable of producing a high-profit grain crop.

"This scenario is creating some new forage realities," Dhuyvetter says.

"Differing situations are bringing forth unique challenges that are being addressed in a variety of ways, often with some trade-offs."

With hay at \$100 per ton, producers need to enhance yields through management, reduce losses and minimize needs, he adds. Here are ways he suggests producers could accomplish that:

* Renovate old hay stands that no longer are productive. Including a legume such as alfalfa in grass-dominated fields can boost nitrogen levels without the cost of applying a commercial fertilizer.

* Plant newer forage species and varieties because they likely are more productive.

* Plan for more timely cuttings to maximize feed nutrients.

* Keep harvesting equipment well-maintained to minimize losses.

* Ensilage forage where available acreage is limited and you need a high

continued on page 34

Alfalfa in forage system extends feed in drought

Another drought year ahead or not, adding more forages to the grazing mix helps during the annual summer slump, says a University of Missouri Extension forage specialist.

Rob Kallenbach, Columbia, advocates more alfalfa, although the legume called "the queen of forages" has fallen out of favor with some farmers.

Planting alfalfa can boost production on any pasture-based livestock farm, Kallenbach says.

"Yields in 2012 were an eye-opener for those who had alfalfa in their for-

age mix," he adds. "Alfalfa kept growing long after other crops had dried up and died. The deep-rooted legume was noticeably greener."

Drought brings renewed interest in establishing the protein- and nutrient-rich legume.

Kallenbach admits alfalfa is a picky plant. "It likes deep, rich, well-drained soils. Alfalfa won't tolerate wet feet."

But the legume responds well to good management, especially when lime,

continued on page 34

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Even if the Midwest gets normal rain and snow, it will take almost two years for soil moisture deep in the earth to recharge and sustain normal crop growth, said a University of Missouri soil scientist.

Randall Miles, associate professor of soil science at the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, said that two years of drought in the Heartland have left many prime growing areas bone dry to at least five feet down. This is where the roots of the crops live, sucking up moisture and nutrients. Without enough water, these crops produce poor yields.

“Don’t count a full recovery of soil moisture soon,” Miles said. “Even if parts of the Midwest receive a lot of snowfall and rain, that moisture will take time to move deep into the soil where the driest conditions exist.”

Miles said that roots have had to go down as deep as eight feet to extract water. Soil moisture recharge is a hydrologic process where water from rain and snow moves downward from surface water and fills in the pore space found in soil. The soil is recharged naturally by rain and snowmelt.

Hurricane helped a little

Parts of Missouri, Indiana and Illinois caught September rains from the remnants of Hurricane Isaac, which helped some of the recharging process there. Other areas, though, weren’t as fortunate. The most recent U.S. Drought Monitor shows a stage 4 (most severe on the rating scale) drought in the central Great Plains of South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma, with neighboring regions showing increased degrees of drought.

Miles has been observing the depths of soil moisture around Missouri. Places where Hurricane Isaac dropped extra rainfall are wet down to a few inches, but the ground is still dry below that level.

Miles pointed out that moisture near the surface can evaporate with just a few days of high winds, higher-than-normal temperatures or low relative humidity. This can pre-

vent moisture from having a chance to move deep into the soil where it is needed.

“The rain and snow will have to come almost continuously – an almost London type of weather pattern – if the soil is to be recharged soon,” Miles said. “It will have to come down slow and steady to minimize runoff.”

Microbial health and river depth a problem too

It could take two years of good rains for beneficial microbes and insects to recover as well, Miles said. “The soil lives in a balance of water and biological activity,” Miles pointed out. “The deep drought has disrupted that biological activity.” The dry soil has impacted the Midwest’s corn crop. Without the

drought’s influence, the USDA’s trend line called for an average yield of 162 bushels of corn per acre. In 2012, that yield was only 122 bushels per acre. There have been four years of below-trend-line production in many areas. Many Midwestern ranchers have culled their herds because there isn’t enough feed forage or water from ponds and streams that have dried up.

Miles said that a lack of moisture passing through the soil and into waterways could also affect barge traffic on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Those river levels could be down for another two or more years, too.

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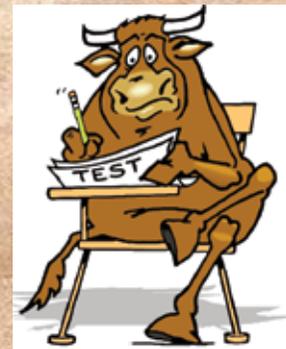


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Survival still is about production costs

By Kris Ringwall, NDSU

The times are good pricewise for cattle, but cattle producers have a lot on their minds these days.

Calving has started on many ranches, and the complicated production scenarios already are constantly churning for producers. Unfortunately, the dollars associated with many production scenarios often are in place well before adequate financial evaluations are done. The critical point is that the dollars are coming in well, but the dollars going out also are growing.

The cattle business costs money.

In visiting with Jerry Tuhy, farm business management instructor at the Dickinson Research Extension Center (www.ndfarmmanagement.com), he noted that free markets will tend to price commodities at or near a break-even point for the bulk of producers. In other words, high-cost producers will be the first producers to lose money in good or bad markets. No market will remain positive enough that all producers will survive the financial tests through time. Cost control remains critical at all times in the cattle business.

In the current world, competition from the energy- and food-producing sectors of agriculture is real. The competition between land uses, such as crops grown for human consumption, crops for energy and crops for livestock feed, is very real. Given Mother Nature's hesitation to provide moisture, the competition only gets tougher.

Grass is becoming even more of a premium. Despite agriculture's tremendous effort at keeping energy costs low and feeding people,

the price is high as these inputs return to farms and ranches as needed supplies.

Cost control is the driver for sustaining beef operations and is achieved by the continual evaluation of the planning process.

We need to return to the North Dakota Farm Management Program, along with the FINBIN database from the Center for Farm Financial Management at the University of Minnesota. These programs allow our discussion to focus on the dollars and sense involved in the beef enterprise.

A good place to start is gross margin. Ac-

ording to Tuhy, gross margin accounts for the purchase and sale of all calves, cull cows and bulls, plus animals transferred in and any overall changes in cattle inventory. The bottom line: Gross margins reflect the amount of money cattle producers have to work with.

In the bigger picture, if gross margins are very small, a producer needs to ask why he or she is involved in the beef business because the money in and the money out are a wash.

Well, that is not true in the beef business because those producers who have at least 50 cows and were involved in the 2011 North Dakota Farm Management program had \$729 in gross margins.

Without going too far back in time, these cattle producers have had stable to increasing gross margins to work with. From 2006 through 2010, cattle producers who were enrolled in the North Dakota Farm Management program had gross margins of \$578 in 2010, \$451 in 2009, \$464 in 2008, \$543 in 2007 and \$529 in 2006.

In 2011, the total direct and overhead expense was \$546 per cow. Although the 2010 gross margin was above 2011 expenses, 2009 through 2006 gross margins were all below the current 2011 expenses.

