

Cattlemán

THE MIDWEST

April 25, 2013 Volume 19 No. 5

GRASSLAND FARMING TODAY



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IMPORTANT TO PREPARE BULLS FOR BREEDING SEASON

By Stephen B. Blezinger, Ph.D., PAS



One of the most important steps the producer can take at this time of the year, for his spring calving cow herd, is to insure that his bulls are properly prepared for the breeding process. Many producers have run into the situation where they have turned the bulls out and anticipated that the result will be a pasture full of pregnant cows only to discover several months down the road that they had a collection of open cows or at least way more than they would have liked. The reason being that the bull or bulls they were using was not fertile, structurally sound or any number of other problems.

This article will take a moment to discuss getting bulls ready for the breeding season and insuring they are capable of doing the job they are there to do!

Insuring Fertility

Fertility in the cow herd, for both male and female animals is absolutely critical. Insuring fertility in the herd is having ALL the necessary components or factors in place that allow for the fertilization/impregnation process to occur on either the male or female side of the equation. In all mammals this is a factor of nutrition, age, health, stress, environment, endocrinology, temperament, etc.

Whether the producer uses a limited or year-round breeding season, he needs to understand the factors that affect the fertility of the bull and what strategies he can use to improve or maximize the fertility of the bull or bulls in his herd. This improves overall herd performance, individual calf performance and longevity of the bull's usefulness in the herd. Fertility in a livestock enterprise is 5 to 10 times more important economically than

any other production measure. While factors such as average daily gain, yearling weights and milking ability are all important, they are irrelevant if cows aren't bred and calves aren't born. Cows bred to high-fertility bulls bear more calves earlier in the season, resulting in more pounds of beef weaned and marketed per cow, which is a direct measure of profit. Bulls with identical semen quality in terms of physical assessment vary in actual fertility. The capability to identify bulls on the basis of fertility potential could result in higher pregnancy rates, leading to larger calf crops.

Step 1 - Breeding Soundness Evaluation

A very useful, important but underused tool to producers is the Breeding Soundness Evaluation (BSE). Important considerations include:

1) A Breeding Soundness Examination (BSE) is the best assurance of satisfactory bull fertility.
2) A bull should have a BSE done every year. It is good, inexpensive insurance.

3) Utilization of a BSE has the potential to return at least \$20 for each \$1 invested in the procedure. A bull may be big and masculine in appearance, but may not be a satisfactory breeder. A BSE provides the best evaluation of the bull's reproductive potential. Normally, a BSE should be done at least 45 to 60 days before the start of the breeding season. For the breeding season starting May 1, the BSE should be done between March 1 and March 15.

4) Bull fertility affects the pregnancy rate, average calving date, average weaning weight, uniformity of calf crop and age of puberty in replacement heifers — all of which have a significant effect on economic importance.

5) Bull scrotal circumference is positively related to both bull and heifer puberty as well as semen quality. This is largely a genetic issue.

6) Surveys report that 15-20 percent of bulls have problems which adversely affect fertility. Detecting high fertility bulls (or identifying low fertility animals) is the key to increasing livestock production and thus profitability. Working with your veterinari-

an to properly evaluate your bull or bulls is a valuable tool and insures that your overall breeding program will not be diminished or delayed, both of which are extremely expensive.

To put this on a larger scale, a one percent increase in fertility in the U.S. beef industry would return a net profit of \$55-60 million to U.S. producers. Obviously, on a global scale, billions of dollars of income could result from identifying higher fertility bulls and males of other livestock species. On a local scale, a rancher who bred proven fertility bulls to heifers in a higher ratio than usual—one bull to 20 heifers instead of the industry standard rate of one bull to 15 heifers—found that he got the same 92-95 percent pregnancy rate during the first 45 days while using a third fewer bulls and no additional feed.

Step 2 - Evaluating Stress, Nutrition and Exercise

On-going research by a group at KSU is searching for ways to detect not only infertility in bulls but also to maintain fertility and maybe even improve fertility. The vast majority of cattle are still being bred naturally, and bulls are obviously an important part of the equation. Polls of producers and veterinarians have shown that about 20 percent of bulls have some sort of fertility problem. Unfortunately, relatively few bulls are tested for fertility so some (many) ranchers may not recognize that a problem exists and certainly do not know where the problem may be.

Stress

Fertility issues don't necessarily mean that bulls with these types of problems are sterile. They just have poorer calf crops than should be. Bull infertility can result from stress, caused by the weather, transport, handling, and so on as well as nutrition.

In some areas of the country extreme combination of cold temperatures and blizzard conditions during winter months is always a concern to cow-calf producers because of the added difficulty in feeding and caring for the cattle herd. Winters can be especially hard on bulls.

Herd bulls, which are general-

ly kept separate from the main cow herd in those with limited breeding seasons, may experience hardship if proper nutrition and shelter are neglected. The future reproductive success of the herd will suffer if bulls are not prepared for or protected from winter weather. Bulls need to be maintained in a body condition score of 5-6 in order to be in ideal breeding condition. Low temperatures and windy conditions can easily increase feed requirements 25-30 percent above normal maintenance requirements. Also, lack of wind protection and proper bedding will increase the chance of frost damage to the scrotum and testicles. During normal winter conditions frostbite is not a common problem with breeding bulls, but prolonged exposure to extreme cold and wind increases the incidence of frostbite and is a problem that must be considered when planning for the breeding season. Evidence of frostbite to the scrotum is usually apparent a few days after freezing in the form of noticeable inflammation and swelling. The heat generated from the inflammation directly affects the sperm that are maturing and stored in the epididymis, which surrounds the testicle at the lower end of the scrotum. The resulting damage may cause temporary or, in more severe cases, permanent sterility in the bull. A scab may appear on the lower portion of the scrotum as healing occurs. However, the absence of a scab does not indicate that frostbite injury has not occurred. Severe frost damage to the testicle and epididymis may cause tissue adhesions, affecting mobility and circulation within the scrotum.

Likewise, external heat or internal heat can be detrimental to bull fertility. Here are some ways to manage this problem. Bulls depend on a number of mechanisms to keep the testicles in optimal operating temperature. The mechanisms include the tunica dartos, cremaster muscle, counter current function of the pampiniform plexus and the testicular arterial branching. The important thing for producers and veterinarians to realize is

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CATTLEMAN

THE MIDWEST
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BEEF COW SLAUGHTER INCREASING

By Darrell Mark

There were 29.3 million beef cows in the U.S. on January 1, 2013, 2.9% less than a year ago and more than 10% lower than the most recent peak in 2006. In fact, beef cow numbers have declined for fifteen of the last seventeen years, generating significant focus on emerging signs of growth. For the first six weeks of 2013, beef cow slaughter averaged 12% below a year ago, suggesting ranchers were beginning to signal expansion plans. It would require double-digit percentage declines in beef cow slaughter for a sustained period of time to result in herd growth. But, as Figure 1 shows, beef cow slaughter has increased sharply in the last few weeks. In early February, about 54,000 head of beef cows were being slaughtered nationally, but by mid-March, the weekly kill had increased to almost 62,000 head.

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LIVESTOCK, EQUIPMENT THEFT ON THE UPSWING IN RURAL AREAS

By Burt Rutherford

“Times have changed,” says Harold Dempsey, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) special ranger. “We grew up on ranches and never locked the door and left the keys in the pickup. We have to do things differently today. A lot of these guys we’re dealing with are not typical thieves.”

Dempsey is one of 29 TSCRA special rangers who investigate rural crime in Texas and Oklahoma.

While he works 17 counties in the Texas Panhandle, he can and sometimes does cross state lines and go elsewhere in Texas as part of his investigations. In fact, working cooperatively with other state and national law enforcement agencies, TSCRA special rangers can extend their investigations to every state in the nation, as well as Canada and Mexico.

While the TSCRA special rangers were established 136 years ago to investigate cattle thefts, they will work any crime that occurs on a farm or ranch in Texas and Oklahoma. In the last several months, Dempsey says, equipment thefts – saddles, tack, trailers, welders, generators, tools, to name a few – have increased dramatically.

Blame it on drugs, he says. “Most of it is driven by meth and K2,” which is synthetic marijuana. And, unfortunately, he sees more and more rural kids getting sucked into the abyss that the drug trade and drug use creates.

That’s because many meth labs have moved from towns to the country. On top of that, urban gangs are moving out to the country as well, looking for easier pickings. In fact, gangs are often responsible for the equipment thefts, with your stolen welder literally going anywhere in the country to be fenced, he says.

One of the best ways to deter theft is to mark your belongings. Brand your cattle and engrave an identifying name and number on your equipment, he says. And if it opens or moves, put a lock on it.

Then, he says, pay attention. “The biggest asset you have is your neighbor. Everyone has a tally book or notebook that they carry in their pocket or in the pickup. If you see something that’s not right, jot it down.” That information should include the time, the day, and the details of what you see, including the make and model of the vehicles and license plates if possible. “We’ve made lots of cases that way,” he says.

beefmagazine.com



LIVESTOCK FEED OUTLOOK FOR THE NEAR-TERM

By Stu Ellis

While Corn Belt crop producers look back at USDA’s March 28 reports and wonder “what happened here,” livestock feeders are doing “high-fives” with themselves.

Although the acreage projection was not unexpected it forecast the potential for increased production and subsequently lower prices for feed grains and soybean meal in the next marketing year. However, the quarterly grain stocks report contained surprises to the market that pushed prices down for the old crop and immediately lowered the cost of feed for livestock producers.

Not a bad way to begin the spring if you have a lot of mouths to feed.

USDA’s Feed Outlook is chock full of good news for livestock feeders, based on the increased availability of feed and lower prices. However, some spot shortages have raised cash prices and what has dropped on the futures market has been negated by an increased basis. Nevertheless, livestock producers foresee opportunities for profitability that were dimmed before the USDA’s two reports on March 28.

Livestock economists are now pointing to black in the near future.

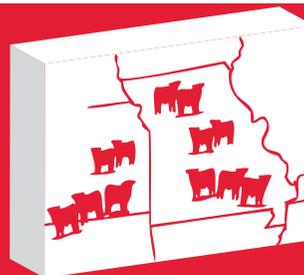
The improved opportunities for the livestock producer can be traced directly to the grain stocks report that indicated nearly 400 million more bushels of corn existed—and should be available—for the market. Evenly split between on-farm and commercial storage, unpriced US corn stocks dropped \$1 in value. However, finding deliverable supplies may be a challenge since the 2.7 billion bushels of corn held on farms was only 49 percent of the total supply, and at this point in the marketing year, farmers typically hold closer to 60 percent of the crop.

In feed terms, USDA says the projected supply of feed grains is 319 million metric tons (mmt). While that is 11 percent below the 358 mmt of 2012, high-

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U.S. BEEF IMPORTS EXPECTED TO STRENGTHEN

U.S. beef imports through February are 4 percent higher year-over-year. Through February, U.S. beef imports from Australia have been only moderately below a year ago and imports from New Zealand have been 43 percent higher, year-over-year. Imports from Canada are 29 percent lower, while imports from Mexico are 30 percent higher. Total beef imports for 2013 are expected to be 16 percent higher, year-over-year, increasing in strength as the year progresses and as domestic beef production and cow slaughter tightens. First- and second-quarter imports are forecast at 600 and 695 million pounds, or 3 and 4 percent higher than a year ago, respectively. Third- and fourth-quarter imports are expected to be 29 and

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“Count Your Blessings” is the title of an old Christian Hymn... you might have heard of it. We sing it from time to time and this year we’re going to try to do it more often - we’re even thinking about having ‘Thanksgiving’ in the spring this year – let me see if I can explain.

As I peered over the truck dash watching a cow calve... a thought occurred to me... “Looks like we may soon be growing some grass! It’s been a long time coming.” When I think how long we’ve been pulling feed out of the barn, one bale at a time, it’s hard to believe. I’m sure grateful we had it... some folks didn’t. One step forward and two back has been the forage story so far this spring... but hold on... if we can get three days of sun in a row things will explode. It’ll be time for Thanksgiving!

It’s amazing how fast we can go from ‘zero to ninety’ in this part of the country – that’s from ‘no grass’ to a pasture that needs the seed heads clipped... in no time at all! If you want to be in the cattle business, which, if you’ve read this magazine long you know is really the grass growing business, there are few parts of the world better suited for it. It’s one more thing to be thankful for... if you’re thinking about keeping track.

That last spring calf hit the ground this morning. There was a light rain falling and a cold wind blowing, but his momma had him, had him up and then

had him moved to the back of the pasture with the rest of the herd in less than an hour. I bet he walked a full quarter of a mile before he was ninety minutes old. I didn’t have to haul him to the barn or ‘mother them up’...or anything – I just watched from a nice warm spot. I was really grateful for that ‘maternal’ old cow and a little hybrid vigor!

The fall calves are actually starting to ‘slick off’ and look great this week... it won’t be long before they will need to be weaned. The ryegrass will be knee-high before we can get them worked and moved out on it.



The ponds are full... even running over. My thoughts are with those folks where the drought has not broken. I’m sure grateful for the rain. Some people didn’t get it.

We’re almost there... that day when cows turned into a new pasture put their heads down, and then there is that unique sound you haven’t heard for months – you know the one. Listen for it! It’s ‘music’ to any cattleman’s ears. There’s no other sound like it. Has it been so long that we could have forgotten? Remember the sound a whole herd of cows make... grazing new grass? There’s no ‘nibbling’. It’s not like the sound of chewing some old ‘stock-piled’ fodder. It happens only when that new grass gets tall enough for a cow or calf to get their tongue around it and then they pull and bite in one motion. Now multiply that by twenty, fifty or sixty mouths... all in some weird kind of rhythm that resembles a



bunch of bullfrogs croaking on a summer night. Next time you turn a bunch of cows into a new pasture... turn off the truck... find a ‘seat’ nearby and then take time to listen to the ‘music’. Every mouthful is one that didn’t have to come off the back of the feed truck. It’s Thanksgiving.

