# ANGUS ADVISOR

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

## Midwest Region

*by Eric Bailey*
*University of Missouri*
*baileyeric@missouri.edu*

### General comments

Weaning time is here for fall-calving beef herds. Weaning calves at home and backgrounding or preconditioning before sale is a slam dunk for individual producers and for the entire beef industry. Historically, preconditioning calves before sale was promoted via value-added sales and the potential for premiums at the sale barn.

However, the real value to producers comes from additional weight gained by the calves postweaning. If calves gain 2 lb. per day (a very modest target) for 60 days after weaning, that's an extra 120 lb. to sell. Calves that weigh 400 lb.-600 lb. at weaning are very efficient converters of feed to pounds of gain. It is very possible for cost of gain to be below 75¢ per pound with the value of gain being $1.50. That's an extra $80 per head in profit.

From an industry-wide perspective, if producers are not willing to precondition their calves, one must question the quality of their management system and their stock. The benefit preconditioning gives from an animal-husbandry and well-being perspective is the separation of stressors over time. Research I conducted during my doctorate program consistently demonstrated that when you spread out stressful events (separation of calf from dam, transport over long distances, diet transition, vaccination, etc.), illness at the ranch of origin and at the feedyard is reduced. Other universities have consistently demonstrated these effects, as well.

Despite all of the improvements in antimicrobials and vaccines over the years, the rate of illness in the feedyard has not declined. It's time that we as an industry stop looking at technological improvements as a substitute for animal husbandry. Wean your calves at home and grow them for a couple of months before selling. Your pocketbook, your industry and, most importantly, your stock will thank you.

### Management calendar for May

*My assumptions: Spring-calving herd begins calving Feb. 1; fall-calving herd begins calving Sept. 1.*

### Spring-calving herds

- We are in the middle of the breeding season. Keep an eye on the activity and body condition of your bulls. Ideally, you are not reliant on just one bull to service your cow herd if breeding by natural service.
- Expect fescue to be producing seedheads soon. Remember, the compounds that cause fescue toxicosis are concentrated in the seedhead. There are three ways to manage around this: 1) mowing/clipping seedheads, 2) chemical suppression, or 3) increased stocking density through rotational grazing.

### Fall-calving herds

- Don't forget preweaning vaccinations. Ideally, they will be given about two weeks before weaning, with a booster at weaning.
- Wean before the summer slump comes on and weight gain is reduced.
- After calves are weaned, cow nutrient requirements drop significantly. Feed your higher-quality feed to growing cattle. Let cows have the marginal-quality (6%-8% CP and 50%-55% TDN) feed. That is not an excuse to starve a profit out of the cows.

## Southern Great Plains

*by David Lalman*
*Oklahoma State University*
*david.lalman@okstate.edu*

### Spring-calving herds

- Spring processing (aka "branding") time is just around the corner. Typical protocols include fly-tagging, castrating bulls not intended for breeding

purposes, vaccinating with a seven-way clostridial bacterin and, more recently, a respiratory viral vaccine has been used at branding time. Your veterinarian should be consulted regarding the appropriate animal health strategies to administer at this time.

- A modified-live respiratory viral combination given at branding, followed by revaccination at weaning, is an effective strategy. This program saves a trip through the chute because the weaning-time vaccination is actually the booster rather than the initial round.
- Cattle are increasingly exposed to parasites as the weather warms and they consume growing forage. Consequently, May or early June is a good time to deworm cattle as part of a strategic deworming program.
- Breeding soundness exams should be performed on bulls before they are turned out with cows.
- The appropriate bull-to-cow ratio will depend on many factors, including age of the bull, size of the pasture, and the number of cows or heifers serviced to AI. A conservative rule of thumb is to expose the same number of cows or heifers to a young bull as his age in months.

### Fall-calving herds

- Purebred breeders in the Southern Great Plains wean fall-born calves between April and July. If calves have not been fed a creep ration through the winter, they will generally gain 3 lb.-4 lb. per day from April through June while nursing the cow.
- The earlier the calves are weaned, the fleshier the cows will be at calving time. In fact, fall-calving cows can easily become overly conditioned if calves are weaned too early.
- Look for and record cows that should be culled due to calf performance, feet, leg, eye, udder and attitude problems. These records are often more practical to collect and record prior to the weaning date.
- At weaning, weigh and condition-score cows while you are weighing the calves if possible. If that additional step is not possible on weaning day, it should be completed within 45 days.
- Be consistent with weighing conditions. Industry standard weighing conditions can be described as semi-fasted. This simply means that cattle are gathered in the early morning hours before they've had a chance to graze. Weights should be recorded within the next few hours, if possible.