In other words, if cattle prices returned to the prices offered from 2006 through 2009, cattle producers would be operating in the

continued on page 31

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SHORT TERM CHANGES IN NUTRITION CAN IMPACT EMBRYO SURVIVAL

When it comes to replacement heifers, we focus a lot of attention on getting heifers to the appropriate weight and condition for breeding. While this certainly represents a key part of the development process, continued effort is needed to capture all of the benefits from that initial effort.

Early reproductive success has major implications for lifetime productivity. Researchers from the Meat Animal Research Center and SDSU reported heifers that conceive in the first 21 days of their first breeding period remain in the herd for 0.6 to 1.2 years longer than those that conceive in the second cycle. Not surprisingly then, this early calving group of heifers have an increased average weaning weight through six calves (Figure 1; Kill et al 2012) and more total pounds weaned compared to those calving in the second period.

In most situations, fertilization rate is estimated to be 90% or greater in beef heifers, whereas first service conception rate drops to 60-70%. While a certain amount of this early embryonic loss will likely always occur, man-

agers want to make every effort to minimize it. Nutrition and management early after conception can influence that loss.

In one study, forage allotment was such that heifers either received 2 times their maintenance energy requirement or 80% of maintenance requirements 10 days before AI and 14 days after AI to create 4 treatments, H-H, H-L, L-L, L-H. Embryo survival rate was significantly lower for heifers that were in the H-L group (38%) compared to H-H, L-L or L-H groups (65%, 70% and 71% respectively; Duane et al., 1999).

Another study collected embryos from heifers that either continued on the pre-breeding diet (gain of 1.5 lb/d) or were fed to lose weight for 6 days until embryos were collected. Embryos that developed in heifers losing weight were behind in developmental stage, received lower quality scores, and had fewer live cells compared to those from heifers continuing to gain weight. Additional evidence that fairly short term nutritional changes can have significant impacts on embryos.

In many operations, replace-

ment heifers are grown and developed in a drylot setting and then turned out onto spring pasture after an AI program or as the breeding season starts. Any grazing skills that they learned as a calf may have not been practiced since weaning. A recent study used pedometers to track movement of heifers that were either in a drylot or on spring pasture 42 days prior to AI. Prior to AI, heifers on pasture took twice as many steps per day as those in the drylot.

When placed in a common pasture after AI, drylot heifers took nearly double the number of steps as pasture heifers the first day of turn out and took several days to reach a similar number of steps as pasture heifers.

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Now heifers must not only be fed to support normal body and calf growth during winter, but also to replace lost fat.

Lost fat concerns Sexten. That energy source affects vigor of the calf at birth. Also, adequate body fat adds quality and quantity to milk the heifer provides her newborn calf.

Nutrition in that first 24 hours determines if a calf thrives, Sexten says. Spring-born calves come into a cold world. They need the rich energy and antibodies provided by colostrum, the first milk, to survive.

Adding one point to body condition score requires adding 100 pounds of fat to the mother's body. That requires adding a pound of gain a day for 90 days prior to calving.

In normal years, average hay

maintains an average beef cow. The hay has protein and energy to maintain body condition and grow a calf.

A gestating cow needs hay with 10 percent protein. A lactating cow, nursing a calf, requires 12 percent protein.

"The only way to know hay's nutrient content is with a forage test," Sexten says. "Marginal hay requires supplementation."

For many, that supplement means almost 4 pounds of corn gluten feed on top of the hay. Often, that means buying a grain supplement. "You can pay now, or you pay later," Sexten says. The choice comes down to buying feed now or risk the cow not rebreeding.

Sexten urges herd owners to consider risks of not feeding. If a heifer loses her calf, a \$2,000 replacement heifer becomes worth \$900

in salvage value.

A heifer in poor body condition after calving likely will not rebreed to calve the second year. That happens often, causing huge losses for beef herd owners. A lost heifer must be replaced.

Loss of a calf or heifer puts hay and grain prices in new perspective.

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posite is seen with stressed calves. When given the choice, lightweight stressed calves will select high-concentrate diets over high-roughage diets. Often this results in increased intakes and gains during the initial receiving period. It is recommended that a diet that is 60% concentrate and highly palatable be offered during the initial receiving period. One important thing to remember is that feeding, mixing, and storage facilities must be adequate to accommodate a high concentrate receiving diet as compared to more traditional feeding systems.

Another problem faced with naïve, stressed calves, is that those calves are not broke to the feed and water trough or have not been exposed to a grain type (concentrate) feed. These calves may benefit most from feeding a high quality hay as they are typically accustomed to a purely forage based diet. An important thing to remember with feeding only high

quality hay to these calves is that weight gains will typically be lower than when calves are offered a higher concentrate supplement. Providing a supplement that is highly palatable is also important to these calves that have never encountered a feed bunk. It is important to have adequate amounts of bunk space so that more timid calves do not get crowded out from the feed bunk.

A good mineral supplement is important for all types of cattle, but is of particular importance with stressed calves. It is important that mineral concentrations in receiving diets account for the reduced intake of these calves. Numerous minerals and vitamins play a big part in supporting proper immune function. Offering a complete, well-balanced mineral supplement to stressed calves that are at particular risk of developing an infection is of vital importance.

Many challenges are faced with managing newly received calves. These calves present

unique challenges from both a nutritional and health standpoint that are often inter-related. The majority of these issues are associated with the stress of weaning, processing, and transportation, which all have negative impacts on feed intake (and in turn nutrient deficiencies) and immune function. Often little is known about the previous management of these calves, and they may have existing nutrient deficiencies that are further compounded with a

decrease in feed intake. Great care should be taken in the management of these calves to account for these issues. It is always important to develop a good relationship with your local veterinarian to tailor your health management program for your cattle's needs. Remember that laying the groundwork with a good nutrition program is vital to the success of each group of calves.



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What to Look For in an Oral Electrolyte Product

By Dr. Michelle Arnold, University of Kentucky



There are five major infectious causes of diarrhea in calves less than 21 days of age: E. coli K99, rotavirus, coronavirus, Cryptosporidia, and Salmonella species. Noninfectious factors such as insufficient or poor quality colostrum, poor sanitation, stress, and cold weather can also cause or contribute to neonatal calf diarrhea. Regardless of the cause, diarrhea results in increased loss of electrolytes and water in the feces of calves and decreases milk intake. Ultimately, this process causes dehydration, metabolic acidosis (the blood is more acidic than it should be), electrolyte abnormalities including a critical sodium deficiency, and a negative energy balance from the lost nutrients and lack of milk. Oral electrolyte solutions have typically been used to restore fluids, correct the pH and electrolyte levels in the blood, and provide nutritional support with the added benefit of being relatively inexpensive and

easy to administer. However, there are a tremendous number of products on the market to choose from and they differ considerably. This article is intended to provide guidance in selection of an oral electrolyte product according to the latest research.