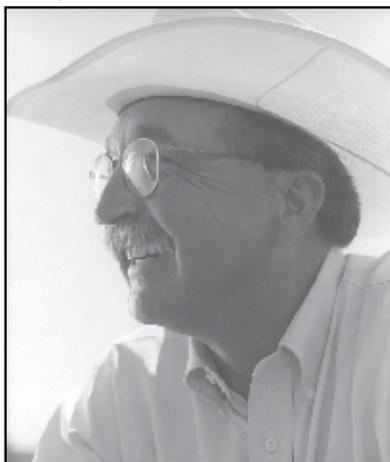
Our youngest son, back from college, has been out ‘mushroom hunting’ and is already back in with a pretty good ‘mess’ of mushrooms. For him ‘mushroom hunting’ is right there at the top of his spring to-do-list with other important things like ‘turkey hunting’. Where he goes to school isn’t far away, but it’s still good to have him home. It won’t be long before my granddaughter and I will be out on one of our favorite adventures - finding

‘wild asparagus’. She’s two this spring... gonna soon be three... and she loves to go with ‘Pop’. I do like asparagus, but when it comes to spending time outside with my granddaughter, one excuse is as good as another! I’m truly grateful for the ‘little things’ spring brings and a family to share them with. We’re going to have ‘Thanksgiving’ in the spring this year. Come to think of it... we’re going to try to have it every day of the year... rain or shine. We’re going to try to be mindful and enjoy every blessing. We have way too many to count! Hope you do too.

KwC



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I was recently asked to speak at a fundraiser down in the south-central part of the state. Since it was for a good cause and just a few miles from where I started my teaching career some forty years ago, I was happy to do it. The function allowed me to meet up with several former students and rekindle old friendships with a few old farmers I've known for a lifetime.

John was one of the first to shake my hand before the meeting started. I've been acquainted with John for close to thirty years, but I

knew of his reputation at least twenty years before that. He has been a purebred cattleman all his life and has exhibited in livestock shows all across the country, and still continues to do so. As we were visiting before the meeting, while the large crowd of prospective donors filed in, John pointed to an older, gray-haired gentleman and

asked, "You remember that guy, don't you?"

The man looked vaguely familiar, but I had to admit that too much water had flowed under the bridge for me to place a name with the face. John got a big grin on his face as he reminded me that he was the judge that had presided over the only trial for which I had ever testified as an 'expert wit-

ness.' "Wait a minute," I interrupted, "How do you know about that trial?"

"Because I served as an expert witness for the other side," John responded.

Many years ago, when I was still teaching at a university, a cow that was stalled at the local fair in that town had been killed when a bull had gotten loose

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MORE RAIN & LOWER FEED COSTS?

By Ron Plain, Extension Economist, UMC



what buyers are willing to pay for feeder cattle. The higher the price of corn, the lower the value of feeder cattle. A dime increase in corn prices reduces the value of feeder cattle by roughly \$6 per head. The futures market is predicting that September 2013 corn prices will be \$2 per bushel lower than last year. That is a potential \$120 per head boost to fall feeder cattle prices.

Will we get a \$2 year-over-year drop in corn prices? Only if the weather cooperates. USDA is forecasting corn acreage will total 97.282 million this year, up 127,000 acres from last year and the most corn acres planted since 1937.

The big unknown, of course, is yield. The national average corn yield in 2012 was only 123.4 bushels per acre, the lowest since 1995. For Missouri, the 2012 average was a dismal 75 bushels of corn per acre. The expected national trend yield with normal weather is a bit over 160 bushels per acre. If we get that, the country will produce its first 14 billion bushel corn crop and a sharp drop in feed prices will occur.

What a difference a year

makes. March 2012 in Missouri was dry and the warmest on record. As a result corn planting in the spring of 2012 was way ahead of normal. On April 14, 2012, 16% of the nation's corn had been planted. March 2013 was wetter than normal and the coolest since 1996. By April 14, 2013 only 2% of U.S. corn acres were planted. The mid April U.S. Drought Monitor showed a good moisture situation for the eastern corn belt, but a continuing drought from the Texas panhandle north to Canada.

Cattle prices have been at record levels in the last few years. The 2013 cattle inventory is the lowest since 1952, so the futures market is very reasonably predicting higher cattle prices are we move toward 2014. Because of dry weather, cow slaughter was extremely high in 2011 and 2012. The 2013 calf crop is expected to be smaller than the year before for the 18th year in a row. A more normal pattern of rainfall may lead to herd expansion and an end to the long slide in the cattle inventory.

The primary risk to more record fed cattle prices is weak meat demand. It is difficult to keep pushing grocery store beef prices to ever-higher records when the nation's unemployment rate is high. In March,

the average grocery store price of ground beef was \$3.84 per pound. That was 61 cents higher than a pound of boneless chicken breasts and only 12 cents lower than the cost of a pound of boneless pork chops.

Another obstacle to higher cattle prices is tight packer margins. Reduced cattle numbers and tight margins caused Cargill to close their Plainview, Texas slaughter plant earlier this year. Typically, beef packers sell the meat and byproducts from a steer for about \$150 more than what they pay for a steer. Last year the margin was about \$118 per steer. Thus far in 2013, the spread has averaged under \$100 per head. At some point, beef packers are going to resist paying more for fed cattle as they try to restore their operating margin.

The outlook for cattle producers is bright. The per capita meat supply is low and meat prices are expected to remain high. As with all types of farming, cattle production has lots of risk, weather being chief among them. The bottom line for farmers never gets very far away from the impact of weather on the fields.



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RAKING TIPS FOR SUPERIOR HAY QUALITY

By Ted G. Dyer, UGA Ext



Whether you are cutting, conditioning, raking or baling, all steps in the process of making high-quality hay require attention to detail. Any slip-ups along the way can compromise the end result. Raking is perhaps the most critical step in the process, as more leaf loss can be caused by improper raking than by any other step in the harvest process.

“A good job of raking can make baling high-quality hay relatively easy,” says Dean Morrell, AGCO hay and forage product marketing manager for Hesston by Massey Ferguson® and a 35-year veteran of the quality hay business. “On the other hand, if raking is done poorly, the result can be poor-quality bales that are subject to spoilage.” Morrell reminds producers to avoid raking alfalfa or clover when the forage moisture is less than 35 to 40 percent to prevent the loss of nutrient-dense leaves. Leaves contain two-thirds of the protein and 75 percent of the total digestible nutrients (TDN) in alfalfa hay.

Raking can't be avoided, because this process gathers a mowed swath into a windrow or gathers two or more windrows into one for more efficient baling. By creating windrows that are uniform in width and in the amount of hay they contain, producers help ensure bales are consistent in shape and density. Also, by creating windrows as large as possible to meet the baler capacity, the amount of loss during the baling process can be minimized when hay is at its driest and most subject to leaf loss from handling.

In addition to proper timing and technique, properly setting the rake ensures good results. Overall, wheel rakes are simplest to set, but rotary rakes, which

have more adjustments, often provide superior results, with less dirt contamination in the hay, and therefore less ash, which reduces forage digestibility. Check the operator's manuals for full details on best practices for setting and operating your style of rake for superior hay production.

Here are several tips on how to set and operate rakes. Except where indicated, tips are for rotary rakes:

- Set rake tines of rotary rakes to skim just above the ground, so they don't dig up dirt, contaminating the hay and wearing down tines unnecessarily. Set wheel rakes to have as little contact with the ground as possible.
- Make sure rotary rake bogey wheels beneath the rotor are level. The rotor should have one-half to 1 inch of ground clearance on all sides at all times.
- Set the tine arm release based on crop conditions and the size windrow you desire. A dry, fluffy

crop requires an earlier release setting. For a heavy, wet crop, use a later release setting.

- For maximum drying, set the windrow as wide as possible.
- If the rake is PTO driven, synchronize the field speed and PTO speed for a gentle lifting and turning action. This helps avoid aggressive handling that can cause excessive leaf loss.
- Operate the rake at a consistent speed to create an even windrow for uniform drying and fewer slugs of wet, bunched hay, thus allowing hay to be fed smoothly and evenly into the baler for superior baler performance. The end result will be high-quality bales and reduced risk of crop spoilage.
- Stay up to date on regular maintenance to ensure peak machine performance including daily greasing of pivot points and hinges. Tighten bolts and replace broken or worn tines. Check tire inflation regularly.
- Be sure to stock up on replacement tines and basket and rake wheel bearings before the season starts to minimize downtime from common breakdowns.





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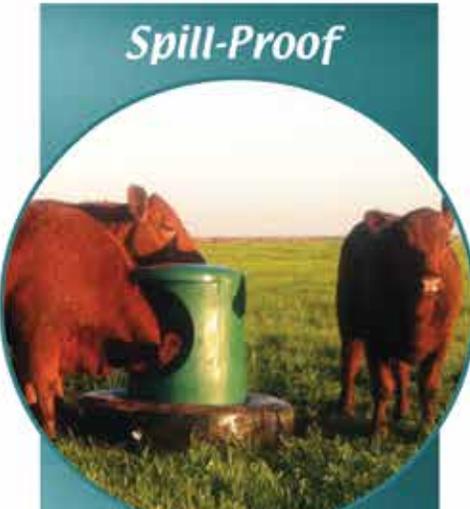
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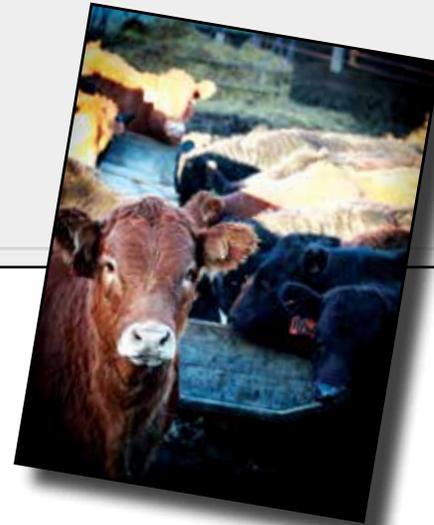
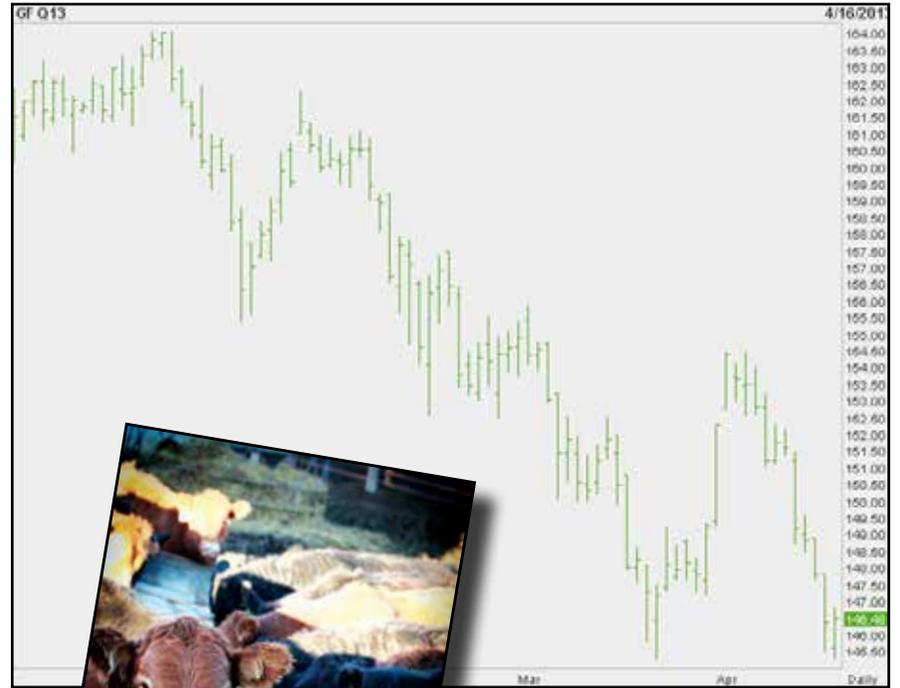
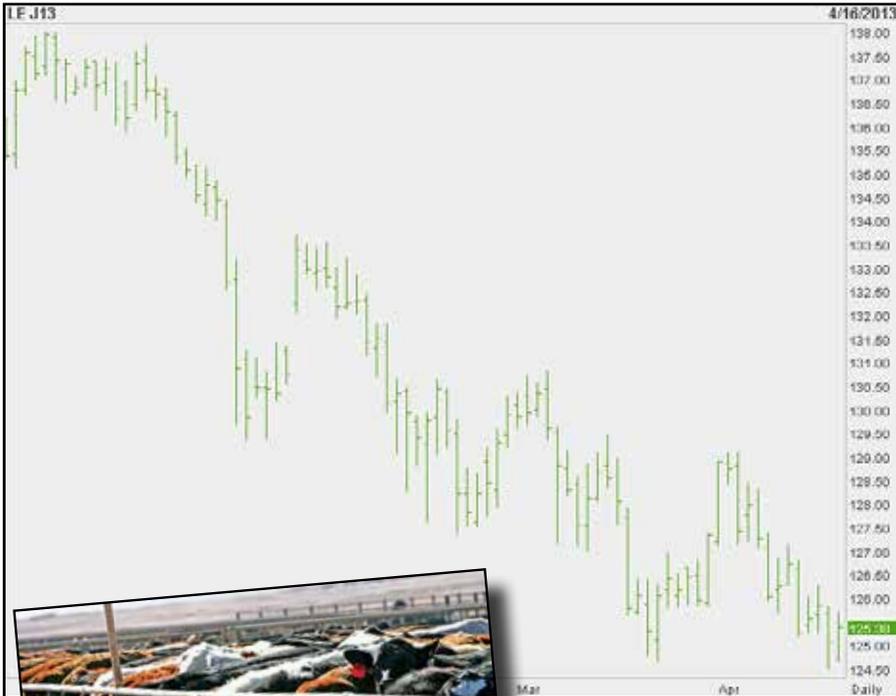
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Feeder Cattle:

Wow, I spent all winter extolling the virtues of how the feeder market was going to be a "wild bull" this spring and summer. Sometimes the market absolutely makes an idiot out of you. I suppose I could expound on the litany of reasons why it didn't happen, but I'll simply sum it up with one word....corn. The price of corn is too high to add any additional value to it when you attempt to market it through livestock. I had a friend say to me one time about 4 years ago, "\$4.00 corn (no, that's not a misprint), IS TO SELL, not feed". Amazing how accurate he was even when corn was \$4. In order for feeders to have maintained their elevated price was for the feedlots to have been making money.....and that didn't happen. We have endured the worst loses in years and it will take a while for those wounds to heal.

Randall Kollmeyer
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What Does this Report Mean to Me?

Q: What do you see as the potential top price for cattle this summer?