## Western Region

*by Randy Perry*
*California State University–Fresno*
*randyp@csufresno.edu*

### Fall-calving herds

***Main focus: Prepare for weaning; cows are on cruise control.***

1. Cows should be pregnancy-checked at weaning time. Avoid holding over open cows — even if they have been excellent producers — because typically the problem will reoccur.
2. Be sure to develop both bulls and heifers adequately once they are weaned. The developmental period from weaning until yearling time and beyond to the start of the breeding period is critical in terms of influencing the future productivity of both bulls and heifers.
3. Both sexes need to be developed at adequate rates of gain so that differences in genetic potential for growth can be expressed. However, neither sex should be developed at extremely high rates because excessive fat deposition can hinder future reproductive performance and detrimentally impact foot and leg soundness. Our target levels of performance from weaning until yearling measurements are taken are 3.0 lb. per head per day for bulls and 1.5 lb.-2.0 lb. per head per day for heifers.
4. Weaned calves should be treated to control internal and external parasites, and heifer calves should be Bang's-vaccinated. Both bulls and heifers should be PI-BVD-tested if that is part of your animal health program.
5. The first 30 days after weaning is the most critical period concerning problems with BRD in cattle. If calves are exposed to dusty lots, run a sprinkler or water wagon. It will more than pay for itself.
6. If late-term abortions have been a problem in the past, consider booster vaccinations for the respiratory diseases and leptospirosis at preg-check.
7. Some producers may be only vaccinating at pregnancy-check time; however, we prefer to vaccinate between calving and breeding and to revaccinate again at preg-check for diseases that are a problem.

*Continued on page 42*

 *continued from page 41*

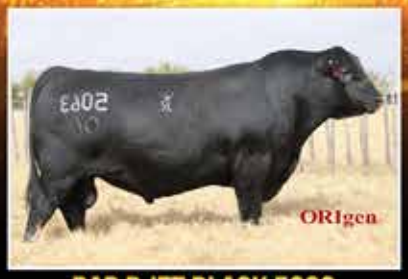
## Spring-calving herds

***Main focus: Prepare for the breeding season.***

1. Sire selection is the most important management decision that is made each year in a purebred cattle operation. Be sure you are using the best sires available that fit your genetic goals or objectives. Many producers focus on sires that are going to produce the stoutest, most marketable bull progeny. I don't disagree with this logic as the income from the sale of commercial-bound bulls represents the largest source of income in many purebred operations. However, in my opinion, the value of the female progeny should be considered just as highly and, from a long-term standpoint, is way more important.
2. I think the beef value index ($B) is receiving far too much selection pressure in many purebred operations. This index is nothing more than a terminal sire index. If your customers are using their Angus bulls as terminal sires and not keeping females as replacements, the selection pressure on $B is warranted. However, if those customers are selling their calves at weaning "off the cow" and if they are keeping daughter progeny as herd replacements, I prefer to focus on maximizing weaning value ($W) without going too far negative on energy value ($EN).
3. I believe strongly in the value of phenotypic traits such as proper degree of muscling, body capacity and structural correctness. Also, the old-fashioned "convenience" traits such as eyes, udder, feet and disposition are still as important today as they ever were. In my opinion, we are so fortunate with this breed of cattle to have so many good bulls that combine all of these traits very well.
4. Semen should be on hand, and a synchronization protocol should have been selected. In addition, all AI equipment and facilities should be ready for use. Don't overlook the importance of good heat detection and attention to details concerning semen handling.
5. Breed yearling heifers from two weeks to one month prior to the mature cows to give them extra time to recycle and rebreed as 2-year-old first-calf cows.
6. Many excellent estrous synchronization protocols are now available, and some offer the option of timed AI (TAI) with very satisfactory results. The Beef Reproductive Task Force is the best source of information in the area of estrous synchronization protocols.
7. Be sure cows are receiving adequate levels of calcium, phosphorus and trace minerals that are deficient in your area. Minerals should be supplemented on a year-round basis. The period from calving until conception is the most critical in terms of influencing reproductive performance. We encourage producers to use a mineral supplement that includes chelated mineral products during the breeding season.
8. If possible, be sure that cows are gaining weight or in a state of positive energy balance during the breeding season. Energy balance has a major impact on conception rates and fertility.
9. Cows should have been vaccinated at least 30 days prior to the start of the breeding period. This is also an excellent time to deworm cows. We prefer to use a pour-on dewormer at this time of the year because it also knocks down fly populations. If not already done, calves should receive their first round of vaccinations for the respiratory disease complex and the clostridial diseases at the same time.
10. We still recommend and use MLV vaccines for the respiratory disease complex. I have yet to see any real good evidence against the use of these products; however, there appears to be more discussion in the popular press literature about the concern that MLV vaccines may be having a slight negative influence on fertility rates or conception at the beginning of the breeding season. Again I want to emphasize, there is no hard evidence that I have seen that supports this concern, but it seems to be a growing concern amongst some professionals in the industry.
11. To help control pinkeye, consider mowing tall pasture grasses; reduce fly populations with sprays, dust bags or fly tags; and treat problems quickly so they do not spread within groups.
12. Access to shade will help reduce the incidence of pinkeye. We prefer to treat pinkeye with a mixture of 90% penicillin and 10% dexamethasone and an eye patch. We inject approximately 2 cc under the membranes on the upper portion of the eyeball.
13. Treatment protocols and products should be on hand for scours and pneumonia in suckling calves. You are well-advised to have first and second treatment options for both conditions and be sure that the protocols have been communicated to the appropriate personnel. AJ

