

Raising VS Purchasing Replacements

Would you like to rid yourself of your hardest management group?

Or would you enjoy knowing you could be paid a premium for being a supplier of known genetic females to progressive cow-calf producers?

Purchasing replacement heifers provides commercial producers the opportunity to shed the operation of the hardest management group — first-calf heifers. It allows the utilization of superior sires, higher quality genetics, ranch resources and labor.

Now is the time in a changing cattle market when producers throw a lot of money away on producing heifers that don't conceive or perform. So why not purchase bred packages and forget the stress of breeding heifers?

Two partnerships featured in this replacement heifer section serve as a source of replacement heifers. Both operations are dedicated at supplying heifers to commercial cattle producers which will add quality and consistency to their herds and to the beef industry.

If you are in the market for replacements consider these tips from Harlan Ritchie, Extension beef cattle specialist at Michigan State University, East Lansing.

If the decision is made to buy females, there are several factors to consider, says Ritchie:

- ◆ Establish the maximum price you can afford to pay.
- ◆ Establish the age range of females you want to buy. A beef cow is generally in her prime from four to eight years of age. She declines slightly from nine to 10, and more rapidly thereafter. Longevity varies among regions and among breeds.
- ◆ Herd dispersals are a good place to buy cows because nothing is held back. You have the opportunity to select from the entire herd.
- ◆ When buying at private treaty, beware of unusual bargains unless you have thoroughly checked them out. You may purchase someone else's problem cows.
- ◆ Evaluating potential sale cows while their current calves are still at side is a decided advantage for the buyer.
- ◆ Unless you are absolutely certain they are pregnant, request that sale cows be pregnancy tested.
- ◆ Don't buy females unless intra-state or inter-state health requirements are met. Illegal movement of cattle can result in severe penalties.
- ◆ When females are purchased, it's important to establish which immunizations are needed. If in doubt, consider IBR, BVD, P1₃, leptos, vibriosis and hemophilus. Booster shots should be given in three weeks.



Replacement heifers are a viable part of any cattle operation. Producers today have the option of producing their own or purchasing bred heifers.

BY ANGIE STUMP