A: At best, assuming we see a return to "normal" (whatever that is) consumption, the top prices for summer fats could be in \$124.00 range. The bottom side is \$113.00. I'm leaning more toward downward pressure rearing its ugly head for the summer.

Q: What does your crystal ball have to say about the feeder market for this fall?

A: Keep in mind that my crystal ball is held together with baling wire and duct tape from too many calamities, but, peering through the cracks, I'm saying we'll have a tough time breaking through the \$145.00 resistance area on the cash side. I see summer feeder futures languishing all summer long. This market has its dobber down for the moment and it's going to be a struggle.

One-way Ticket to Town

For those producers who manage bull pens, caution always should be taken prior to entering the pen.

By Kris Ringwall, NDSU

Bull 50 just bought himself a one-way ticket to town. For bulls, there are only two pens. One is the pen for breeding bulls, while the other bulls go to the “for beef market” pen. I climbed over a fence instead of using the standard gate to enter one of the bull pens. However, Bull 50 decided that was not acceptable. In a fraction of a second, Bull 50 was on me. There is no lack of understanding when one comes face to face with a bull that is seeking dominance. He is the boss, so, in this case, I needed to move. I took the quick exit and scaled the fence.

Although Bull 50 won the moment, I won the event. By that afternoon, Bull 50 was on a trailer heading to town destined for the next day’s



market. Market beef would become Bull 50’s new name.

Although the need to anchor the business of beef in data and numbers is real, there always is room for discussion because many day-to-day activities are producer and ranch dependent.

One such point is temperament. The Dickinson Research Extension Center tries to have

continued on page 11

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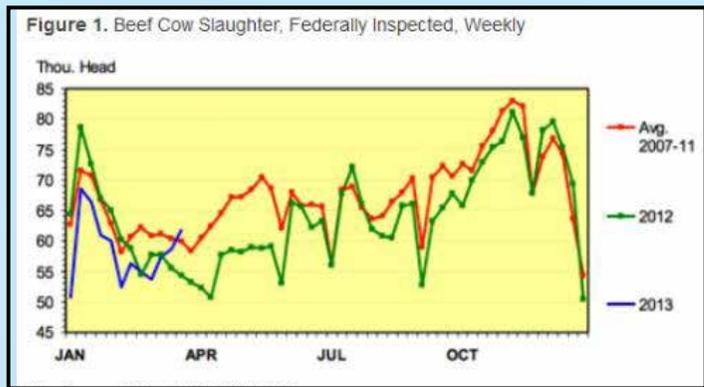
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heifer pairs will sell for \$1900-2000. Many of the second, third, and fourth calf cows with good calves



As shown in Figure 1, the seasonal trend is for beef cow slaughter to increase through April and May (refer to the red line illustrating the 2007-2011 average). This increase results from producers culling open cows, cows without a calf, or other nonproductive cows before turning cowherds out to pasture for the summer. Note that this seasonal increase is occurring almost a month earlier than normal this year. It isn't due to green-up of pastures and early turnout of cattle – at least not in the Great Plains. Instead, high feed prices and expected later turnout to pasture is prompting selling of cows that didn't calve or calved too late.

Anecdotally, it appeared at several recent bred cow sales in Eastern South Dakota that cow-calf producers were liquidating bred cows and heifers that didn't calve within a fairly tight window. In several cases, good solid mouth, running age bred cows were being sold because the owner had finished calving and those being sold were the remaining ones to calve. Additionally, in many cases, older cows (more than fifth calvers) that still had a few years of productivity remaining attracted little interest from producers. Instead, many of these older, yet productive, cows were weighed for slaughter, partially as a result of strong slaughter cow prices. For example, breaking slaughter cows (75-80% lean) could bring between \$75/cwt and \$84/cwt in recent weeks. So a 1400-pound cow could bring \$1050-1176/head for slaughter value. Short-term bred cows selling for breeding stock would scarcely bring more than that, generally ranging from \$1050-1250/head.

Given the "two-way" market for the running age cows, it appears like several producers are selling the older cows from their herd and repopulating their herd with younger cows and heifers. Through the winter months, it doesn't appear like bred heifer and young bred cow prices have declined as much as prices for older bred cows. While few bred heifers are being sold at this point in the spring, heifers with good calves at their side will bring more than \$1600/pair. For some of the best genetics, some of these

Northern Plains. The recent severe winter storm cost ranchers a few extra hay bales and may have delayed pasture turnout too (although the moisture will help grass production). Further, the storm likely resulted in the loss of a few calves, so some additional cows without calves could move through slaughter channels. Optimism that the moisture from the storm will improve pasture and range conditions could keep bred cow and pair prices from declining in the next few weeks. However, such optimism might be short-lived for many producers whose precipitation remains more than twelve inches in deficit, even after the recent storm.

The extent to whether cow-calf producers materially expand the size of the cow herd in 2013 will be highly dependent upon the weather. Although the drought has abated in many areas (particularly the Eastern and Central Corn Belt), many areas remain affected by last year's drought, and it appears like dry conditions will prevail through this summer too. Even with normal precipitation, many drought-stressed pastures will green up later than normal this spring and will have to be stocked lighter. Plus, many graziers are considering the possibility that grass will run out by the beginning of August this year if it doesn't rain appreciably. Unlike last year, corn will not be planted as early, so corn stover residue grazing won't likely be early enough to replace late summer grass pasture/range. And, with almost no change in expected harvested acres of hay in 2013 compared to last year (for both South Dakota and the nation), hay prices are likely to remain high through next winter too. The bottom line is that this year of potential cow herd expansion is becoming one of stable or declining cow numbers. And, unlike last year, we won't have the July cattle inventory report from USDA-NASS to provide a mid-year estimate of cow numbers due to budget reductions.

South Dakota State University



er sorghum and barley imports have added to the supply. And feed use has been declining for 3 consecutive years, which has not occurred for 35 years.

Competitors

In competition with livestock feeders for short corn supplies is the ethanol industry, which is projected to increase its use of corn by 50 million bushels, in large part to lower costs of corn. Exporters will not be taking advantage of the lower corn prices, since increased production in Brazil will help supply global demand. US corn prices remain above the price in Brazil and some other countries, which will tend to keep more of it for domestic use.

Due to the lower numbers of grain consuming animal units the feed use of corn is expected to shrink in the second half of the current corn marketing year. It is expected to be about 800 million bushels less than the 10-year average and the fourth lowest use of corn in a given second half of the marketing year since 1975.

Because of the higher stocks corn prices expected to be paid for feed were reduced by 30-cents per bushel on the low end of the USDA price range and by a dime on the top end with the mid-point for the marketing year reset to \$6.90. However, at the end of the corn marketing year in August, available supplies of the old crop are expected to be down to 757 million bushels, and available supplies of the new crop will be minimal. In 2012, early planting resulted in abundant supplies of corn in August, but the weather delays for planting the 2013 crop will push harvest back. And some farmers may be opting for soybean planting instead of corn if the planting season continues to be challenged.

Accessing Supplies

Livestock feeders may see a wider variation of supplies, depending on their location. States that were hurt by the 2012 drought had been seeing progressively higher acreages of continuous corn being planted. But those were the hardest hit by the drought and most of those farmers have indicated intentions to reduce corn acreage and plant a more weather-resistant crop rotation.

U.S. BEEF
continued from page 3

34 percent higher than year-earlier levels.

Cattle imports from Mexico tighten as imports from Canada begin to rebound

Cattle imports to the United States are expected to tighten in 2013 as Mexico's herd continues to contract. U.S. cattle imports through February were 7 percent lower than a year ago. This reduction resulted from lower Mexican cattle imports, which were 32 percent lower

Illinois farmers are planning a 5 percent reduction in corn acres, and across the Corn Belt states from Iowa to Ohio a more than 900 thousand acre drop is expected. However, the Great Lakes states, along with the Southern Plains, the Delta, and the Southeast are increasing corn acres by more than is being lost in the Corn Belt.

The result may be earlier planting of more acres in Gulf Coast States could have the potential to supply early corn, if it can be accessed.

Sorghum

Reduced corn supplies from the 2012 crop pushed many livestock feeders toward sorghum, where stocks are lower as a result, but not as low as possible because of increased sorghum imports. Disappearance has increased due to feeding and stocks in both on-farm and commercial storage is down. Feeders are well aware of high sorghum prices, since the midpoint of USDA's price range is \$6.85 and is the highest on record.

Barley

Domestic use is higher due to lower corn supplies, and imports have bolstered stocks. The stocks are higher than in 2012, due to a better production year. Barley production enjoyed the better weather that fostered increased corn production in Minnesota and the Dakotas where record corn yields occurred in 2012.

Summary:

Livestock feeders who have been challenged in finding supplies and paying for them, have benefitted from increased stocks of corn and lower prices due to USDA's reports at the end of March. While those supplies will be tight through August, and Corn Belt weather has delayed planting, early planting has occurred in the Gulf States which may supply needed corn in early August.

Due to high prices of old corn, exports have been reduced, but the \$1 drop in corn prices since the end of March has also meant increased competition for corn from the ethanol industry. 2013 acreage will increase, but not in the Corn Belt, where many farmers will return to traditional crop rotations.

FarmGate



through February. Imports from Canada through February were 58 percent higher. This trend may be in play at least for 2013, as exports from Mexico are expected to continue tightening while Canadian exports rebound with gradual herd-size recovery. Total cattle imports for 2013 are forecast at 2.15 million head, or 5 percent below 2012 levels.

USDA/ERS



a zero tolerance for challenging temperaments. Interestingly, oftentimes those closest to the cattle are more sympathetic than those who are more distant or perhaps not down in the chutes. There are excuses, but the bottom line is that aggressive temperament by a bull can't be tolerated.

Bull 50 was a good 2-year-old, at least by the numbers. He was selected based on excellent marbling and rib eye traits and certainly was a good carcass bull. Those are critical traits when cattle are fed out because ranch profit is a function of harvest value. That all changed when bull 50's eyes met mine. The look was not good.

For those producers who manage bull pens, caution always should be taken prior to entering the pen. Why today and why me? One will never know. The DREC ranch manager was with me, so Bull 50 had a choice. Perhaps what saved us was that moment of

thought by Bull 50 deciding which one of us to go after. We got a head start while Bull 50 pondered. Events such as this bring back many memories of tragedy, particularly in the dairy business.

The headline read, "Local dairy producer killed by herd bull." These stories are fewer today, particularly in the dairy business, because of the increased use of artificial insemination. In fact, most dairies would not even need to have a dairy bull on the premises.

The truth is, as producers tend to their bulls, they become part of the bulls' pecking order. More kindness, caring and scratching of the head only make matters worse. The bull slowly adapts to the caregiver as one of the gang. Even if the bull does not mean to, that fateful day simply is a function of a 2,000-pound or more animal picking a fight with a 160-pound-plus person. Guess who wins?

Bull 50 was not kidding. The

snort, look of the eyes, deliberate focused movement, tossing of the head without losing eye contact and pawing of the ground were strong signs of aggression. It could have been worse because one of the hands could have walked in the pen alone to feed the bulls. With back turned and concentrating on dumping feed, the ranch hand would not know what was about to happen. One would rather not think about that happening. Instead, send out a reminder never to enter a bull pen without due caution and diligence. Winning the fight with a bull will not happen. Anyway, Bull 50 is now market beef and the price probably will be slightly above \$100 per hundred-weight. That is good, and at least the day was not all about medical expenses. The point is that cattle do not pay for medical bills very well, and they do not sit around talking about estate taxes or who takes over once the boss is gone.

Cattle don't care and only respond to cues that trigger behavior. If attacked, they will retreat or maybe choose to defend. In moving cattle, those who teach cattle movement will use those behavioral cues to be better cattle handlers. However, one never knows the day or time when a bull, cow with a newborn calf or a just plain ornery critter decides this is the day to challenge that two-legged critter who comes to the pen every day.

Bull 50 stood his ground today, but, fortunately, the outcome was good. The bottom line is to not keep aggressive cattle. On a side note, Bull 50 was a little aggressive when the center purchased him, but we needed an extra bull. In the pen next to Bull 50 was Bull Y1199, who was another high-headed, very nervous bull, but younger. He also went to town.



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and run over the cow while she was tied, breaking her neck. Both the owner of the cow and his attorney were friends of mine and wanted me to be their expert witness since I owned cattle and had 'Doctor' in front of my name. Reluctantly, I had agreed to testify as to the proper and accepted methods for restraining bulls at livestock shows.

Unbeknownst to me, John was friends with the owner of the bull, and because of his vast experience in showing livestock, he was sought out to testify that the bull had been restrained properly and the incident was simply a tragic accident. As we visited the other night, John related to me...the rest of the story.

John and the judge were very close to the same age, and had grown up together and attended the same little, rural school. According to John, when he took the stand to begin his testimony, the judge asked, "John, do you consider yourself an expert?"

I can just hear John's hill-billy drawl as he responded, "Well, your honor, you've known me since we were kids. I've raised cattle my whole life and I've shown cattle all over the country. If that makes me an expert, then I am. If not, well so be it."

John said the judge's next words surprised him as he asked, "Well, John, the next witness following you is Dr. Jerry Crownover. Would you consider him an expert?"

John answered slowly, "Well, sir, since I've shown cattle under him several times in my life, I'd have to say...well...uh...no."

That day, after the verdict was rendered by the judge, I was relegated to the status of 'non-expert' and I must say it is a title I have managed to retain.



when a heat related insult occurs, it is important to consider several things, including the severity of an insult, prognosis and what processes, whether pathologic or management-induced, are involved. These factors can affect the efficiency at which any of these reproductive related processes function, resulting in higher testicular temperature that can lead to increased problems with sperm formation and function. Increases in testicular temperature have resulted in reduced semen quality. Sources of thermal insult include high environmental temperature, fever and excessive lying down. Any of these conditions can negatively impact semen quality. The breeding soundness examination can help identify these potential problems.

Nutrition

Nutrition and feeding practice can have a profound affect on fertility. Fertility can be negatively affected by feeding certain materials such as excessive gossypol, the pigment in cotton products (cottonseed meal, cottonseed hulls, etc.). This does not mean that cottonseed by-products cannot be fed to bulls, only that they should be fed at moderate levels – no more than 3-4 lbs of cottonseed by-product feeds per head per day. The good news about this situation is that it is reversible. Research has shown that bulls with poor fertility due to the consumption of excessive gossypol will regain normal fertility several weeks after the gossypol is removed from their diet. Additionally, several studies have been done with vitamin E, an antioxidant and commonly included nutrient in feeds and mineral supplements, in combination with gossypol. Not only did the vitamin E protect against gossypol, it appeared to be favorable toward bull fertility. Other research into alleviating stress effects are being done with vitamin A, C and the trace mineral selenium.