Accurate assessment of a calf with diarrhea is necessary to determine if oral fluid therapy is adequate or if intravenous fluids are indicated. After determination that oral fluids are needed, the solution chosen must satisfy the following four requirements:

1. It must supply enough sodium to rapidly correct the losses that have occurred;
2. It must include agents (glucose, citrate, acetate, propionate, or glycine) that actually encourage absorption of sodium and water from the intestine;
3. It must provide an alkalinizing agent (acetate, propionate, or bicarbonate) to correct the blood from being too acidic;
4. It must provide energy because calves with diarrhea are in a negative energy balance.

Sodium, chloride, and potassium are all lost in the feces of calves with diarrhea. Sodium is the most important of these and most research suggests a level of 90-130 mmol/L is necessary to correct dehydration. However, sodium absorption from the small intestine will only

occur if there is glucose or an amino acid such as glycine, alanine, or glutamine that the sodium can join with and cross into the cells in the gut. The ratio of glucose to sodium present in an oral electrolyte solution should fall somewhere between 1:1 and 3:1. With dehydration, potassium is lost in the feces and urine so calves may experience a profound loss of body potassium stores. A common clinical sign in calves with chronic diarrhea is extreme muscle weakness due in large part to this loss of potassium. Oral electrolyte products should contain between 10-30mmol/L of potassium. A relatively new theory called the "strong ion theory" encourages the use

of products that deliver an excess of strong cations (sodium and potassium) relative to the concentration of strong anions (chloride) in order to help correct a portion of the acid-base balance in the blood. This "strong ion difference" or "SID" is calculated as follows: $[Na+] + [K+] - [Cl-] = SID$ and should fall in the range of 60-80 in an oral electrolyte product. Chloride should be present in the range of 40-80 mmol/L; concentrations at the lower end of the suggested range will beneficially increase the SID. It is extremely important that the oral or IV fluids chosen for rehydration will be able to increase blood pH from an

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SILVER SPUR SALERS CONSTANTLY IMPROVING TO MEET CUSTOMER DEMANDS



By Brenda Black

Silver Spur Salers is located in Northwest Missouri about 20 mile from Iowa and 40 miles from Nebraska and Kansas. Maryville is 100 miles north of Kansas City and is surrounded by rolling hills and lush farm ground. "It's cold in the winter, hot in the summer, and windy!" says David Frueh (pronounced "Free"), owner of Silver Spur.

Whether the winds blow hot or cold, Silver Spur designs its herd to withstand the extremes through extensive genetic selection in a nearly 100% AI and ET breeding program. Dr. Frueh employs his veterinarian skills at home to achieve such versatility. In his practice at Maryville Veterinarian Clinic, LLC, he encourages

clients to do the same. "We encourage our customers to use AI bulls on heifers, then one of our bulls on their cows and for clean up," the vet says.

"We can try a lot of different bulls from different parts of the country and find the ones that produce and will function well in the Midwest," Frueh says. "Then we use more aggressively the ones that work. We have a lot of variety and use sires to mate for superior genetics."

It's a family affair when it comes to breeding decisions and implementation. David and Janelle's daughter Stacy and her husband Scott Liebhart, who is herdsman of Silver Spur Salers and takes care of the show cattle, also run a Red Angus herd nearby. In addition, they bring their own experiences to the chute as ABS AI technicians.

"We have been crossing our Salers herd, along with the Red Angus herd we have in partnership with Stacy and Scott, to get the composites," says Frueh.

"We still raise purebreds because that's how we develop our composites and people want them. The

quality has increased since we first began in 1984. The quality of our bulls compared to five years ago is a lot better. We now have more homozygous black, but still have a lot of red bulls. And a few in between. We used to not have as many of the percentage bulls – the Optimizers and composites – but they are working for the customers and they want them, so we are producing more of them."

On 600 acres of pasture and hay ground and another 370 of rental property, the Fruehs and Liebhart's run over 200 head in a spring cow herd and another 35 head in a fall herd. On those blazing or blustery hills, is where the cattle of Silver Spur Salers go to work.

"We like the red cattle for the heat," says Frueh. "Some Salers have a lot of hair, but we've tried to breed that out of them for this region. We have found conception rates this year very good even with the heat."

As for the foot of snow that can make spring calving bitter on the babies, Frueh says, "The calves are very hearty. They get up when they are born."

Liebhart agrees: "Salers are known for their calving ease with very vigorous calves after birth; most are up within minutes and nursing."

Salers that start strong, Frueh claims, also finish well, without a lot of assistance. "We try to develop our cattle to maintain their weight and survive on roughage. We don't raise corn, we have to buy it. So we don't like to use a lot of it. We like easy keepers who can live off grass. We do that by selection."

Frueh looks for cattle that maintain body weight, milk really good and breed back. On the bull side, he says customers are quite pleased with the ready-to-go-to-work condition.

"We get our bulls in very good shape on a high roughage diet" he explains. "They are not really fat. A lot of times they will go out in the first breeding season and gain weight and keep growing. Our bulls last a long time – 6 to 7 years. Our repeat customers say they come to them in great shape and stay in great shape, gaining

continued on page 29

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To quote USMARC in the presented report, "Marbling score was estimated to be highest in Angus. Continental breeds were estimated to be one-half to a full marbling score lower than Angus with the exception of SALERS."

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weight out on grass while breeding cows. And in the fall, they are still looking very good.”

“People like the disposition of our cattle,” adds Frueh, “and that brings them back many times.”

Liebhart, who works with the herd daily, discounts any accusations that contend otherwise. “Saying they are wilder than any other breed is just not true.”

However, saying they grade well, that's a different story -- with proof. “Salers are the highest marbling Continental breed based on studies,” says Liebhart.

For the last 18 years, cattle that are not kept for breeding purposes at Silver Spur Salers are retained and fed at a local feedlot and marketed on the rail. “Feeding these cattle, we've found out they grade well and make money in the feedlots even when other cattle don't,”



explains Frueh. “They wean off big and we've had pens grade 38 out of 40 as Choice and Prime.”

Silver Spur Salers likes to have its beef and show it too. Since the outset, the family has been involved with the American Salers Association and the Missouri Salers Association, serving in leadership roles and investing a lot of energy and time into the junior programs.

“Stacy is a past junior member and we have helped sponsor the junior nationals in Missouri three times,” says Frueh. “Scott is presently on the show and sale committee of ASA.” Silver Spur Salers exhibits at the National Western Stock Show, American Royal, the NAILE and surrounding state fairs, showcasing some of their top herd sires like Colverhill Zenith 89Z, JFW Packer 40F, DJF Power Train 252K, DJF Navajo 93N, and DJF Rolen 5002R. In 2012, they brought home the gold when Whiskey River 9006W became National Champion in Denver.

Now the third generation is involved in showing, with grandson Landon Liebhart showing his pee-wee calves at local shows and the Junior Nationals and grandson

Luke Othic hoping to show for the first time this year.

