

ANGUS ADVISOR



Our team of Angus advisors offer regional tips for herd management for the month of February.

Southern Great Plains



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Spring-calving cows

- Prior to the beginning of calving season, move cows to a fresh, clean pasture that has not been grazed for at least 120 days.
- If your operation has a history of calf scours, consult your veterinarian to develop a treatment protocol plan.
- Check first-calf heifers several times daily for possible calving difficulties.
- The process of parturition (calving) is generally divided into three stages:
 - Stage 1 is the dilation of the cervix and occurs 4 hours to 24 hours before the actual birth.
 - Stage 2 is the delivery process and begins when the fetus enters the birth canal. The beginning of Stage 2 is usually identifiable when membranes or a water bag appears at the vulva. Stage 2 averages about 30 minutes in mature cows and about one hour in

- first-calf heifers.
- Intervention should be considered (refer to your protocol) if there has been no progress in the birthing process after 30 minutes in mature cows or one hour in first-calf heifers.
- Stage 3 includes expulsion of the placenta and involution of the uterus.
- During early lactation, energy and protein requirements increase dramatically. Assuming above-average genetic potential for milk production, these cows would

require about 19 lb. of TDN and 3.4 lb. of protein.

- This is roughly equivalent to a diet containing about 59% TDN and 11% protein.

Fall-calving herds

- Fall-calving cows with above-average genetic potential for milk production should receive about 7 lb. of a supplement containing 20%-24% protein daily when grazing low-quality native range forage or low-quality hay.
- A second alternative is to feed around 4 lb. of a concentrate supplement containing 20%-24% protein with 5 lb. of good-quality alfalfa hay.

General recommendations

- Consult a forage specialist in your area as you consider the fertility and management program for both native and “improved” cool- and warm-season grass pastures and rangeland.
- Develop a plan for stocking density, grazing management, control of invasive plants with herbicide or prescribed fire, and fertilizer use in introduced forages.



PHOTO BY SHAUINA ROSE HENMEL

Midwest Region



by Eric Bailey

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General comments

It is time to get high-magnesium minerals in front of cows grazing cool-season forages. This is a means of preventing grass tetany.

One of the problems plaguing high-magnesium mineral supplements is inconsistent intake. This is a time of year when forage is in short supply and producers are likely feeding hay and a supplement. Perhaps it is time to consider mixing mineral into your supplement to ensure consistent intake. Most minerals are formulated for consumption of 2-8 oz. per cow per day. If you're putting loose mineral and hand-feeding supplement regularly, this could aid in the prevention of grass tetany by ensuring consistent mineral intake.

It is commonly recommended to

fertilize cool-season pastures with nitrogen at this time of year. However, this practice may contribute to fescue toxicosis, as nitrogen fertilization increases production of the compounds purported to be the cause of fescue toxicosis.

The University of Missouri recommends nitrogen fertilization in August to boost fall regrowth and support stockpiling forage, which may extend your grazing season. Plus, spring growth of fescue often outpaces forage demand by your livestock. Remember, the seedhead is where ergovaline concentrates. When forage growth outpaces demand in the spring, the forage will develop a seedstalk and seedhead.

I have seen a spring-grazing system in which cows were rotated frequently on half of the available acreage where forage was kept in a vegetative state and seedhead production was prevented. The other half of the forage was cut for hay.

Remember, quality and quantity have an inverse relationship. More quantity often equals poorer-quality forage.

Management calendar for February

My assumptions: Feb. 1 is the beginning of calving for the spring-calving herd; Sept. 1 is the beginning of calving for the fall-calving herd.

Spring-calving herds

- Get herd sires a breeding soundness exam.
- Care for newborn calves.
- Watch cow body condition.
 - Consider sorting off thin cows and feeding separately, as cows in low body condition are less likely to breed.

