

# Vet Call

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## Protect your investment with proper bull care

### Prebreeding conditioning period

At least 60 days prior to the start of the breeding season, evaluate bulls for breeding soundness and start preparing them for the upcoming work load. Make sure bulls are in proper body condition and physically fit to be "breeding athletes."

Bulls need to be in adequate condition at the start of the breeding season so weight loss during this period of high physical activity won't cause stress. At the same time, bulls should not be over-conditioned. If bulls are too fat, they won't be as active and may lose excessive weight during the breeding season.

Yearlings need to gain around 2 pounds (lb.)/day during the conditioning period so that they maintain a body condition score (BCS) of 6. Two-year-old bulls in good body condition (BCS 6) are near their mature weight and only need to gain about 1 lb./day during this period.

For older bulls, the ideal energy level during the conditioning period will depend on their physical condition. If bulls are in good body condition (BCS 5-5.5), a forage-based diet with supplemental concentrate will be adequate to build the desired energy reserves. If the bulls are thin, they may need substantially more grain.

Many times bulls from bull tests, sales or shows will be overly conditioned and should slowly lose weight prior to the start of the breeding season. If your bull is over-conditioned, start him on a ration similar to the one he's accustomed to, but at about 70% of his previous intake. You can reduce the amount of grain about 10% per week until the desired nutritional level is obtained.

Dramatic nutritional changes can have an adverse effect on semen production, so it's important these changes be done gradually.

Exercise is important during the prebreeding period because during the breeding season the bull may travel several miles per day and maintain long periods of physical activity. If given ample area in bull pastures, bulls will usually exercise themselves. In designing bull facilities, locate feeding and water areas as far apart as possible.

Other factors that impact a bull's performance and general health include parasite load, foot health and reproductive tract injury. Bulls tend to attract a disproportionate amount of external parasite infestation, making treatment programs for flies and lice important considerations both during the breeding



season and when the bulls are separated from the cows. Although mature bulls will build some immunity to internal parasites, because of the stress they are under during the breeding season, deworming prior to turnout is recommended. A product that is effective in killing the inhibited stages of *Ostertagia* is recommended.

Feet and leg problems in bulls can be caused by poor structure, obesity, exhaustion, fighting with other bulls, rough terrain, accidents or infections such as foot rot. Trim hooves overgrown due to lack of exercise to restore normal movement. If excessive hoof growth is due to an earlier bout with founder or a rear-leg structural flaw, trimming may alleviate the symptoms for a period of time, but the problem will recur. Treat foot rot, nail penetrations and

superficial lacerations promptly to allow the best possible chance for a return to breeding soundness.

Observe the external reproductive tract of bulls closely throughout the year, but especially during the breeding season. The two testicles should be the same size; therefore, the scrotum should be very symmetrical. If that is not the case, ask your veterinarian to examine the bull immediately.

When one testicle is smaller and softer than the other, usually the smaller testicle is undergoing degeneration. The scrotum can also appear asymmetrical if the epididymis alongside one of the testicles is enlarged. The epididymis may become enlarged due to inflammation, tumors, abscesses, or blockage; and the prognosis for return to breeding is poor.

The penis can be damaged in such as way that blood forms a large pocket around the penis (a hematoma) along the belly of the bull. This type of injury often leads to disruption of the nerve supply to the penis or adhesions between the penis and the prepuce, making breeding impossible. Consult a veterinarian to determine if surgical or medical treatment is warranted.

Penile warts are seen most often in young bulls. Don't use a bull with a penile wart until the wart is surgically removed and the penis is completely healed.

A veterinarian can identify other conditions such as scrotal hernias, cryptorchidism and hypoplastic testicles at the time of a breeding soundness examination (BSE).

### During the breeding season

Your goal is to get as many females settled as early in the breeding season as possible in order to have older calves at weaning and to decrease feed costs by allowing accurate phase-feeding of the cow herd. To accomplish this goal, bulls need to be fertile, able to find and breed females that are in heat, and able to service all females that are available.

The number of bulls required to adequately cover breeding females is related

to many factors. Environmental factors include: terrain, carrying capacity of the pasture and pasture size. Bull factors include age, condition, fertility and social status. Other factors such as injury, reproductive disease and use of estrous synchronization also influence the bull-to-female ratio. Bull to-female ratios can vary from 1:20 to as high as 1:80 [(following artificial insemination (AI)]. Generally, mature bulls can cover 30-40 head, while yearling bulls can cover 15-25 head.

Observe bulls closely during the breeding season to be sure they are getting the cows bred. Injuries to bulls during the breeding season are relatively common. When a bull does become lame or incapable of breeding because of an injury to his reproductive tract, remove him from the breeding pasture and replace him with another bull.