For the matriarch of the Frueh family, it's not just the cattle that bring home the glory. “We are very proud of our family, says Janelle, “Our oldest daughter Stephanie and husband Danny Othic with grand-daughters Carly 14, Rylie 11 and grandsons Luke 9 and Quade 7, live on a small acreage outside of Warrensburg Mo. Stephanie is a middle school math teacher and Danny is a sergeant on campus at UCM. Stephanie showed cattle in her younger years and has a few cows of her own here. Stacy and Scott have Landon 7, and Easton 2. They live on our south farm. Stacy is our office manager at our

Vet Clinic. Stacy has shown cattle since 1992, and is still our number one show lady in the ring.”

While the Frueh family enjoys the show ring, it is in the sale ring where all of their hard work pays off. This year the 9th Silver Genetics Production Sale takes place March 24. When the majority of their customers come from a 50 mile radius, it's important to sell them the very best and present them with integrity.

“I've always told Scott and Stacy to tell the customer the truth,” says Frueh. “Tell them everything you know about the animal. Don't just tell them what they want to hear. Report your weights right and sell the product for what it is.”

Frueh believes that no matter which way the wind blows, a steady and good rapport with his customers is the main thing. “Treat them right and tell them up front how it is and they will always come back.”



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Silver Genetics
Production Sale IX

March 24, 2013 - 1:00 pm
 United Producers Livestock Market
 Highway 71 North - Maryville, MO

Salers - Lot 28

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The Mcaskill's Keep Coming Back

Down in the southwest corner of Oklahoma, Mike Mcaskill and family have been having success with Salers cattle for quite some time, "Somewhere around 1984, we began using Salers bulls. We were down in Amarillo at a sale and there was a terrible blizzard that day. We had been wanting to buy a Salers bull to put on our heifers for the calving ease we had heard about. We bought a young bull that day for our heifers," Mike recalls, "But towards the end of the sale, the outfit offered one of their older herd bulls for sale. Well, the blizzard had made the crowd a little light and the bull wasn't bringing much, so we bought the bull and used him on our mature cows. Boy, did those calves ever do well. At the time we were running a colored set of mixed cows. We really, really, liked those calves out of that bull."

"It's that calving ease and the vigor of the Salers calf that got us started. We like to joke that the Salers calf will shake his head, blow the snot out of his nose and be up to nurse before you can get back to the pickup to get a tag. I'm not sure you can really tell people and have them believe the vigor of these cattle. It is really something they have to experience. My son, Jake, calves all of the heifers and he really likes how they calve out."

A few years later, after seeing what the Salers influence female would do for their operation, they bought a potload of pure-bred Salers heifers off the satellite sale, sight unseen.

"I've always been one that listened to the market and if they want a striped popsicle, that's what I'll raise," says Mike. "So, we started buying black, polled Salers bulls which eventually led me to Monte Row-

ell and we've been buying there for many years ever since. Some of the bulls we got early on maybe had a slight disposition issue. But we started paying attention to this as we were buying and since we've been buying from Monte, we've been really happy and have not had any problems."

The ranch will save some their own heifers and will occasionally buy some Angus commercial heifers. The cow herd is made up of grade black cows and they run Salers bulls on all of them. The heifers they retain as replacements would be typically 1/2 Salers. "So we have quite a few cows that would be 1/2 Salers and we get some calves that would be 3/4 Salers." Mike continues, "We started calving the 5th of January this year and as of the 5th of February, we have right at half of the calves on the ground. I think we only have about 3 red ones out of the 130 head of calves, so we are mostly black."

They are down some on cow numbers with the recent drought, but they are calving 90 heifers this spring to get back up to the 300 mother cows they normally run. Most of their property is along the North Fork of the Red River with most of the 3500-4000 acres in native pasture and some in improved Bermuda grass. Like most producers in a large portion of the U.S., they are hoping for some badly needed rain to get the grass growing and get on the road to recovery.

Mike has tried about every method of marketing the calves there is. They will typically wean their calves around the 10th of October and precondition them for 45 days. "We give a full vaccination protocol and booster them again in 2 weeks. The health has been excellent." The calves will

gain about 2 pounds per day in that 45-day period, putting on right at 100 pounds of additional weight after weaning. They are then turned out on wheat pasture. "We'll get about as good a gain as you can get on wheat." In a normal year, the calves will run on wheat grass until the 1st of March. The cattle will weigh right at the upper end of 800 pounds, pushing right below 900. The cattle are green and ready to go when they get to the feedlot. They already know what a bunk is from the 45 day preconditioning period. So, they are green off wheat, but bunk broke and they go to eating the first day in the feedlot."

That is in a typical year. "The last two years have been anything but typical" so the ranch has improvised according to the weather. "We typically have a 3 week period where the wheat goes dormant and things were looking like they were going to stay dry, so we decided to go ahead and sell the calves in the middle of January. The calves sold at a local auction to a repeat buyer." The year prior to that we had lots of days over 100 degrees and very little moisture, so we sold the calves right off the cow. That is the first time we have done that in 35 years."

They have fed some of their cattle in the past. They have partnered with feedlots before on the cattle they raised. They have sent some all-natural Salers steers to Emporia, Kansas, for an All Natural Beef program. Mike adds, "those cattle graded 87% Choice and Prime and they did really well in the feedlot. One year we sent some calves to Coronado Feeders and they really rang a bell - they gained 3.61 a day. The performance on the cattle has been great. We couldn't be happier." The last couple of years the Mcaskill operation has sold

calves that were source and age verified with individual electronic id's and that has worked well for them.

"It is a true honor to have Mike Mcaskill as a customer, it's a real pleasure to sell bulls to people like him." - Monte Rowell

The Salers bulls will travel - you don't have to worry about them hustling. We have really good success with them. When asked what the main thing is that has kept them coming back to Salers all these years, Mike is quick to answer, "the calving ease and vigor of that Salers calf number 1 and 2, and we have gotten along with Monte really well. We are well satisfied with the job Salers cattle have done for us over the years. We have bought some Angus heifers over the years and bred them to the Salers bull. These cows are fantastic - it would be hard to breed a better beef cow than what this cross makes. We have been buying moderate framed bulls and we are getting cows that weigh 1100-1150 pounds in decent flesh, which works really well in this country."

Sounds like a tried and true testimonial using Salers for close to 29 years.



Linden Hill & Friends Production Sale

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Salers & Angus Genetics
Est. 1944

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red, which is not a pleasant thought. The total direct and overhead expenses per cow from 2011 back to 2006 were \$546 in 2011, \$466 in 2010, \$464 in 2009, \$452 in 2008, \$445 in 2007 and \$424 in 2006.

A quick review of the numbers points out that, even though average gross margins have been good, if recent expense numbers are any indication of future expense numbers, expenses are accelerating.

From 2010 to 2011, expenses jumped more than 17 percent, while gross margins jumped more than 26 percent, thus the increase in net returns for the cattle producer. However, the red flag still is there, so it will be interesting when the 2012 numbers come out as to where production costs are going.

For now, the point remains: The cost of production is a large, sustainable block in the survival of beef operations. A simple fact is that producers need to plan well while on the high-speed road leading to cattle profits as the 2013 year engages.