In the last couple of years, the cattle industry has dealt with two significant factors that subsequently have affected the nutritional programs for many operations. One has been the droughts that have been experienced. The availability of forages, the base of any herd's nutritional program is severely affected by drought, causing producers to have to find alternative sources of forage. This has been coupled with exceptionally

high feed prices meaning that not only have forages been hard to source in some areas, they have been extremely expensive in some areas as well. Additionally in many cases the forage sources that have been available have also been of very low quality thus requiring additional supplementation to meet the animal's needs. Supplemental feeds that would be needed have also been very expensive. Putting all this together, for many producers this meant feeding poorer forages than they would have preferred as well as lower amounts or quality of supplements simply because they had limited dollars to spend. This results in a less than optimal nutrition program and potential problems with fertility.

Energy intake can have a great deal of effect on the breeding soundness of bulls. Ideally a bull should be in a body-condition score of 6 to 7 prior to the beginning of the breeding season. In many cases young bulls purchased at production sales are in excessive body condition. If this is the case, it is recommended that young bulls carrying excess flesh should be "let down" from the time of purchase until they are turned out with the cow herd. It is suggested that the producer, when buying a new bull get information on the type of diet the bulls have been eating and then slowly step down the amount of concentrate and increase the percentage of forage over a period of 60 days. Avoid any major feeding changes.

Good management practices and providing balanced nutrients are critical for maintaining cow and bull fertility. In addition to protein and energy, adequate trace mineral intake and absorption is required for reproduction. Reproductive performance may be greatly affected if zinc, copper, manganese or selenium levels are marginal to deficient. In bulls, zinc deficiency causes lower fertility due to poor sperm quality and reduced scrotal circumference. Likewise, male reproductive performance is affected by low manganese status, which can inhibit libido and lowers spermatozoa numbers. Another consideration for bull fertility is bone soundness and the ability to travel. Zinc, copper and manganese are needed for skeletal development and maintenance as well as hoof integrity. A bull suffering from lameness or joint problems will breed few-

er cows. Selenium deficiency in bulls decreases spermatogenesis, the development and maturation process for sperm.

Feeding beef cattle complexed/chelated copper, zinc, manganese and cobalt has been shown to enhance reproductive performance early in the breeding season. Additionally, use of an injectable trace mineral such as MultiMin® three to four times per year (or at least 45 days prior to the breeding season) can help overcome absorption issues and stimulate trace mineral-dependent reproductive processes. As producers look at their mineral programs, two important considerations exist. First, the best approach to supplementation is to include a balance of all minerals that impact production and especially reproduction. Increasing the level of a single mineral due to identified deficiencies can create an imbalance, an antagonistic effect, on another mineral. For example, zinc and copper become antagonistic if either mineral is supplemented at extremely high levels. Optimum copper: zinc ratios are 1:3 to 1:5. Secondly, the strategic period for use of complexed trace mineral to improve reproduction and breeding performance in bulls is 60-80 days prior to the start of breeding season

Exercise

Finally, exercise is important for bulls. Bulls have to be able to potentially walk miles in a given day. Plus during breeding, the energy level required can quickly wear a bull down if they are not in adequate physical condition. To increase the exercise level of these bulls feed them on a hill and provide water at the bottom of the hill. This type of exercise not only pulls any excess weight off these bulls, but it also strengthens the feet, legs and back.

Conclusions

Bull management to insure fertility and maximum productivity requires a considerable amount of understanding and input. The benefits are significant, however, when bulls perform optimally and provide the maximum genetic influence.

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Cattle Today



Is it too late to supplement post calving?

By Julie Walker

Calving season is in full swing for many producers. Now that cows/heifers have their calves at side, you might notice some of the cows are on the thin side. A pregnant cow with a full winter hair coat can be difficult to estimate her true body condition. Is it too late to supplement those cows now?

Research has shown that cows in moderate body condition score have the best probability of cycling and conceiving early in the breeding season. The target body condition score is 5 for cows. A body condition score 5 cow would be described as the last two ribs being visible with



minimal evidence of fat in the brisket, over the ribs, and around the tail head. The individual spinous processes would not be visible. So, if the cow's body condition is five or higher, there is no reason to provide additional feed for weight gain. However, you want to provide the required nutrients to maintain

them in the desired body condition.

It is normally recommended that young cows (2-year olds) be in a body condition score of 6 at the start of breeding season. You would not see any ribs on a body condition score 6 cow, but would see some fat depositions present over the tail head and in the brisket.

Thin cows are known to be slow to return to estrus and may not rebreed on time to stay on a 365 d calving interval. Also, it is hard to put weight on cows during lactation, since the additional energy provided in the diet will be first directed to milk production rather than weight gain. One key to improving the cow's body condition score is making sure that the present ration is providing all of the nutrients required for this stage of production to prevent further declines in body condition scores. Research conducted by Houghton and others at Purdue showed that thin cows that were increasing in body condition had higher pregnancy rate than thin cows that were decreasing in body condition (Table 1).

Supplementing cows post calving can be a difficult balancing act between getting weight on the cow versus too much milk for the calf.

First, sort off the thin cows so they are not competing with cows in moderate or better condition for feed. This management will ensure they are getting the planned nutrients. Second, test the feedstuffs to know the actual nutrient content for developing the balanced ration for the desired weight gain. Third, monitor the cows and calves to ensure that you are seeing the desired results. You may not be able to get all of the weight gain onto the cows during this period, but focusing on getting the animal in a positive plane of nutrition will improve the probability of the cow cycling during the breeding season.

Another consideration before starting to supplement post calving is the amount of time between now and the start of the breeding season. If the cows will be moved to quality grass with enough time for weight gain before breeding, then providing supplemental feed may not be warranted. However, you still want to ensure that the cow's nutrient requirements are being met until green grass is available so that she will not continue to lose weight.

South Dakota State University



Table 1: Effect of Postpartum Condition Score Change on Pregnancy Rate

BCS status	Pregnancy (%)
Thin (<5) & increasing CS	100
Fleshy (>5) & increasing CS	75
Thin (<5) & decreasing CS	69
Fleshy (>5) & decreasing CS	94
Moderate (4.5 – 5.5) & maintaining	100

* CS = Condition Score

Adapted from Houghton et al. (1990)



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SMALL PRODUCERS SHOULD MANAGE BULLS DURING BREEDING

By Clay Wright

By the beginning of April, most cow-calf producers in the Southern Great Plains are a few weeks away from the start of the breeding season and are wrapping up routine preparation of bulls before turn-out. Ideally, bulls are in a body condition score of at least 6.0 to 6.5, maintaining their condition on a high-forage diet and getting plenty of exercise. They have received immunizations and parasite control, and passed a complete breeding soundness examination. All this preparation is critical, but it is not the end of the manager's responsibility. Throughout the breeding season, managers need to observe and address health issues and physical problems that may arise, and manage the hierarchy of social dominance among the bulls. This is true if your herd has two bulls or twenty bulls.

Dr. Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University emeritus extension animal scientist, authored an outstanding publication, *Management of Beef Bulls*, covering all aspects of bull management. At the bottom of page five in this publication is a table that illustrates the effect of bull dominance over time.

The data emphasizes two basic facts: the dominant bull in a breeding herd sires the greatest percentage of the calves, and, up to a certain point, age is a primary factor in determining dominance. Many producers have herds of 50 or fewer cows and only two bulls. Dominance is just as much an issue for smaller herds as for larger ones. Here is a common scenario for small producers:

The producer has 40 cows, an older bull (A) and a younger bull (B) getting ready for



his first breeding season. The bulls are run together in the off-season. When the

breeding season comes and cows are returning to heat in large numbers, how does the rancher manage his two bulls?

We recommend turning both bulls out together. Bull A's dominance, experience, maturity and capacity will enable him to settle the largest number of cows early. Remove bull A from the breeding pasture to rest after a month, or earlier if he drops a full body condition score. Leave bull B alone with the cows for at least two weeks,

and for the rest of the breeding season if his body condition stays above a score of 5.

It is critical to favor this young bull during his first breeding season. Turn bull A back out with the cows after bull B has had his two-week learning experience. By the end of six to eight weeks, the majority of the cows should be settled. Both bulls can "clean up" for the rest of the breeding season, assuming the young bull has regained condition.

When only one or two bulls are used, it is vitally important to observe them in action throughout the breeding season. Make note of the cows' IDs and service dates, then find those cows in 18 to 23 days to make sure they don't return to heat. If bull A in the scenario above became infertile after two weeks, you would know it and could remove him from the breeding pasture. If undiscovered, he would still exert his dominance over B and cows would go unsettled or breed later in the season.

In small herds, observation during the breeding season and management of social dominance among bulls is just as important to success as fertility, health and physical soundness.

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Insurance for your breeding season

By Dr. Les Anderson,
University of Kentucky

I received the call on Monday. I seem to receive this call 6-8 times each year. This particular rancher had just finished getting his cows diagnosed for pregnancy. He had 43 fall calving cows. Last fall, these cows were synchronized for artificial insemination and were exposed to one bull for about 5 weeks and a second bull for 7 weeks. Only 22 cows conceived and all of them conceived to the AI. The first question I asked this rancher was the obvious one; did you get a breeding soundness exam (BSE) performed on your bulls? His response; the bulls had one when he bought them but he had not had one done since



(2-3 years). The bulls were checked and, sure enough, both were infertile.

What is a BSE? A BSE is a fertility exam performed on bulls by a veterinarian. A BSE has three components; scrotal circumference, a physical exam, and a semen evaluation. Scrotal circumference is highly correlated with semen output and serving capacity. It is recommended that a 12-13 month old bull have a scrotal circumference of at least 30 cm. The physical exam is performed to

simply ensure that a bull is physically up to the challenge of the breeding season. Are his feet and legs structurally correct? Is he free from injury and/or infection? The veterinarian then examines the bull's semen to determine if the sperm cells are normal. The bull is then graded as satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or deferred. Bulls classified as unsatisfactory are considered infertile and it is not recommended that they be used for breeding. Bulls that receive the deferred classification had some irregularities in their ejaculate and a second collection is required to determine his fertility. A BSE is a highly reliable tool to use to identify bulls that are infertile.

Results from surveys nationally indicate that fewer than

30% of cattlemen routinely subject their bulls to a BSE. I am amazed by how few people obtain a BSE in their herd bull before each breeding season. We purchase car, health, life, and crop insurance. Why wouldn't we purchase a little breeding-season insurance? We protect ourselves against most disasters but we don't protect our cow herd from the ultimate disaster? A BSE will cost \$50-100 so it is a fairly inexpensive, easy form of risk management. I'm fairly certain that the cattleman that called me wished he had gotten a BSE on his bulls before he found out that he had 21 open cows. The \$150 investment in breeding insurance (BSE) seems small compared to the lost income from 21 cows (\$15-18,000). So protect your investment. Obtain a BSE on all your bulls 30 days before every breeding season.



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Roger Eakins says 251 bred heifers are consigned at Fruitland. They are 95 percent black or black whiteface. Registered heifers include 42 Angus, eight Simmental and eight Hereford. Cross-breeds include Angus-Simmental, Angus-American and Angus-Hereford. Most have been synchronized for artificial insemination (AI) and 68 percent are pregnancy checked and confirmed AI-bred.

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Eldon Cole says 350 crossbred and purebred heifers are consigned at Joplin. About 90 percent are black or black whiteface. Breeds and crosses include Amerifax, Angus, Hereford, Gelbvieh, Red Angus and Simmental. A few carry 1/8 Brahman.

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Eakins and Cole, University of Missouri Extension regional livestock specialists, manage the sales, which are organized by boards of local consignors. Eakins can be reached at 573-576-2965. Cole is at 417-466-3102. Detailed sale catalogs will be available on sale day.

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CONDITION SCORE YOUR COWS

Performance records are indispensable in managing your cowherd. When combined with regular body condition scores, you can be proactive, rather than reactive, in your management decisions.

By Burt Rutherford

According to the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), nearly 30% of cow-calf producers don't keep any records at all. That figure astounds John Jaeger, beef scientist at the Kansas State University Ag Research Center in Hays. "How can you manage?" he asks. "How can you deal with a drought of this magnitude?"

Jaeger subscribes to the oft-quoted theory that you can't manage what you don't measure. He says performance records, especially in a drought, are

management tools to make informed decisions and plan ahead, "rather than getting to a point where we are in a panic situation and reacting rather than managing."

However, looking again at NAHMS data, Jaeger is fully aware that three-fourths of cow-calf operations, representing 85% of the cows in the country, only work cattle through a chute once or twice a year. "So it makes it a little difficult to get a lot of production measures to use as management tools during a drought," he says. "But

there are ways around that."

Among the best ways around that, he says, is to body condition score (BCS) your cows at least twice a year, and four times if possible. "All measures of production are affected to some extent by the nutritional status of the cow, which BCS indicates."

Cattlemen should shoot for a BCS 4 or 5, he says. Anything beyond a BCS 5 usually isn't economically feasible to maintain. Meanwhile, a BCS 5 indicates a healthy cow on an adequate plane of nutrition

for both her and her calf. Anything less than a BCS 4 is indicative of a problem. So what can condition-scoring your cows tell you? A lot of things, he says. Take, for instance, a cow's ability to rebreed after calving. Going from a BCS 3 to a 4, he says, gains about 20 days. "We get about 10 more from a 4 to a 5," he says. In other words, a BCS 5 cow

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will start cycling about a month earlier than a BCS 3 cow.

If you're trying to maintain a 365-day calving interval, cows at a BCS 4.5 to 5 will get you there. Anything less than that and you could start backing up. Then there's calf health. In a drought, the chance for weak-calf syndrome or dummy calves increases. "Inadequate protein and/or energy intake by the dam is the primary cause," he says. "Remember that 50% of the (fetal) growth occurs the last 60 days. Make sure they have adequate protein, because protein has been proven to be the pri-

mary predisposing factor for weak-calf syndrome," he says.

Which means your cows need to be either maintaining or gaining in BCS the last 60 days of pregnancy. If they're going backward, so are you.