Fall-calving herds

- This is a good time to consider castrating and vaccinating calves.
 - Intact male calves weaned at 7 months of age are no heavier than steers, according to multiple research experiments.
- This is also a good time to pull bulls.
 - Any cow that conceives after Feb. 1 will be conceived 150 days after

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Guide to abbreviations and acronyms

To make the "Angus Advisor" more concise and consistent, we have used the following abbreviations or expressions:

\$Values	dollar value indexes	CHAPS	Cow Herd Analysis and Performance System	Mg	magnesium
ADG	average daily gain	CP	crude protein	MiG	management-intensive grazing
AI	artificial insemination	cwt.	hundredweight	MLV	modified-live virus
AIMS	Angus Information Management Software	DM	dry matter	N	nitrogen
BCS	body condition score	EPD	expected progeny difference	P	phosphorus
BLV	bovine leukemia virus	ET	embryo transfer	PI	persistent infection
BMP	best management practices	FMD	foot-and-mouth disease	PI ₃	parainfluenza-3 virus
BQA	Beef Quality Assurance	GnRH	gonadotropin-releasing hormone	preg-check	pregnancy-check
BRD	bovine respiratory disease	IBR	infectious bovine rhinotracheitis	Se	selenium
BRSV	bovine respiratory syncytial virus	ID	identification	sq. ft.	square feet
brucellosis	Bang's disease	IM	intramuscular	SPA	Standardized Performance Analysis
BSE	bovine spongiform encephalopathy	in.	inch	TB	bovine tuberculosis
BVD	bovine viral diarrhea	lb.	pound	TDN	total daily nutrients
Ca	calcium	LCT	lower critical temperature	THI	temperature-humidity index
		lepto	leptospirosis	trich	trichomoniasis
				Zn	zinc

calving. That makes her calving interval greater than 420 days.

Western Region



by Randy Perry

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Fall-calving herds

Main focus — getting cows bred

1. If you are AI breeding on return heats, give a GnRH injection at the time of breeding as it has been proven to increase conception rates on repeat inseminations.
2. Personally, I like to switch bulls and not breed the cow back to the same AI sire that I used on the first service.
3. Bulls are probably already turned out or will be shortly. If females are in pastures where they are easily observed, record natural service dates and watch for return heats in cows that have been naturally covered by bulls. If a high percentage of the females that have been naturally covered by bulls are coming back into estrus, replace the bull if that is an option.
4. As discussed every month, mineral supplementation is important in achieving optimal reproductive performance. The breeding season is the most critical period to be certain that females are achieving adequate mineral consumption.

5. As discussed in previous columns, it is critical that both protein and energy requirements of females are being met during the breeding season. Females should be in a state of positive energy balance or gaining weight during the breeding season as energy balance has a significant influence on fertility or conception rate.

6. If not already done, calves should receive their first round of vaccinations. Producers should consult with their veterinarian in developing their vaccination protocol.
7. I recommend that calves are at least 45 to 60 days old before they receive their first round of vaccinations. This can cause a problem if you have some late calves sired by the clean-up bull. In these situations, I like to

vaccinate the AI-sired calves about 30 days before the cleanup-sired calves. In many operations, this practice may not be practical.

8. Calves should be old enough by now to identify the bottom end of the bull calves. I recommend that producers look at bull calves with a critical eye and a sharp knife. In most herds I think the bottom 20% of the bull calves should be castrated. I personally believe that this should be determined based on phenotypic quality only.
9. Treatment protocols should be on hand for both scours and pneumonia in suckling calves. Treat problems promptly as young calves go “downhill” quickly.

Spring-calving herds

Main focus — the calving season

1. Supplies should be on hand and the proper equipment should be available to assist females with problems at calving. Be sure that your personnel are properly trained in the most current procedures recommended for assisting females that are experiencing calving difficulties.
2. For maximal absorption of maternal antibodies, calves should nurse within the first 6 hours after birth. A supply of frozen colostrum could be kept on hand, or a colostrum replacement or supplement could be used. Extra milk from a mature cow taken shortly after calving is the best source for frozen colostrum. **AJ**



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