Cow-calf Enterprise Net Return per Cow

	Gross Margin	Direct Costs and Overhead Expenses
2011	\$729	\$546
2010	\$578	\$466
2009	\$451	\$464
2008	\$464	\$452
2007	\$543	\$445
2006	\$529	\$424

FINBIN (www.finbin.umn.edu) from the Center for Farm Financial Management, University of Minnesota

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acidic state to a more neutral state. This is normally accomplished by alkalizing agents such as bicarbonate, acetate, or propionate found in oral electrolytes. Although all have similar effects, acetate and propionate have several advantages over bicarbonate:

1. Acetate and propionate help sodium and water to be absorbed in the small intestine but bicarbonate does not;
2. Acetate and propionate are sources of energy but bicarbonate is not;
3. Acetate and propionate will not alkalize (raise the pH) in the abomasum or true stomach but bicarbonate will; this is important because an acidic stomach beneficially kills harmful bacteria before they can reach the small intestine and finally,
4. Acetate and propionate do not interfere with milk clotting in calves whereas bicarbonate has been shown to interfere with this normal digestive process. For this reason, experts recommend that bicarbonate-based electrolytes not be used when the calf is nursing the cow. Conversely, products with acetate or propionate do not cause digestive disturbances and are well tolerated when fed with milk.

Commercial preparations may also vary in the amount of particles dissolved in the solution. A "hypertonic" oral electrolyte product has a very large amount of glucose (sugar) in the preparation and may have the denotation "HE" for high energy. These differ from "isotonic" solutions which have a similar amount

of particles in the solution as is normally found in the bloodstream. Hypertonic solutions give greater nutritional support because of the higher glucose level yet they can cause abomasal bloat and increased diarrhea if the calf is unable to absorb this large amount of sugar. Depressed calves that are not nursing can be given a hypertonic electrolyte product of 500-600mOsm/L if separated from the dam. Beef calves that continue to suckle should receive isotonic solutions. Remember milk is better at maintaining a normal blood glucose level than any electrolyte solution so allow the calf to continue nursing. Never mix

electrolytes with milk or milk replacer as these products are designed to be mixed with water only.

In summary, it is important to examine the oral electrolyte product label and understand the contents. Unfortunately, ingredients are often presented in different ways that make comparisons difficult. Consult a veterinarian or nutritionist to properly evaluate your oral electrolyte product before your next case of neonatal calf diarrhea.

OSU



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THE OPTIMIZER

The American Salers Association "Optimizer" Registry is a specific extension of the ASA Composite Registry Program. Optimizers offer commercial cattlemen a means to manage percent blood in their cowherds through the use of documented, seedstock quality composites complete with EPDs. Cattle from ¼ to less than ¾ Salers ancestry fit the program, and all have performance data.

Optimizer Criteria

Cattle from 12.5% to less than 75% Salers ancestry fit the program. Both parents must be registered in their respective breed association. All registered Optimizer animals must have reported performance data.

A purebred Optimizer will consist of 5/8 Salers.

How Does It Work?

Producers enroll cattle with the current ASA registration application. Those producers registering Optimizer cattle will simply check the Optimizer column on the registration application. Producers provide ASA with ancestral information including registration numbers of any non-Salers parent animal recorded in another breed's registry. The Optimizer pedigree contains complete multi-breed information including calculated multi-breed EPDs.

Animals that are eligible for both the ASA registry and the Optimizer registry cannot be jointly entered into each herdbook. However, animals can be transferred from one herdbook to another.

Research shows the Salers-Cross Female is the Most Efficient and Productive Cow in the Industry

Mothering Ability

When it comes to mothering ability, the Salers cross female is unmatched. As any rancher with Salers cross will tell you, the females go from a teenager to a mother overnight. It's normal to see new calves up nursing in ten minutes, regardless of the weather. Hot to bitter cold - the calves are hardy and ready to get up when they hit the ground. A live calf is where your profit starts.

Optimize the Maternal Traits

The success of the Optimizer composites is their breeding from complementary maternal breeds. This creates a composite that takes advantage of heterosis, and also produces a predictable, efficient, productive, cross-bred replacement female. Salers, Hereford-Baldy and Angus (or Red Angus), are all; good milking, relatively easy calving, high fertility breeds. In addition to traits the breeds have in common, they complement each other with the Angus providing extra fleshing

ability and the Salers adding under quality and increased growth for heavier weaning weights. Just one reason the Salers-Angus cross female is the most efficient and productive commercial cow in the industry.

Managing Heterosis

Managing heterosis will lead to increased profits. Multi-breed rotational crosses take management to maintain maximum heterosis. Optimizer composites easily fit into most crossbreeding situations. On an unrelated cow, they transmit 100% direct heterosis. On a straight-bred Angus or Salers cow, they will transmit 50% of the heterosis of a pure outcross. A continual system of using Optimizer composites and mating them back to Optimizer composite daughters results in retaining 50% of possible direct heterosis and 50% of maternal heterosis. For weaning weight, there is a greater total impact from heterosis than would be expected in crossing two pure breeds (100% direct heterosis, 0% maternal heterosis) because maternal heterosis has a greater impact on weaning weight than does direct heterosis. No amount of crossbreeding is going to make up for poor genetics in a cow herd. Select the best possible genetics you can and watch the improvement when you breed Optimizer composites balanced for maternal traits, performance and

outstanding carcasses.

You can have your cake and eat it too. You can utilize the superior genetics in the purebred line and combine them to make crossbreds and use hybrid or purebred genetics and plan crossbreeding systems to perpetuate the hybrid vigor and still take advantage of additive genetics.

As you do that, it's critically important that any of the bulls you buy be well characterized for the economically significant traits - in other words, they need to be evaluated from a performance standpoint; they need to have EPDs, and those EPDs need to be backed by a good database and, obviously, a reputable breeder.

Having said that, if you do that, it's pretty well documented; they're all hybrid genetics; they're producing bull calves that will be marketed as seed-stock, despite the fact that they're multiple breed calves, and the uniformity and consistency and predictability of their offspring will be just the same as the uniformity and predictability of the purebred.

The only question is then - what is the additive genetic merit? And in today's industry, you can find hybrids of a number of different breeds that offer not just hybrid vigor but also offer the additive genetic merit, the improved genetic traits backed

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Standard Equipment

- Receiver hitch and louvered sun visor
- Dual lift cylinders
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by predictable EPDs, to ensure that you get what you expect.

With that, we think that the best way to maximize your productivity is to utilize both improved genetics and hybrid vigor in your commercial ranching environment.

What Does It Cost?

Optimizer registrations are processed at the same fee as appropriate Salers registrations.

How Do I Participate? If you are interested in participating in the Optimizer registry program or would like additional information, contact the ASA office at (303) 770-9292 or email: info@salersusa.org.



Optimizer Table of Eligibility

Below are examples of matings of percentage blood cattle and the resulting percentage of the offspring of those matings. Animals that are 12.5% Salers blood up to, but not including ¾ Salers blood are eligible for this program.