Jaeger says the key times to BCS your cows are pre-breeding; preg checking or weaning; pre-calving; and post-calving at turnout. "With that being said, if you measure BCS pre-breeding and again at preg-checking or weaning, and you see a half BCS decrease, and you haven't had adequate rain (during your peak growing season),

you can't go by BCS," he says. "You have to go by environment and what forage availability looks like."

Keeping tally of your BCS is easy and low-tech, he says. Get a tablet, write BCS 3, 4 and 5 across the top, and draw lines down the paper to make columns. Then make hash marks in each column corresponding to how you BCS the cow.

Add up your tally marks, multiply by the BCS number at the top, and divide by the total number of cows. That gives you the number of cows in each BCS and the average BCS of your herd.

If you have any hash

marks in the BCS 3 column, you have some management decisions to make. "You know these girls are in trouble and you want to move them up to at least a 4," Jaeger says. "Depending on what time of year it is, it may be difficult. But you definitely want to move the 4s into 5s. So early weaning, sorting and implementing some culling strategies" may be called for.

"Those are things you know," he says. "But act quickly. Act before you're in a panic."

beefmagazine.com



Determining How Much Forage a Beef Cow Consumes

By Rick Rasby, University of Nebraska

It's Spring and for cow/calf producers in many areas the majority of the cows are calving or are about done calving. Cow/calf producers during this time period are typically about to finish up feeding harvested forages. A frequent question from producers is "how much will my cows eat on a daily basis"? Producers want to meet the cows' nutrient requirement, but sure don't want to over-feed expen-

sive forages. With the dry conditions this past summer and harvested forages at a premium, closely estimating the amount of feed needed to get through the winter and early spring will be important to contain cost.

The Difference Between Intake on a Dry Matter and As Is Basis

This can be a challenging concept to explain – what is the difference between dry matter

and as-fed – especially when nutrients for beef cows are on a dry matter basis. Intake on a dry matter basis means that the forage doesn't include moisture. However, we know that the forages contain moisture and not all forages contain the same amount of moisture. So if forage intake can be determined on a dry matter basis, it can easily be converted to an "as is" or "as-fed" basis.

As an example, if it were determined the daily dry matter intake of a group of 1,200 pound cows eating an average quality hay is 24 pounds per head and the hay that they are consuming is 88% dry matter, these cows would consume about 27 (24 pounds/.88) pounds per head per day on an as-fed basis.

If the same group of 1,200 pound cows are fed a ration where part of the ration called for corn silage to be fed at 10 pounds per head per day on a dry matter basis and the corn silage is 35% dry matter and 65% moisture, the pounds

of corn silage in the diet would be 28.5 (10 pounds/.35) pounds per head per day on an as-fed basis. Remember that of the 28.5 pounds of silage, 18.5 pounds is water and 10 pounds is silage.

What Determines Daily Forage Intake

There are a number of different factors that determine the daily intake of a cow. The primary factors are cow weight, forage quality, and stage of production (gestating or lactating). When feeding the same forage, cows that weigh 1,300 pounds will consume more on a daily basis compared to lighter weight cows that weigh 1,100 pounds. In addition, cows that are lactating will consume more feed than cows that are not lactating.

Forage quality impacts dry matter intake of cows. As the forage quality increases, indicated as an increase in TDN content of the forage, the amount of the forage that the cow can consume also increas-



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DETERMINING

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es. As forage quality increases, there is more leaf as compared to stem. When quality is low, there is more stem, therefore more cell wall contents that are not as easily digested — the forage does not pass through the rumen very fast.

In addition, as forages increase in maturity, there is an increase in lignin content. Lignin is not digested by the rumen microbes.

A good example of how forage quality impacts the amount a cow can consume daily is wheat straw. Wheat straw is low in protein and energy, 4.0% crude protein and 40% TDN. When cows have full access to wheat straw, they don't quit eating wheat straw because they don't like it, they quit eating it because they can't stuff anymore into their rumen. Straw has such a low digestibility that it takes extra time in the rumen for it to be

digested and passed through the rumen before more can be consumed. Daily intake on a dry matter basis may be 1.6% to 1.8% of her body weight. In comparison, corn silage will typically be about 70% TDN and lactating beef cows can easily consume 2.5% to 2.7% of their body weight on a dry matter basis of this feed.

There are some "thumb rules" to help estimate daily feed intake of cows on a dry matter basis consuming forages of differing quality when they are either gestating or lactating.

- When forage quality is low (52% TDN or less) and cows are not lactating, they will consume 1.8% and lactating cows about 2.0% of their weight on a dry matter basis.
- If the forage quality is average (TDN content between 52% and 59%), non-lactating cows will consume about

2.0% to 2.1% and lactating cows about 2.3% of their body weight daily on a dry matter basis of this forage.

As an example, if the forage were 55% TDN and lactating cows on the average weigh 1,200 pounds, then it could be estimated that they would eat 28 (1200 pounds x 0.023) pounds of hay daily on a dry matter basis. If the hay were 88% dry matter, on an "as-fed" basis, cows would eat about 32 (28 pounds/.88) pounds daily. If there were 200 head of cows in the herd, it would take about 3.2 ton of this hay per day [(200 head x 32 lb/hd/da)/2000lb] not accounting for any waste.

Estimating daily feed intake of your cow herd is the first step in determining the amount of forage that is needed to be on-hand for a harvested forage feeding program. When forage availability is

tight like it is during drought, being able to determine how much inventory is needed will help enhance the profit potential of the cow/calf enterprise.

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FACTORS AFFECTING THE PERCENTAGE OF COWS CYCLING AT BREEDING

By Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University

The breeding season is, or soon will be underway for those herds that have a spring calving program. The most important factors that determine if, and when, a cow returns to cycling activity were studied by Kansas State University reproductive scientists. Over a period of 7 years, Kansas State scientists used more than 3,200 beef cows in estrous synchronization studies. As a part of these studies they determined which cows were cycling before the start of the breeding season both before and after synchronization treatments. They then looked at the previous data about each cow and determined the major factors that influenced the likelihood that she would have returned to heat by the start of the breeding season. The research indicated that three main factors were the most important determinants as to wheth-

er the cow would recycle before the breeding season began. Body condition, age of the cow, and the number of days since calving were the biggest influences on incidence of cycling activity before breeding.

Body condition: Cows ranged in body condition score from 1 (extremely emaciated) to 7 (very fleshy). As body condition score increased the percentage of cows cycling increased in a linear fashion. The Kansas data

reported that there was an 18% increase in percentage cycling for every 1 full condition score improvement.

Age of the cow: The percentage of first calf two-year-olds cycling was about 10% less than mature cows that were having at least their second calf. The extra nutrient requirement for growth clearly limits the cycling activity at the beginning of the breeding season of two-year-olds. Also two-year-

olds are in the stage of life where the baby teeth are being replaced by permanent teeth. Some of these young cows have problems consuming roughage similar to "broken-mouth" older cows. This explains why many producers choose to breed replacement heifers ahead of the cow herd and therefore give them more days before the breeding season begins for mature cows.

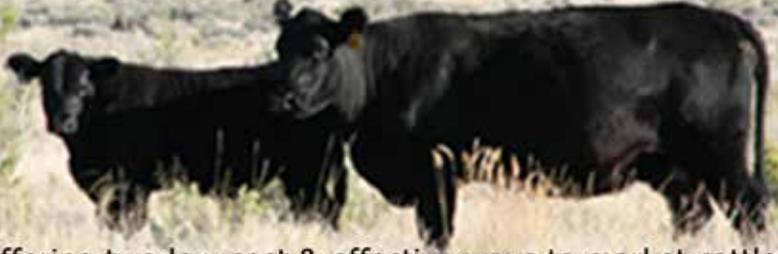
Numbers of days since calving:

Cycling activity was also influenced by the number of days since calving. For every 10 day interval since calving (from less than 50 days to 70 days) the percentage cycling increased by 7.5%. A short calving season is important because it allows a higher percentage of cows to be cycling by the start of the breeding season.



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NUTRITION CAN IMPACT PREGNANCY RATES IN HEIFERS AND COWS

By Bethany Johnston, UNL

How much does nutrition impact the reproductive rates of cattle? According to Dr. Rick Funston, UNL Beef Reproductive Specialist, "The nutritional status of animals is difficult to measure, and this complicates interpretation of nutrition x reproduction interactions. An animal's nutritional status is usually assessed on changes in its live weight and body condition. However, these are long-term changes while many of the events of reproduction, e.g. ovulation, fertilization, and placentation, take only a short time."

Research has shown an increase in pregnancy rates with a "flushing effect." Cattle bred on an increasing plane of nutrition have shown higher pregnancy rates than cattle bred on a declining plane of nutrition.

Can producers use this "flushing effect" to their ad-

vantage?

First, think about when your cows are breeding. For a March calving herd in the Sandhills, high quality forage is available in June when cows are bred. However, a May calving herd would be grazing August grass, which is maturing and protein levels will likely be declining.

"During a normal year, I would recommend supplementing the "high risk" animals but this year the entire herd may need supplementation," says Funston about the later calving herd.

However, Funston notes, this year's early spring calving herds may need to consider the impact continued drought conditions will have on forage. First, if pastures remain dry, the forage availability and quality could be poor, even in June. Second, if abundant rains do come, the forage may be too high

in protein and lacking energy, causing lower pregnancy rates. "Just as we take precautions while grazing irrigated grass while breeding cows, a lush pasture with no old grass may cause a similar effect."

Research at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory (GSL) near Whitman has observed a lower pregnancy rate in the May calving herd, especially the younger 1st and 2nd calvers and heifer calves. The older cows (4 and older) appear to breed similar to the earlier spring calving herd.

These were two years of "normal" to above normal precipitation and we still had issues with these "high risk" animals

breeding without supplementation," said Funston.

Last year, they tried "flushing" the younger females in the May herd. The heifer calves and first calf heifers received a protein supplement 10 days prior to the breeding season (bull turn-out or AI) and during the breeding season. Both groups were synchronized and bred for 45 days, and received supplement for 55 days total.

At GSL, the first year of

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SOLVING THE “OPEN-COW” DILEMMA REQUIRES REPRODUCTION & FERTILITY MANAGEMENT

By Burke Teichert

I'm an older commercial rancher who has tried to carefully watch what happens on the land and in the pasture, and then put some numbers to it. This isn't a lot of fancy math; it's simply attaching dollars and cents to some inputs and outputs. Here are some random thoughts from that exercise.

Are reproduction and fertility the same? It depends on what you include in your definition of fertility. I don't want to debate the definitions, so let's look at how I think about reproduction.

To me, reproduction is the number of animals I'm able to sell as a percent of a beginning inventory. I would include the factors of pregnancy rate, embryonic death loss, neonatal death loss, weaned calf-crop percentage and subsequent death loss. I can't sell calves that were never conceived or that died.

I like the concept of “calves weaned per cows exposed,” but I don't like the records and the adjustments re-



quired to get to an accurate number. In addition, I want my team's focus to be on this year's pregnancy rate and this year's weaned calf crop percentage.

To get back to “calves weaned per cows exposed,” I've chosen to simply multiply the current year's weaned calf crop percentage by the previous year's pregnancy rate. It's a very good proxy and will get you the info you need. With this info, however, we have only accounted for losses up to weaning; we must now subtract yearling and cow death loss. Remember, we can't sell those that die.

Longevity

What is longevity? If you think about it, a cow can live many years in the herd if we don't expect her to raise a calf every year. After we get rid of a few misfits, most of

our culling happens because a cow either fails to conceive or wean a calf. Therefore, I've concluded that longevity is greatly determined by fertility, and fertility is greatly determined by how well a cow fits her environment.

Many years ago, I was introduced to the concept that increasing turnover was one way to increase profit. This basically means increasing the operational size. I agreed, but wanted to look at turnover in a different way.

To me, turnover has come to mean the number and the value of animals that I can sell from a fixed size resource. It didn't take much arithmetic to figure out that “weaned calf crop percentage” was my most important cattle metric followed by “death loss percentage” and “pregnancy rate.” I even decided it was more important to have more calves than to have bigger calves.

The next “crazy” turnover idea was to set aside our “grandma,” or older, cows that we were fairly sure shouldn't stay another year in our environment. At sometime in mid- to late-August, we would wean the calves from these cows and sell the cows before the fall price break – probably at 100 lbs. heavier and \$5-\$10/cwt. more than if we'd waited 1½-2 months to sell her at the normal weaning date. We were also able to allocate the feed those cows would have consumed during the next two months to other livestock.

Maternal

What are maternal traits? Many people believe that maternal means milk. However, I think milk is a growth and inefficiency trait, as it makes calves grow faster at

a very high cost. The conversion of grass to milk to calf growth is very inefficient. Cows that give a lot of milk have poor maintenance efficiency and often have a difficult time breeding back without a lot of expensive feed.

To me, maternal traits include the ability to conceive early in the breeding season, carry the calf to term, and give birth unassisted to a healthy calf. It also includes providing enough milk for good immune system development and adequate calf growth, the ability and natural instinct to immediately mother the calf and get it to nurse quickly, take good care of it until weaning, and then to do it over and over.

Bull costs

With today's high bull prices, it's increasingly important to pay attention to bull-to-cow ratio. I've never hesitated to use one bull per 30 cows. However, research and some good rancher experience indicate the ratios of one bull per 40-50 cows can work well. However, never having done this, I have no experience to draw on.

However, it's not difficult to have bull depreciation costs of \$50/calf born. After adding interest, feed and an annual breeding soundness examination, the cost can approach \$75-80/calf born.

If you can double the number of cows per bull and still get them pregnant, the cost could be halved. This is one area, however, in which incremental change is advised rather than one big change. I'm concerned that there are a lot of bulls with marginal fertility. Libido is a definite factor in bull fertility.

Thoughts on heterosis

Heterosis is very important to fertility. I wouldn't

NUTRITION

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results is favorable for the May calving herd. The heifer calves (receiving 1 lb. of 30% protein cake) bred 82% versus the non-supplemented heifers (59% pregnancy rate). The first calf heifers (receiving 2 lbs. of a 30% protein cake) bred 87% versus the non-supplemented animals who only bred 53%.

Before you turn out bulls this year, consider the quality and quantity of your forage during the breeding season. Supplementation during the breeding season may be an option to consid-

er this year. A flushing effect can also be accomplished in a drylot situation.