Some bulls can lose interest in cows (usually following heavy service). They also need to be replaced. Such problems can best be detected by observing bulls while they work

Leave yearlings with the cow herd for 60 days or less. Beyond that time, continued weight loss from strenuous exercise may have long-term negative effects on their growth. After removing them from the herd, keep yearlings separate from older bulls until they are 2 years of age. Place yearlings on the best available forage, such as regrowth from hay fields or high-quality hay.

**After the breeding season**

This period is often difficult for producers. What do you do with a bull you don't want around the cows; you don't want where he can tear up fences, gates and other equipment: and who isn't doing anything productive? Many producers basically ignore their bulls once the breeding season is over, which can cause problems during the next breeding period.

Formulate supplements for available forages that minimize (optimize) feeding costs and keep bulls in moderate body condition. Because of differences in nutritional needs, separate mature bulls that are in good condition from young, growing bulls. Sort and feed separately any bull that is thin and needs to gain extra condition, or who, because of temporary injury, is not able to compete with stronger bulls. Mature bulls in good condition can exist very well on an essentially all-roughage diet while

consuming about 2% of their body weight (dry-matter basis) of average- to good-quality forage.


Provide bull facilities that reduce the likelihood of bulls injuring themselves or each other. Isolate the bull pasture from cows so bulls will remain quieter and be less likely to fight. The pasture should be of adequate size to encourage exercise and reduce confrontations between bulls.

Make sure bulls have ample protection from extreme weather stress. Frostbite of a bull's scrotum causes irreversible damage to the testes and epididymis.

Your bulls have a substantial economic impact on your business. Give them special care. For quality bulls, investments to keep them healthy are more than repaid by outstanding service when they are called upon. Neglecting a quality bull can lead to unacceptable performance, a reduced calf crop, younger calves at weaning and decreased income.







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**MATERNAL PERFORMANCE**


Grq Golden (406) 962-3743 Glenn Golden (406) 962-3465 Box 231 Joliet, MT 59041

 <p><b>Harrison Rite Supreme 450</b> %e RIO 054 GDAR • Dam's Sre Shoshone 247 PJM bought 450 from Brandon Hamson through Midland where he achwed WR 103, GR 101, YR 100, YW 1,189, Yrl Scrotal 38 Cm He is tight sheathed, sharp fronted and has a real hmd quarter. Jack McNamee later bought 1/3 werest.</p> <p>EPDs: BW: +5.5 WW: +25 Mk: +17 YW: +42 Yrl. SC: 38 cm</p>	 <p><b>Cole Creek Inciter 253</b> Sre Intensifw Darnk Sve Norseman 73 PJM Inc-ter's dam l' the fourth generation is 3 times 376, 1 hme Traveler 23-4 with a straight Juanada Lad Bottom, 2 times Juanada Lad 22.2 bmes Juanada 7 BW 93, WR 100, GR 109, YW 1,230, YR 104, Yrl. Scrotal 38 Cm, Yrl P&amp;c 209 25 His C&amp;as am thjck Wh hs heifers being extremely ferrnure made females</p> <p>EPDs: BW: +1.0 WW: +4 Mk: +16 YW: +22 Current SC: 44 cm</p>
 <p><b>ZRP Intensifier 0021</b> Sire: Cc021 Hls Vltra Tera Dve • Dam: New Power of CM 2004 Matrn Weight: 2,300 lbs. • Mature Scrotal: 46 cm Doubtless 0021</p> <p>EPDs: BW: +1.6 WW: +16 Mk: +14 YW: +20 Current SC: 42.5 cm</p>	 <p><b>Cole Creek Tracker 1232</b> Sire: V104F Hls 417 • Dam's Sve: CH 2004 Hls 2004's come every year grow up fast Every consistent herd sire</p> <p>EPDs: BW: +7 WW: +20 Mk: +15 YW: +34 Current SC: 42.5 cm</p>

**All Sires:**  
RR Chevis 3432 • Cole Creek Cutler 1135  
Cole Creek Chevis 1235 • Shoshone Prince 5135  
Cole Creek 407 Traveler 1222 • RR Regal 1459

**Jr. Herd Sire:**  
**CH QUANTUM 8247**  
Sire: CH Quantum 3330  
Dam: GDAR Traveler 584 LT  
x Shoshone Intent  
BW +3.2; WW +32; Mk +16; YW -65

**Other Herd Sires:**  
Cole Creek Juanada Lad 104 (Joanada 7 x O Ben)



**AAR Windy Ridge 523**  
Sire: Windy Ridge Contender • Dam's Sve: CP Power Lad 8242  
• Calving-ease Supreme • Great cows behind this bull  
Montana Power, Rite 034, VGAR Power Play 941

EPDs:  
BW: +8  
WW: +30  
Mk: +8  
YW: +63  
Current  
SC:  
46 cm

*The Juanada Outcross Herd*  
Registered Angus - 18 Years • Always Searching for the Finest Angus Females

**Annual Production Sale March 23, 1998 • Selling 50 Bulls and 20 Heifers**

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