% Salers Sire or Dam	X	% Salers Sire or Dam	% Salers Offspring	Expressed as Fractions
0%	X	50%	= 25%	0 x ½ = 1/4
6.25%	X	43.75%	= 25%	1/16 x 7/16 = 1/4
12.5%	X	37.5%	= 25%	1/8 x 3/8 = 1/4
18.75%	X	31.25%	= 25%	3/16 x 5/16 = 1/4
25%	X	25%	= 25%	1/4 x ¼ = 1/4
6.25%	X	68.75%	= 37.5%	1/16 x 11/16 = 3/8
12.5%	X	62.5%	= 37.5%	1/8 x 5/8 = 3/8
18.75%	X	56.25%	= 37.5%	3/16 x 9/16 = 3/8
25%	X	50%	= 37.5%	1/4 x 1/2 = 3/8
37.5%	X	37.5%	= 37.5%	3/8 x 3/8 = 3/8
12.5%	X	87.5%	= 50%	1/8 x 7/8 = 1/2
25%	X	75%	= 50%	1/4 x 3/4 = 1/2
37.5%	X	62.5%	= 50%	3/8 x 5/8 = 1/2
50%	X	50%	= 50%	1/2 x 1/2 = 1/2
100%	X	0%	= 50%	1 x 0 = 1/2
37.5%	X	87.5%	= 62.5%	3/8 x 7/8 = 5/8
43.75%	X	81.25%	= 62.5%	7/16 x 13/16 = 5/8
50%	X	75%	= 62.5%	1/2 x 3/4 = 5/8
56.25%	X	68.75%	= 62.5%	9/16 x 11/16 = 5/8
62.5%	X	62.5%	= 62.5%	5/8 x 5/8 = 5/8
56.25%	X	93.75%	= 75%	9/16 x 15/16 = 3/4
62.5%	X	87.5%	= 75%	5/8 x 7/8 = 3/4
68.75%	X	81.25%	= 75%	11/16 x 13/16 = 3/4
75%	X	75%	= 75%	3/4 x 3/4 = 3/4
100%	X	50%	= 75%	1 x 1/2 = 3/4

Here is an example of the quickest way to create purebred Optimizer offspring starting with purebred Salers and a purebred of another breed. (A purebred Optimizer is 5/8 Salers and 3/8 of another purebred breed.)

First Breeding

Sire: PB Salers
Dam: PB Other
Offspring: 50% Salers – 50% Other

Second Breeding: Then mate the above offspring as follows:

Sire: 50% Salers – 50% Other
Dam: PB Salers
Offspring: 75% Salers – 25% Other

Third Breeding: Mate this final offspring to a halfblood individual bred the same way as the first breeding.

Sire: 75% Salers – 25% Other
Dam: 50% Salers – 50% Other
Offspring: 5/8 Salers – 3/8 Other

This individual is 5/8 Salers and 3/8 of only one other breed.

This constitutes a purebred Optimizer.

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FORAGE

continued from page 21

quantity of feed or high-quality forage is beneficial. The cost per nutrient can be favorable in spite of silage production costs when yield is high.

* Select hybrids that do well in your area, plant early, and provide good weed control and fertility to increase yield potential.

* Harvest at the optimum moisture, pack the forage correctly and cover it to help reduce potentially high storage losses.

* Maximize the use of low-cost roughage by providing supplementation, particularly in corn-growing regions.

* Graze stover left behind when corn is harvested to reduce the need for hay and to extend grazing, further reducing feeding costs. New procedures are being developed to harvest, grind and treat residues to enhance their digestibility as a feed.

* Grow a second crop (for example, a mixture of oats, radishes and turnips) after the early harvest of peas or barley in areas where fall moisture can be anticipated to germinate a second crop to provide additional fall grazing.

* Consider planting a high-yielding annual forage such as oats, millet or hybrid sorghum-sudan when cash crops fail (hail, disease, poor emergence, etc.). With attention to fertility and weed control, these forage crops have the potential to yield more than 2 tons per acre of a high-quality forage. If fencing and water are available, these crops can be grazed or wind-rowed and left for late grazing rather than cut, cured and baled.

* Use bale feeders to reduce hay waste when feeding more than a day's feed to smaller groups of cattle. The design, durability and price affect the effectiveness and cost of using bale feeders. Consider hay-saving designs that allow for more room per bale, and have slanted bars, greater height and a means of suspending the bale off the ground.

* Bale graze larger groups with a multiple-day supply of bales in the field to reduce feeding commitments and leave the manure dispersed in the fields.

However, this option must be managed carefully to minimize waste and maintain cow condition. Include some low-quality forage as cereal straw in combination with some moderate- and higher-quality bales for no more than three to five days. A good estimation of cow weight and bale weights is helpful when bale grazing.

Dhuyvetter also recommends providing adequate protein in the ration to supply microorganisms with nitrogen, which is critical to the efficient breakdown of fiber and forage utilization. Forage analyses can help determine if and what may be needed, and how best to deliver it.

NDSU



ALFALFA

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phosphorous and potash levels are kept up to soil-test recommendations. "Alfalfa pays well for extra attention. With a little care, it grows more tonnage per acre."

In addition, the legume fixes enough nitrogen for its own use. That cuts fertilizer costs.

Almost every farm big enough to maintain a livestock herd has some land that will grow alfalfa, Kallenbach says. A 1,000-acre farm with 300 cows will have 80 or 100 acres suited for alfalfa.

While he favors the prime legume, every farm can benefit from clovers, red and white, and lespedeza seeded into grass pastures. Those legumes extend grazing into the summer slump.

Clover's big advantage is ease of establishment. The legumes can be frost-seeded into grass pastures in February. However, grasses must be grazed down short before seeding. That allows seedlings to get started in the spring. Tall grass makes too much competition.

Kallenbach's main message: Diversify forage beyond toxic tall fescue, Missouri's dominant pasture forage.

Warm-season grasses also hold up well in what are the usual summer dry spells. They can extend the grazing season.

"Last summer the drought-tolerant species delayed need to start feeding hay," Kallenbach says. "However, in extreme droughts nothing keeps growing without rain. The cool-season grasses dry up early."

Grazing provides less expensive feed

than baled hay. A dry-weather grazing plan requires advance planning. Many producers started feeding baled hay in July last summer because of grass shortages.

Summer grazing also comes from annual warm-season grasses such as sorghum-sudan and pearl millet. However, they must be planted when there is moisture in the soil. "If you wait until going into a drought, it's too late to plant supplemental forages," Kallenbach says.

All forages benefit from managed grazing. With rotational grazing, dividing large pastures into grazing paddocks, less forage is lost to trampling. The rest periods in management-intensive grazing boost production of forage per acre.

Forage that cows waste in continuously grazed pastures could have been used to replace high-priced baled hay.

Dry-weather grazing may become the new norm, according to some climatologists looking at long-range forecasts.

Mixed-species pastures with managed grazing may become part of the survival of beef herds in Missouri.

For Kallenbach, better grazing plans include alfalfa. It has a bright future on more Missouri farms, he says. Even if drought doesn't come, alfalfa producers have high-tonnage forage to be grazed, baled or put up as balage.