Visit the UNL Beef Website for more information at <http://beef.unl.edu>. Updated information on synchronization systems, a synchronization planner, and Applied Reproductive Strategies in Beef Cattle proceedings can be found at <http://beefrepro.info>.

University of Nebraska



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strive for maximum heterosis, but 50-80% of maximum is a good target depending on your operation and your seedstock sources.

My bottom line is that nothing about the cow is as economically important as reproduction. If we fail to cull open cows and dry cows, are we inadvertently selecting for infertility even if the heritability is low?

I continue to read articles claiming that heifers that calve early in their first calving season will make better lifetime cows. I agree, but most of the articles contend that it's important to develop the heifers so that a high percentage will conceive early in the breeding season. I struggle with what this might imply.

I don't like over-developed heifers. Yes, you can get a lot of heifers pregnant the first

time, but later breedings and calf performance might not be so good. I prefer to manage heifers like stocker heifers; expose quite a few more than you need for 30



days or less. The truly good ones get pregnant – not the ones that you over-conditioned to get pregnant. I've come to believe that this is

reasonably effective selection for fertility.

In my conversations with ranchers, I hear of way too many open cows. I think there could be issues with

expensive feed, but that doesn't work economically. I prefer to start with moderately developed heifers that breed early in their first breeding season; maintain a reasonable level of heterosis in the herd; keep cow size and milking ability in check; cull open, dry and late-calving cows; and use good, fertile bulls.

Burke Teichert, consultant on strategic planning for ranches, is retired as vice president and general manager of Deseret.

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cow size, milk production, a lack of heterosis and bull fertility. Most of these can be overcome with a lot of

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Impacts of drought and regional change on hay production

Derrell Peel,
Oklahoma State University

Lingering winter weather this year is exaggerating the impacts of limited forage supplies for beef producers. Drought in 2011 and 2012 reduced U.S. hay production and increased hay demand leaving the country with very limited forage supplies at this time. On December 1, stocks of all hay were down nearly 28 percent from a 2001-2010 average prior to the drought. States with the biggest decrease in hay stocks are (in descending order); Texas, South Dakota, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Nebraska, Michigan, and Minnesota. These 11 states all had reductions in hay stocks of 1 million tons or more and accounted for 72 percent of the total decrease in December 1 hay stocks compared to the 2011-2010 average. Decreased hay stocks for Texas, South Dakota, Missouri and Kansas all exceeded 2 million tons.

Drought reduced hay production in many states in either 2011 or 2012 or both. The 2011-2012 average all hay production for the U.S. was down 16 percent from the 2001-2010 average. A comparable list of the top eleven states with decreased 2011-2012 average all hay production is the same as

above for hay stocks with two exceptions; South Dakota and Minnesota are not in the top eleven decreased hay production states and are replaced



on the list by California and Ohio. South Dakota did have sharply reduced hay production in 2012 but it followed high production in 2011 so the two-year average was only 9 percent below the 2001-2010 average. Compared to the 2001-2010 average, the eleven states with the biggest decrease in 2011-2012 production accounted for 77 percent of the total U.S. decrease in production.

Drought generally has a bigger impact on hay yields compared to harvested acreage.

The recent USDA-NASS report on prospective plantings also included estimated hay harvested acreage for 2013. A look at how harvested hay

down 387,000 acres (26.0 percent); Tennessee, down 307,000 acres (16.0 percent); and Missouri, down 301,000 acres (7.3 percent). Rounding out a similar top eleven list includes the states of Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Kentucky and Ohio, all with decreased hay harvested acreage of 200,000 to 300,000 acres compared to the 2001-2010 average. Together these states account for 79 percent of the decrease in total U.S. hay harvested acreage. Most of these changes in hay harvested acreage are not the impact of drought but rather reflect longer-term shifts in crop production. Significant amounts of hay land are being converted to annual crop production in and around the Corn Belt from North Dakota to Tennessee. The decrease in hay harvested acreage in the Northern Plains and Upper Midwest is particularly dramatic. By contrast, some of the worst drought affected areas, including Texas and Oklahoma, have projected 2013 hay harvested acreage that is unchanged or up from the ten-year average.



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These Are All Ranch Raised

How do you define efficiency in your herd?

By Dr. Brandi B. Karisch,
Mississippi State University



With cost of livestock production increasing each year, producers are continually searching for a cheaper, more efficient way to produce their product. Any beef producer who has filled up a diesel pickup truck or been to the local feed store lately has a good understanding of just how much input costs have climbed in recent years. Improving the efficiency of your operation requires several things, but perhaps most important of these are measurements and records. The saying “you can’t manage (or improve) what you don’t measure” is very applicable to the discussion of measuring efficiency of a beef cattle operation. The definition of efficiency differs for each herd, but most producers can likely agree that the best measure of efficiency is a relationship between inputs and output traits. An efficient calf, or cow, or herd has a low level of inputs relative to outputs. It is also important to remember that an efficient animal for one producer in a certain environment might not be considered efficient when placed in a different production system or environment. Therefore it is important to tailor your definition of efficiency to your herd and production level.

For the cow/calf producer, it is interesting to know that regardless of cow type approximately 73% of ME consumed by a mature cow is used for maintenance (Ferrell and Jenkins, 1985). Therefore, large portions of feed expenses for the cow/calf producer are directed just to maintain the cow, not accounting for lactation, growth, energy

storage, or reproduction. Therefore, reducing cow maintenance requirements may be an effective way to improve cow-herd efficiency by allowing more of consumed energy to be directed toward other sources, such as lactation, or fat storage, and may also be an effective way to improve profitability. During periods where intake is limited, i.e. drought or winter, those more efficient cows would be more able to maintain their weight, and/or condition perhaps due to lower maintenance requirements. There are many factors, such as milk production, temperament, maintenance requirements, or tissue accretion, which may affect why some cows are more efficient at converting available forage resources to pounds of calf weaned. It is important to identify cows that are more efficient in converting available forage resources into more pounds of weaned calf, while still maintaining adequate condition to ensure rebreeding.

For all groups of cattle, feed costs are the single largest variable expense. However, previous selection strategies have been focused primarily on increasing growth at weaning or other output traits. This strategy neglects the fact that it often costs more feed to get that increased weight gain, and might not

be the most profitable strategy. Selection for improved feed efficiency in growing calves could reduce feed required for gain, and thereby improve profitability for an operation.

The most common trait used is feed conversion ratio (FCR), which is simply the ratio of feed intake to ADG. One potential drawback of using this trait is that selection for FCR would select for cattle with an increased growth rate and ultimately increased mature body size thereby increasing maintenance requirements. Another trait has been proposed to measure feed efficiency that gets around this problem. Residual feed intake (RFI) is the difference between an animal’s actual feed intake and the amount of feed an animal is expected to eat based on its size and growth rate, and measures variation in feed intake independent of growth rate and mature size. One major drawback to measuring feed efficiency for most beef producers is the need to have individual feed intake of animals, which can be costly. However, in recent years, many options have become available for producers to have bulls or females tested for feed efficiency. Many breed associations have recognized the need for an improvement in efficiency, and EPDs or genetic tests are currently available for many breeds of cattle to select seedstock based on this criteria.

For the stocker producer, efficiency may be best considered relative to costs. This is where a detailed budget becomes a vital part of calculating the efficiency for a producer. Documenting expenses for each group of calves is important to accurately calculate profits. There are a few calculations that are helpful in determining how efficient an operation is at adding value to calves. In a simple calculation, cost of gain accounts for a great deal of production and market information. Cost of gain can simply be calculated as the total cost to put on that gain ÷ total gain. Breakeven price is also an important piece of information to know. Breakeven price is simply the price you need to receive for your cattle in order to break even on the sale. This is a very important number for stocker producers to know to ensure that cattle are profitable. Recently, the MSU Extension Service released an app for mobile devices that assists producers in determining breakeven in price, breakeven out price, and breakeven cost of gain. The app can be found at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/msuesbreak-even/id580535520?mt=8> <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/msuesbreak-even/id580535520?mt=8>.
Breakeven cost of gain can also be calculated as follows:
Breakeven cost of gain=
(Expected sale weight ×
Expected sale price) –
(In weight × In price)
(Expected sale weight ×
In weight)
Regardless of how you choose to define efficiency for your farm or ranch, it is important to strive for the most efficient production system possible. The continuously rising costs of inputs are not likely to disappear any time soon, so to insure that your farm stays profitable for the future producing the most product with the least input is a valuable strategy.



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LIMFLEX HEIFER HELPS LEAD YOUTH TO A FUTURE IN THE CATTLE BUSINESS

By Brenda Black

Author's Note: Most often, the breed features I contribute to *The Midwest Cattleman* highlight well established, successful producers. But once in a while, I come across a story that tells another side to the beef business – the road to success. Natalie Schowe is the face of the next generation of beef cattle farmers and this is her story as she just gets started on her Limousin journey.

Many purebred cattlemen or cattlemen started their beef business at the end of a show halter and leather lead. Some were second or third genera-

tion showmen and knew the ropes, literally. But there are some who also come into the game as true rookies and find a love of the cattle and the people they meet make them want to stay.

old daughter rode shotgun on Jan. 8, the day they departed their hometown of Warrenton. They only made it as far as Kansas City when their truck broke down and delayed them three hours for repairs. Another 100 miles down the road found the pair sidelined with a blowout on the trailer. “I began to wonder if it was going to be worth it all!” recalls Natalie. “Once we got to Denver, I had never seen the mountains, so it was awesome. And the actual show in Denver was huge, so many cattle as compared to the other shows we had been to.”



Natalie Schowe won't soon forget one of the best experiences a young beef producer can have. She led a champion at the National Western in Denver! She came out a winner in more than one way, thanks to Yana, her LimFlex heifer, and a few great mentors.

The road to the contest wasn't easy. Natalie's dad, Dale, commandeered one of the three rigs of the Wies Limousin convoy. His 15-year-

was old enough to show was my sister's last year, so she helped me get my steer ready and show in our local county fair. Yes, I was afraid. My sister stayed in the ring with me and was there in case I needed her.”

In Denver, Natalie was a one-woman show when it came time for the big dance, but she gives a lot of credit to friends who helped her gain such confidence with the cattle. “Our friend Heather, and Trent Edwards, talk to me calmly and tell me what I need to do in the show ring,” says Natalie. “I try to be as calm and patient as I can. If I get upset, then Yana tends to notice and she gets upset.”

As Natalie and her younger brother, Clayton, got more interested in the cattle, they decided to take the Schowes on the road to some bigger events. They traveled to AGR and Block and Bridle. “And then it just evolved from there,” says Natalie.

Her mother, Jill, says she and Dale are most proud of Natalie's increased knowledge and her showmanship. “She has a great spirit and never gives up. She is more confident in herself and in the show ring.”

To appreciate how far Natalie has come, it's important to understand one more thing about this young cattlemom-

an. She faces some hurdles that fellow contenders may not have to overcome. “I was born with severe developmental delays and processing disorder,” Natalie explains. “I have also been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder.”

Still none of those challenges seem to stop this little go-getter. She is as much a winner outside of the ring as in it with her positive attitude and can-do spirit. She competes in the Special Olympics in three disciplines: Bowling, Basketball and Track and Field events.

It was at a field day of a different kind in June of 2012 in Springfield, MO, when Natalie discovered the winning potential of her and Yana as a team. “We didn't know how good she really was at first,” says Natalie. “We just knew she was gentle.” The deep bodied, easy moving calf began turning heads every time she hit the ring.

She racked up an impressive list of accolades in one show season: MO Reserve Champion at AGR; MO Champion at Block and Bridle; Reserve Division Champion at the Eastern Regionals in TN; Champion Lim-Flex at the Missouri Field Day in Springfield; Class Winner at the

continued on page 27



Junior Nationals; Class Winner at a Mags Jackpot show in OK; Supreme Champion Heifer at Boone and Callaway Fair; Grand Champion 4-H Junior at the MO State Fair; Class Winner at NAILE, Louisville, KY; and Grand Champion at Denver in the junior show.

“Several judges have commented she is the type that really catches your eye when she walks in the ring,” says Natalie’s dad. “This daughter of Mags Savage and MCBN Wynonna is even tempered and mostly fault free.”

And now she’s a mamma herself, having recently calved a Mags Shyllo heifer. Yana’s show days might be over, but she and Natalie are just getting started as a team. “We may flush embryo and help Natalie develop a small business with her cattle,” says Dale. “We are looking at helping her develop into a self-sufficient, responsible adult. We want her to have a career that is realistic and one she will thrive in as well as enjoy.”

Natalie seems to be completely on board. Her plans for the future: “I want to be a teacher, have a farm and raise my own cattle.”

“Dale and I don’t own any cattle ourselves,” says Jill. “Dale, along with his sisters, have a small herd of commercial cattle on the family farm that they took over when their father died. Currently, our children, Natalie and Clayton, have nine cows and six calves that are Limousin or LimFlex.”

Dale says their introduction to the Limousin breed came through Mike and Heather Henderson of Wies Limousin Ranch and their work with the junior program mostly. “But we’ve also learned about the calm, gentle traits of the breed and their feed efficiency,” says Dale.

The Schowe family is pleased with their decision

and thankful for the circle of friends who helped make such an adventure possible for one special girl. “Natalie has a heart of gold, and has really blossomed while learning to show cattle,” says Jill.

“Anyone who has a support system and desire can buy, raise and show cattle,” adds Dale. “We are not a family with unlimited funds, and we

have truly had an amazing year and a half taking Natalie, Yana, and the family to six different states showing cattle. We are looking forward to continuing to show cattle and exposing our children to as much of the cattle industry as possible.”

It appears as though this little LimFlex heifer has led an entire family into the Lim-

ousin business. While Yana may be a hard act to follow, Natalie seems to have it all in perspective. “It is okay if you don’t always win; I am having fun just being with family and friends, learning more about cattle and showing them.”



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LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD: MEGATRENDS AND BEEF INDUSTRY SHIFTS

By Dr. Tom Troxel and Dr. Michael L. Looper

The beef industry has undergone significant change in the past few years. On the production side, severe drought has caused structural changes in the industry. Herd size has dramatically diminished, input costs are high and some cattlemen are exiting the business instead of taking on herd rebuilding. Looking ahead, there are further significant changes in the marketing landscape that the industry must successfully adapt to in order to keep beef as the premier center of the plate protein. Households composed of one or two persons now represent 62% of total

households. In addition, some families are now eating more a la carte meals, where individual entrees are needed to meet each person's desire. Retailers are going to need several merchandising options as they reach out to these consumers. A recent beef checkoff study found strong consumer interest in packages of small, 4-5 ounce expertly trimmed steaks in the meat case... as well as on the restaurant menu. Market research also has found that a limiter for beef consumption is that beef does not perform well in the microwave. This has led to testing of new packaging

such as a microwaveable ground beef option with a pouch to collect grease as the beef is cooked.

Hispanics are anticipated to grow from 16 percent to 30 percent of U.S. households from 2010 to 2050. The percentage of Asian consumers in this country is expected to nearly double, from 5 percent to 9 percent. Not only will tastes shift, but the beef industry must be able to satisfy increasingly diverse consumer palates. This will create an explosion of taste options to enjoy, particularly for millennials who embrace ethnic flavors to a much greater degree than older segments of the population.

The marketplace is fractured into three major generational cohorts. The baby boomers remain the most economically powerful generation and, at its peak, was 76 million strong. Boomers want to stay vital and productive as they age and, as more become empty nesters, their discretionary income increases. Generation X is the smaller (49 million) that followed the boomers. They are the in-between cohort whose influence is increasing as the boomers retire. Third is the mil-

lennial generation, which, at 80 million strong, is bigger than the boomers. Millennials are the market of the future and as this cohort moves through society it is changing everything. Also, it is important to note that many of us refine our taste buds when coming of age in our 20's. Historically that has been the time frame when steak consumption climbs. We must stand ready to educate millennials as they go through this important gastronomic coming of age.

Millennials – consumers born between about 1980 and 2000 – use social media to make many of their decisions, as well as increase their knowledge base. Technology in communications is advancing faster than most consumers can keep up with it. Research has found that millennials are much more likely than other consumers to use a 'shopping app' at the supermarket – an app that tells them, for example, what's on sale, where to find certain foods in the store and can provide recipes and suggest ingredients. What kind of electronic communication will drive millennial decisions and knowl-

continued on page 29

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edge-building tomorrow?

The beef industry has come up with several new beef cuts (Denver Cut, Flatiron Steak, etc.) that have helped make steak eating more affordable, and increased the value of the carcass to the beef industry. Today about half of U.S. households are low to moderate income households, and these consumers are typically higher frequency beef eaters. Innovation is needed to find affordable beef options for all income levels. As the industry moves toward a more comprehensive selection of great beef solutions, we must also remember many consumers today never talk to a butcher, and thus have a declining level of understanding of beef selection

and cookery. Matching beef options up with the distribution channel that appreciates the unique strengths of each cut will require more precise distribution models in the future.

Nearly one-third of consumers believe that 40 minutes is too long to wait for their meals, from start to table, and 70% say an hour is too long. Add to that the fact that 70% of women now are working and it is easy to see that convenience is critical. While ground beef has been the “fall-back” product for the time-conscious, more convenient whole muscle cuts, including microwaveable roasts, could boost demand. So, too, could easy beef options which quickly assemble

into one-pot meals, an increasingly popular choice for the home cook.

Pick up a steak at Walgreen’s on the way home from work? Grab lunch from a food truck outside your office? Have dinner at the nice restaurant in your favorite supermarket? Order your groceries online? Online grocery shopping is finally growing at a sustained and rapid rate. Food distribution is ever changing, with specialty stores, pharmacies and others beginning to add meat products to their offerings and supermarkets providing sit-down restaurants.

The many venues offering fresh foods are a challenge for beef and, in response, the industry is creating new packaging

technologies, size variety, and new preparation methods to meet food distribution needs and consumer demands.

As we look down the road, the trends we’ve identified stand out as particularly relevant to beef producers. They have important implications for how beef is marketed and communicated about. It has been said that the future is what you make it. Obviously, no one can predict the future. However, it makes sense for the beef industry to take action today to manage what we see coming down the road tomorrow.

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BEEF IMPROVEMENT MEETING IN OKLAHOMA HAS TIPS FOR MISSOURI PRODUCERS



Serious beef producers interested in producing quality beef are urged to attend nearby national meeting.

The Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) meets in Oklahoma City, June 12-15. "It's where researchers, producers and industry leaders meet to discuss discoveries in beef production," says Jared Decker of the MU Extension beef team.

The theme is "Where Profit and Progress Intersect." A major topic will be the crossbreeding vs. straight-breeding debate.

New genetic tools are available that aid production of quality beef. Producers will hear various sides of all issues.

MU beef reproduction specialist Dave Patterson will present results of research on breeding protocols. Those were developed and tested at the MU Thompson Farm, Spickard.

"It's a chance to hear the latest in beef cattle breeding and genetics," Decker says.

Decker is organizing an in-service training at the event for MU Extension regional livestock specialists. They work with producers improving herds to make quality beef.

It's where ranchers discuss timely topics facing the industry, Decker says.

The main program is June 13-14. Other events and ranch tours surround the meeting at the Renaissance Hotel and Convention Center in Oklahoma City.

There will be more than serious science. The group visits the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum the evening of June 13. Entertainment includes the Bunkhouse Band.

Producers can sign up at the BIF website: www.beefimprovement.org/convention.html. Hotel links are included.

There is one fee for all four days. However, various combinations down to one-day tickets are available.

The event, which moves state to state, attracts a large crowd, Decker says. This year, the faculty at Oklahoma State University takes charge.

Recent meetings have been in states as far as Montana. This year the educational event is next door. Decker urges Missourians to participate.

UMC



Louse Alert for Cattle in Southwest Missouri

Reports are that lice are showing up on cattle in southwest Missouri. According to Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension for over 40 years, this is the time of year when those reports usually come in.

"Flies and ticks are easily visible on cattle so it's easy for the owner to get concerned about the impact they can have on profitability. Just because you can't see the parasite doesn't mean it's not there and costing you money. You almost need to get cattle in the head chute and inspect them closely to detect a louse problem," said Cole.

The louse buildup has been going on since back in the fall of 2012 according to Cole. Heavily infested cattle will now be showing signs of loss of hair and discomfort, which results in the cattle rubbing on fences, bale rings, corral, feed bunks, etc.

There are two types of lice normally found on cattle in Missouri. According to Cole, they are referred to as chewing and sucking lice.

The chewing or biting lice primarily irritate cattle, both young and old.

"The blood sucking louse actually pierces the skin and the blood feeding interferes with growth and milk production. Both types of lice may be found on cattle in small numbers in the warmer months," said Cole. "During the winter they multiply rapidly when long hair is on the cattle."

There are numerous products and methods of application that help hold louse infestations in check. Sprays, back rubbers, dust bags, pour-ons and injectables are effective when used according to label instructions.

When treating with sprays, a second application is needed in 14 to 18 days to kill the nymphs that hatch following the first spray.

"Close observation may reveal that some cattle seem to attract more lice than others. They should be culled from the herd at an opportune time as they could be carriers and contribute to the spread of the problem," said Cole.



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Economics, timing drive pesticide application decisions

By James Locke and Jeri Donnell

Spring is the season when most begin thinking about controlling weeds and other pests. Producers who choose to control pests (weeds, insects or diseases) with chemicals are faced with deciding whether to hire a commercial custom applicator or to self-apply pesticides to their own property or crops (i.e., be a private applicator). The right choice depends on each producer's individual circumstances. This article will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each system, including an investment analysis of purchasing the sprayer.

First, determine if a reliable custom applicator is available for hire at a reasonable price. Custom applicators provide advantages of efficiency and convenience. Due to dedicated equipment and specialized personnel, they can treat more acres per day than most private applicators. A reliable custom applicator will

apply the requested products, at the requested rate, to the requested pastures or fields in a timely manner. Their equipment should be calibrated and able to apply pesticides without streaking or excessive overspray. They should only spray under acceptable environmental conditions and do

everything reasonable to avoid off-target spray drift. Many, if not most, custom applicators can supply the pesticides, thus eliminating the need for producers to maintain their own chemical inventories and dispose of empty pesticide containers. Custom application is not viable if there are no custom applicators available who meet these criteria.

A common disadvantage of relying on custom applicators is incorrect pesticide application timing. The efficacy of any pesti-

cide depends on applying it at the correct time for the target pest; often, that time frame is very short. The same pest problems can develop for many clients at the same time since custom applicators typically serve a particular geographic region and producers in that region frequently grow the same crops. Having a large number of client requests at the same time, coupled with delays due to weather or equipment problems,

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Vaccinations for the cow-calf operation

By Dr. Michelle Arnold,
University of Kentucky



One of the most common questions in cow/calf production is what vaccines are necessary on an annual basis to keep the herd healthy. The guidelines set forth in this article are designed to help answer that question but the details of what products to use and when to administer them are best decided by the producer and his or her veterinarian. Technology is constantly changing and updating science to make today's vaccines safer and more effective than any time in the history of cattle production. However, the sheer number and types of vaccines and dewormers available today can make the correct selection of products challenging at the very least. Every farm is different with regards to the disease risk the cattle face and the challenges of labor and facilities needed to work the cattle. Your veterinarian is equipped with

the knowledge and skills to determine what will work best for your unique situation.

Consult your veterinarian before instituting any health protocol

Cows and Bulls 4-6 weeks Prior to Breeding

1. Viral respiratory vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV) with *Campylobacter fetus* (Vibriosis) and 5-way Leptospirosis- Fetal Protection (FP) product preferred. If the cow is pregnant at the time of vaccination, use a killed vaccine product to reduce the risk of accidental abortion. Certain modified live vaccines can be used in pregnant animals but only if used strictly according to label directions.

2. 7 way Clostridial (Blackleg)-necessary if under 2 years of age. Optional after that depending on the exposure risk of the herd.

3. Deworm-perform at least twice per year (spring and summer). If only once is possible, deworm in late June or July. Deworming in the fall is a good practice to reduce the number of worms that overwinter in the cow but is not as important as the spring and summer when larvae are active in the pasture.

4. Tag cattle for identification and/or re-tag those that have lost tags.

5. Breeding Soundness Exams are highly recommended for herd bulls.

Heifers Prior to Breeding

1. Viral respiratory vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV) with *Campylobacter fetus* (Vibriosis) and 5-way Leptospirosis-Modified live or killed product. Fetal Protection (FP) product is preferred. Follow label directions; some vaccines require a booster and some do not.

2. 7 way Clostridial (Blackleg)

3. Deworm with a branded (not generic) product. A heifer is under increased nutritional demand because she is still growing herself and trying to reproduce. Young animals do not have the immunity to parasites that adult cattle possess; therefore it is important to use effective dewormers.

Calves 1-3 months of age:

1. Identify with tag

2. Vaccinate with 7 way Clostridial (Blackleg) vaccine-Although the calves are too young to mount a good immune response, this dose of vaccine will initiate the immune process.

3. Dehorn, Castrate-the earlier these practices are completed, the better.

4. Optional Practices:

a. Implant steers at the time of castration (unless you

plan to sell calves in an organic or natural market)

b. Viral Respiratory Vaccine-Killed, MLV *, or intranasal (preferred for young animals)

c. Pinkeye vaccine (administer in late spring/summer just before fly season)

d. Deworm-Begin deworming calves at 4-8 weeks old depending on time of year and expected level of pasture contamination with parasite larvae.

e. Test for BVD-PI (ear notch)-Consult your veterinarian if this is something to consider. If BVD has been diagnosed in an animal from your farm or there is a history of unexplained abortions in the herd, testing all calves is the proven first step to find persistently infected (PI) animals.

Calves pre-weaning:

1. Viral respiratory vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV)-Killed or MLV * but follow label directions regarding MLV usage in nursing calves.

2. Deworm with an endectocide for internal and external parasites. Use a branded product-not a generic. A drench anthelmintic such as Safeguard, Synanthic, or Valbazen may be used but a second product will be required for external parasite control.

3. 7 way Clostridial vaccine

continued on page 33

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(Blackleg). Follow label directions regarding the need for a booster.

4. Optional:

Vaccinate with Mannheimia haemolytica toxoid-This vaccine, commonly known as a "Pasteurella shot" or "Pneumonia shot" is given pre-weaning in anticipation of the stress associated with weaning. In a low risk situation in which the calves are weaned on the farm and no new additions are added to the group, this vaccine may be delayed until after weaning. Consult your veterinarian and check your marketing plan since many programs specify what vaccines must be administered and when in order to participate.

Calves at Weaning:

Delay working calves until the stress of weaning is over. It is best to wait until the calves are eating, drinking, and most (if not all) have stopped walking and bawling.

1. Booster viral respiratory vaccine-MLV strongly recommended /often required by special sales. a. For Replacement Heifers: Viral respiratory with Campylobacter fetus (Vibriosis) and 5-way Leptospirosis vaccine included. Booster according to label directions-MLV is strongly recommended for recently weaned females to be kept in the herd.

2. Booster 7 way Clostridial if required by label direction

3. Optional Practices:

a. Implant-Follow label di-

rections if re-implanting. Do not implant females to be used for breeding purposes. Do not implant if planning to sell on the natural or organic markets.

b. Pasteurella multocida and/or Histophilus somni (formerly known as Hemophilus somnus) vaccines-consult your veterinarian.

Cows after weaned:

1. Check cows for pregnancy by palpation, ultrasound, or blood test. If open, strongly consider culling her.

2. Check for other problems: Eyes, mouth, udder, feet and legs, body condition, disposition.

3. Scours Vaccine-Administer prior to calving. Products vary on when to administer them so follow label directions carefully.

More Considerations:

1. If calves cannot be processed pre-weaning, then do the steps for "Calves at Weaning" then, in 2-3 weeks, booster the viral respiratory vaccine (and the 7 way Clostridial if required on label). If castrations and dehorning were not done earlier, these practices need to be completed as soon as possible. Tetanus vaccination is strongly recommended when performing late castration; especially if banding. Consult your veterinarian regarding whether to use a tetanus toxoid or antitoxin.

2. *Modified Live Vaccines (MLV) provide fast, broad immunity and are excellent stimulators of cell-mediated

immunity. They are generally preferred in recently weaned calves and usually required by most preconditioned sales. However, only use modified live vaccines in pregnant cows and in nursing calves if the cows were vaccinated with MLV in the last 12 months (check label for specific requirements). If this requirement is not met, a killed vaccine must be used until the cow is open and the calf is weaned.

3. Killed vaccines provide safe, protective immunity but must be given twice (usually 2-3 weeks apart) if it is the first time viral respiratory vaccine is administered. Annual boosters are required after the initial two-shot sequence.