If not needed on the home farm, alfalfa becomes a highly marketable feed. Someone, somewhere, will need it and be willing to pay big bucks for it.

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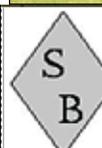
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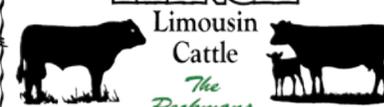
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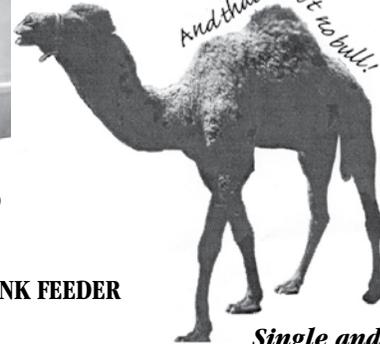


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| Mar 22 Sunflower Genetics Sale, Maple Hill, KS | Apr 3 Kansas PT Bull Test Sale, Beloit, KS |
| Mar 23 Aschermann Charolais Spring Bull Sale, Carthage, MO | Apr 5 * Circle S Ranch Going to Grass Production Sale, Canton, KS 620-654-6507 |
| Mar 23 Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca, AR | Apr 6 * The Andras Kind Red Angus Bull Sale, Manchester, IL 217-473-2355 |
| Mar 23 * Maplewood Acres Red Angus & Pld Hereford Sale, Sedalia, MO 660-287-1341 | Apr 6 Angus in the Green Hills, Green City, MO |
| Mar 23 Missouri Simmental Association Spring Sale, Eldon, MO | Apr 6 * Four State Angus Assoc. Bull & Female Sale, Springfield, MO 417-844-2601 |
| Mar 23 New Haven Angus 14th Annual Bull Sale, Leavenworth, KS | Apr 6 Gardiner Angus Ranch 34th Annual Prod Sale, Ashland, KS |
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| Mar 24 C/S Cattle Co, Pomona, MO | Apr 6 * Show-Me Classic Bull Sale, Windsor, MO 660-527-3507 |
| Mar 24 Frank Turner & Sons Angus, Armstrong, MO | Apr 6 Woodruff Angus Farms, Milton, IA |
| Mar 24 * Silver Genetics Production Sale IX, Maryville, MO 660-927-3600 | Apr 9 * Sydenstricker Genetics, New Cambria, MO 573-581-1225 |
| Mar 25 * Oleen Bros Hereford/Angus Prod Sale, Dwight, KS 785-466-1422 | Apr 13 Bittersweet West - Turn Out Sale, Hiawatha, KS |
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| Mar 28 Sweiger Farms Bull Sale, Weatherby, MO | Apr 20 * McBee Cattle Co 10th Annual Selection Day, Fayette, MO 573-228-2517 |
| Mar 29 Wann Ranch, Poteau, OK | Apr 20 * Missouri Red Angus Sale, Springfield, MO # 660-265-7192 |
| Mar 30 * Dickinson Simm & Angus Ranch 41st Prod Sale, Gorham, KS 888-603-BULL | Apr 20 * Owen Bros Diamonds & Spurs Sim-Genetics Sale, Bois d'Arc, MO 417-491-5161 |
| Mar 30 * Power of the Reds, Macomb, IL 877-700-4099 | Apr 21 C&C Performance Angus Breeders' Sale, Chillicothe, MO |
| Mar 30 * Seedstock Plus South MO Bull & Female Sale, Carthage, MO 877-486-1160 | Apr 27 Missouri Charolais Breeders Assoc 48th Annual State Sale, Columbia, MO |
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| Mar 30 * Waukaru Shorthorn Sale, Rensselaer, IN 219-819-0430 | May 18 Midwest Regional Braunvieh Sale, Springfield, MO |
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BEGINNING

continued from page 19

cost of gain.

•Continued margin opportunities

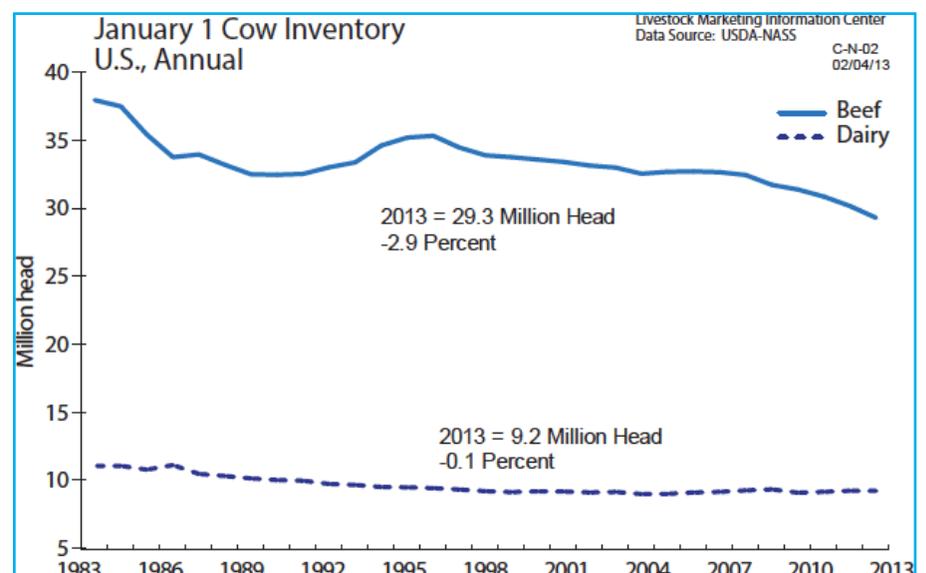
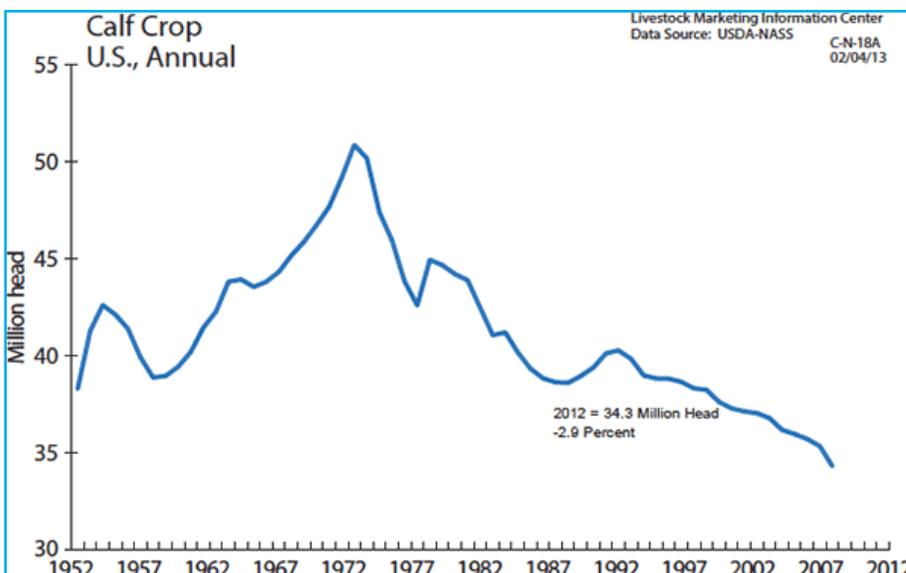
Fluctuating prices will create opportunities for significant margins in stocker cattle.