4. If heifers have been allowed to stay with the herd bull until weaning, most likely some are pregnant. A prostaglandin injection can be given to the heifers once they have been away from the bull a minimum of 10 days. These injections work best in early pregnancy so do not delay administration if needed.

5. Try to minimize the number of vaccines given at one time as much as possible. Multiple vaccinations cause neck soreness. Multiple Gram negative vaccines may cause cattle to spike a fever and go off feed for a short period of time.

6. Keep good vaccination records. Record date, vaccine name, serial numbers and

expiration dates at a minimum.

7. Utilize fly control and pinkeye vaccine beginning in late spring.

8. Letters in a vaccine name mean:

a. IBR, BVD, BRSV and PI3: Diseases included in a viral respiratory vaccine.

b. An "FP" in the vaccine name stands for "fetal protection" and means protection against fetal infection and abortion due to the BVD virus.

c. An "HB" in the vaccine name stands for the strain of Leptospira known as "Hardjo bovis" that is a common cause of abortion in cattle.

d. "HS" stands for "Histophilus somni" (formerly known as Hemophilus somnus)

e. "L5" stands for the 5 strains of Leptospirosis.

f. "V" stands for "Vibriosis"

In summary, vaccination programs must be designed around the specific needs of your cattle. There are numerous vaccines available on the market for other diseases (for example: Brucellosis, Anaplasmosis, Trichomoniasis, Clostridium perfringens Type A, Foot Rot, Papilloma or Wart Virus) but they may or may not be useful in your situation. Always discuss your concerns with your veterinarian to develop the plan that will work the best for you.



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“Raising calves that have the potential to create excitement when they run into the sale ring requires that they have some positive objective data,” said Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension.

According to Cole, progressive feeder cattle order buyers are not content to just bid aggressively on calves that have the looks, flesh and fill condition.

“Those buyers would like to have a track record for feedlot gain and carcass merit that supports that extra one, two or three bids,” said Cole. “The most effective way to develop that objective data is to retain ownership on all or at least a portion of your calf crop.”

The cattle feeding business has not been financially rewarding in recent times with calf and feed prices both high. In fact,

last December’s closeout on the Missouri Feedout showed a \$225 per head feeding loss.

Despite that dollar loss, some of the participants discovered they had steers that gained above average in the Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity in southwest Iowa. Excellent carcass quality and yield grades were also made.

“These facts can help their herd mates attract more bids in the future,” said Cole.

ENTRY DETAILS

The feedout is now accepting entries, a minimum of five head, until May 10. Eligible entries must be born after July 1, 2012. Birth dates and positive sire identification are desired, but not required.

The calves must be weaned and given two rounds of modified live vaccinations at least 28 days before the June 4 delivery date. Forty-five days are preferred. They must be castrated, dehorned, healed and bunk broke.

Pickup locations will be Joplin Regional Stockyards and possibly the Paris Veterinary Clinic.

Calves in the northwest corner of the state may be delivered directly to the selected feed yard in southwest Iowa.

At the June 4 pickup, steers will be weighed, given feedlot tags, graded by Missouri Market News graders and priced. The price is used to establish value going into the feeding phase. The price helps determine the profitability during the finishing phase.

Data available on individual animals at the conclusion of

the feedout include: rate of gain, carcass weight, marbling score, ribeye area, fat thickness, retail value per day on feed and per day of age, carcass premiums, discounts, disposition score, feed to gain and health treatment costs.

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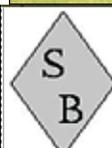
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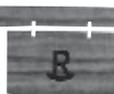
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ECONOMICS

continued from page 31

can result in even the best custom applicators missing the optimum application timing.

Secondly, producers should evaluate their resources and management style prior to deciding to be a private applicator - especially if a reliable custom applicator is available. A major factor is whether or not a suitable sprayer is already owned or must be purchased. Another, and perhaps more important and often overlooked factor, is whether a producer is willing to commit to spraying in a timely manner. When investigating control failures, producers often say they did not have time to spray when application was needed. Simply put, if other activities are going to preclude spraying at the right time, it is an easy decision to hire a reliable custom applicator.

There are many advantages to being a private applicator if a producer is willing to commit the necessary time. The greatest advantage is usually improved pest management due to timely application. Private applicators can closely monitor pests and treat at the optimum pest stage and under favorable weather conditions. Another benefit of private application is the ability to treat only the areas of the field that have the target pest problem. This is often an option for post-emergence herbicide applications and can significantly save on pesticide costs. Private applicators can continue their financial savings by shopping around for the best pesticide prices.

If the decision to hire a custom applicator or be a private applicator is purely economic, other fac-

tors need to be considered. Economies of scale play a large role in determining if owning a sprayer is economically feasible. This means the more acres allocated to the sprayer decreases fixed costs per acre. However, remember to include all operating costs when comparing custom versus private application. These costs include fuel, oil and lube, maintenance and repairs, operating and tending labor, and interest on operating expenses.

For example, a rancher trying to decide between custom application and private application has the following scenario:

Herbicide needs to be applied to 1,000 acres to control annual broadleaf weeds. Herbicide price is assumed equal for both custom application and private application.

Custom application can be hired for \$5.50 per acre.

A pull-behind sprayer equipped with a GPS light bar can be purchased for \$6,500 at an annual interest rate of 5 percent. The useful life of the sprayer is estimated to be seven years with a salvage value of \$500. The sprayer is estimated to operate at 5 miles per hour with a 30-foot swath and 65 percent operating efficiency.

A suitable tractor to pull the sprayer is already owned. Tractor ownership and usage costs are allocated to spraying activities at a rate of \$9 per hour, and it will require 85 hours to spray 1,000 acres.

Step 2. Calculate the net present value (NPV) of purchasing the sprayer. This article will not explain the procedure for calculating NPV. However, given these parameters, the rancher in this

scenario is advised to purchase the sprayer because the net present value is positive and gives him a return on his investment greater than 5 percent. Said another way, returns on his investment are greater than the opportunity cost (i.e., interest) associated with purchasing the sprayer. To ensure a minimum rate of return of 5 percent, this rancher must spray at least 620 acres per year.

This rancher should keep in mind that 85 hours are required to complete the task of applying herbicide to 1,000 acres given the speed, spray width and operating efficiency. Using the NPV calculation in our example, custom application and private application would be equally profitable if the cost of custom application was reduced to \$4.85 per acre. Yet this is unlikely given recent trends in custom application rates. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service reports the average cost of ground-spraying for weeds has increased from \$4.94 per acre in 2009 to 2010 to \$5.45 per acre in 2011 to 2012. Even if the cost is not reduced, custom application may still be the better option if

the rancher is not willing to make the time commitment required to complete spraying activities in a timely manner.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both custom and private application. Producers must make their own decisions about which system is the right choice for their operations. Custom pesticide application is often an easy decision for many small acreage or absentee landowners due to economies of scale or convenience. However, even for small acreage producers or absentee landowners, private application can provide advantages in flexibility of application timing, improved efficacy and reduced pesticide use. Producers should consider the advantages and disadvantages, including economic analyses, of each management system prior to making a decision. We hope this article helps you make a more informed decision about hiring a commercial custom applicator or being a private applicator.

Noble Foundation



Step 1. Calculate operating costs for each system.

Custom Application	\$/acre	Units	Total Cost
Custom application	\$5.50	1,000 ac	\$5,500
Total operating cost per year	\$5.50		\$5,500
Private Application	\$/acre	Units	Total Cost
Fuel	\$1.05	0.3 gal/ac @ \$3.50/gal	\$1,050.00
Oil and lube	\$0.105	10% of fuel	\$105.00
Maintenance and repairs	\$0.15	1,000 ac	\$150.00
Labor	\$1.50	1,000 ac	\$1,500.00
Tractor use	\$0.765	85 hr @ \$9/hr	\$765.00
Interest	\$0.21	6% of costs	\$214.20
Total operating cost per year	\$3.78		\$3,784.20

MISSOURI BEEF INDUSTRY COUNCIL DIRECTOR ELECTION LEGAL NOTICE

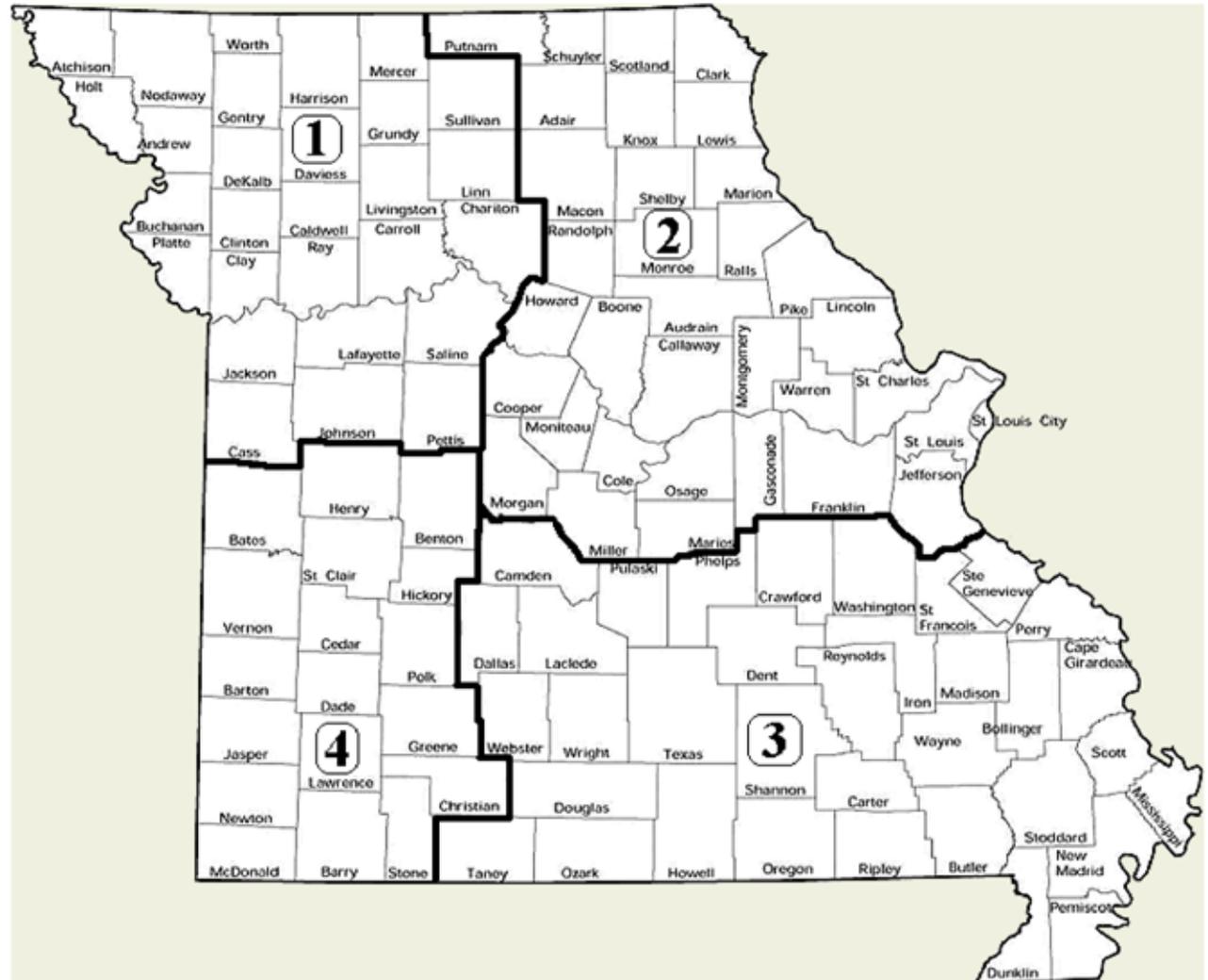
Notice is hereby given that the Director of Agriculture will be conducting an election to fill three positions on the Missouri Beef Industry Council Board of Directors. One regional council member is to be elected in each of Regions 1, 4 and one member is to be elected at-large. Terms of office are three years.

Any cattle producer within the specified regions of the State of Missouri who is producing cattle for market and the legal owner of one or more head of cattle becomes eligible to vote in the election by registering at his/her respective Farm Service Agency (FSA), or electronically at <http://mda.mo.gov/councils/> prior to July 20, 2013. Cattle producers who have voted in any of the previous five (5) elections are not required to register unless their address has changed.

The Missouri Department of Agriculture will mail ballots to registered producers August 19, 2013. Ballots must be postmarked no later than August 31, 2013 to be valid.

Any qualified producer may be nominated and have his/her name placed on the ballot provided the independent nomination is accompanied by petition of not fewer than 100 producers in the nominee's region and written permission of the candidate. Petitions must be delivered to the Director of Agriculture on or before July 20, 2013. Petition forms are available from the Missouri Department of Agriculture by calling 573-751-5633.

VOTE VOTE VOTE



Region 1		Region 2		Region 3		Region 4	
Andrew	Platte	Adair	Pike	Bollinger	Ripley	Barry	
Atchison	Ray	Audrain	Putnam	Butler	Ste. Genevieve	Barton	
Buchanan	Saline	Boone	Randolph	Camden	St. Francois	Bates	
Caldwell	Sullivan	Callaway	Ralls	Cape Girardeau	Scott	Benton	
Carroll	Worth	Cole	St. Charles	Carter	Shannon	Cedar	
Cass		Clark	St. Louis	Crawford	Stoddard	Christian	
Chariton		Cooper	Schuyler	Dallas	Taney	Dade	
Clay		Franklin	Scotland	Dent	Texas	Greene	
Clinton		Gasconade	Shelby	Douglas	Washington	Henry	
Daviess		Howard	Warren	Dunklin	Wayne	Hickory	
DeKalb		Jefferson		Howell	Webster	Jasper	
Gentry		Knox		Iron	Wright	Lawrence	
Grundy		Lewis		Laclede		McDonald	
Harrison		Lincoln		New Madrid		Newton	
Holt		Macon		Madison		Polk	
Jackson		Marion		Mississippi		St. Clair	
Johnson		Miller		Oregon		Stone	
Lafayette		Moniteau		Ozark		Vernon	
Linn		Monroe		Pemiscot			
Livingston		Montgomery		Perry			
Mercer		Morgan		Phelps			
Nodaway		Osage		Pulaski			
Pettis				Reynolds			

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