Many of these issues should

continue to challenge producers while also providing opportunities for the astute producer, as it will take several years to rebuild the cow herd. If the rebuilding started this year with the additional retention of the spring 2013 heifer crop, then

it would be fall of 2015 before those heifers would provide additional calves for the market. In addition, the overall market will have to deal with the lack of those heifers kept for replacement at the same time. Many of the areas that typically have significant

numbers of beef cows are either still in drought or lack good grass. It will take time for this situation to change and will require good management to make it through successfully.



Radunz says the premiums paid for black-hided feeder calves is one example, and it was documented last fall by CAB data showing a 14-year record high \$5.30-per-hundredweight Angus premium over non-Angus 500-weight calves.

“It has value on the feeder-calf end because it has value on the fed-cattle end, even if they’re sold live,” she says. “They want to have the opportunity to qualify for branded premiums.”

Feeders will pay more for cattle with good performance and health reputations, too, she says.

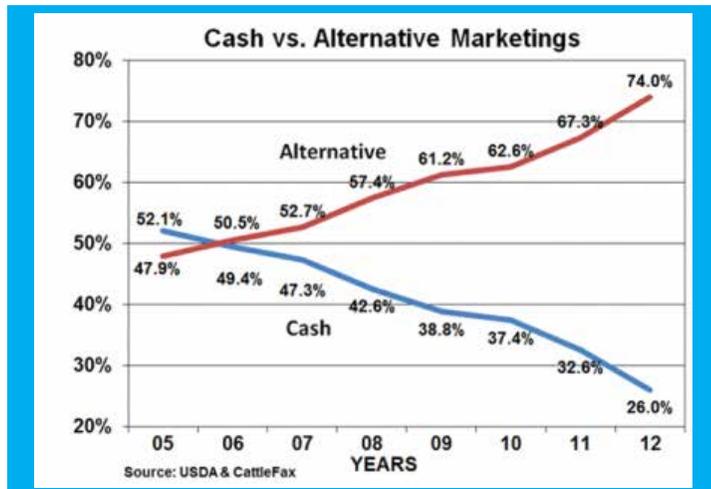
As more cattle are sold on grid arrangements each year, McCully says the signal clarifies that weight is no longer the only pricing determinant.

Cow-calf producers should take note.

“The genetic decisions they are making today will be impacted by this trend,” he says. “The bulls pur-

chased now will be producing calves and replacements sold into a market that is increasingly concerned with quality.”

The bottom line: “Everybody at least needs to understand grid marketing, no matter how you’re selling,” Radunz says. “That’s the way the cattle are being valued anyway.”



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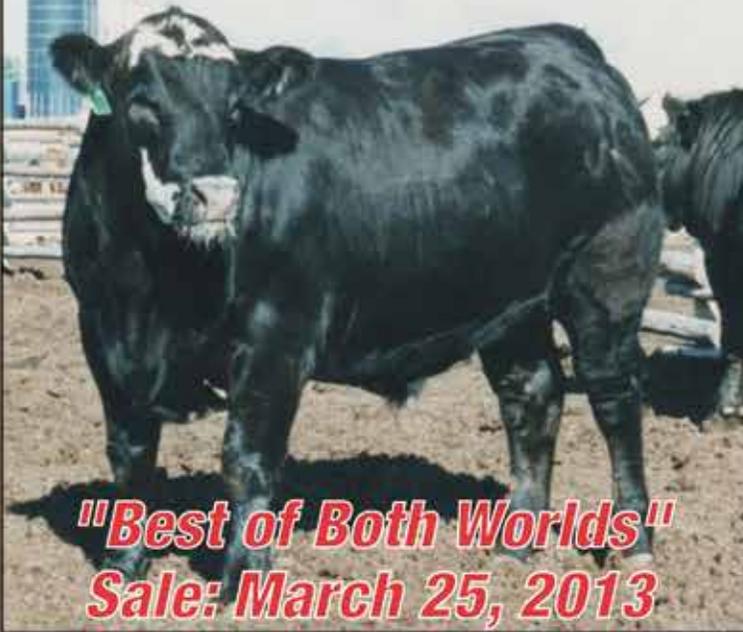
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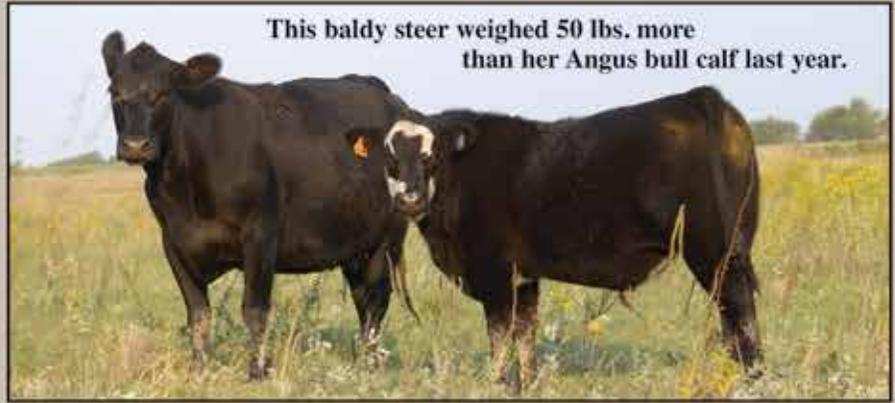


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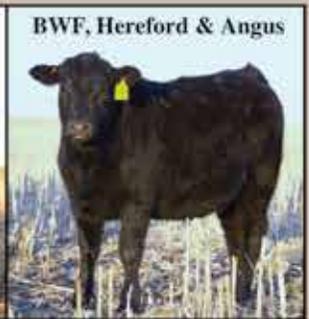
This baldy steer weighed 50 lbs. more than her Angus bull calf last year.



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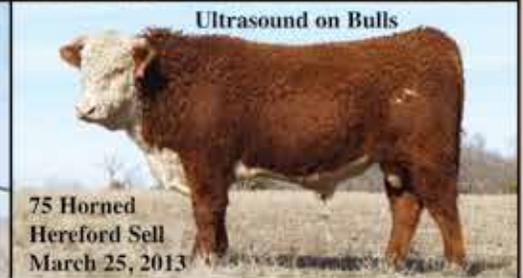
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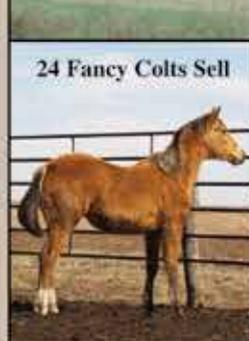
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