# PROFITABLE PERFORMANCE. CONSISTENT *Quality.*

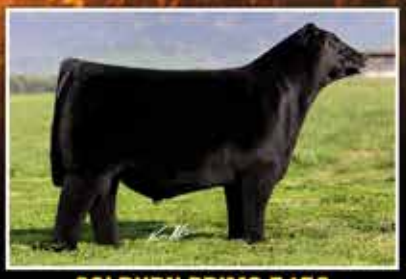
**Bovine Elite is proud to offer the most comprehensive lineup of quality bulls in the industry. Call us today to order!**




## BAR R JET BLACK 5063

REG. NO. 18389838

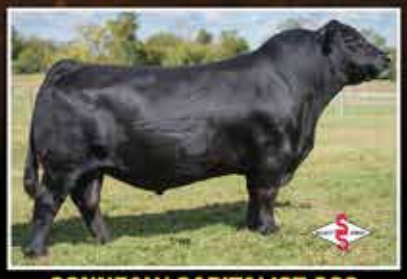
*A calving ease Black Granite son with power, eye appeal, EPD excellence and carcass quality.*



## COLBURN PRIMO 5153

REG. NO. 16217480

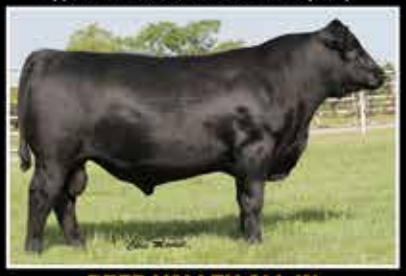
*Phenotypically right and pedigreed perfect to produce show winning offspring.*



## CONNEALY CAPITALIST 028

REG. NO. 16752262

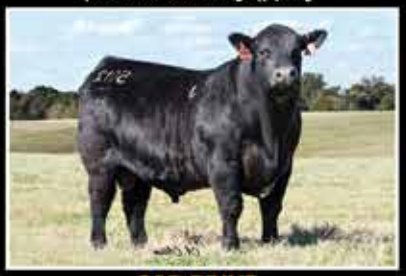
*Unmatched in his ability to transmit body mass, base width and visual muscle.*



## DEER VALLEY ALL IN

REG. NO. 17307074

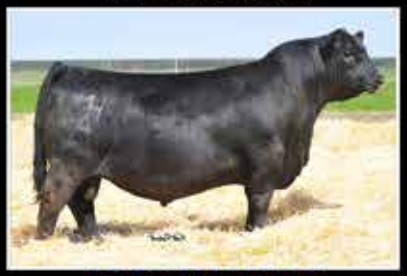
*A proven "spread" bull that you can count on for low birth, yet high performing calves.*



## GAR DRIVE

REG. NO. 18301470

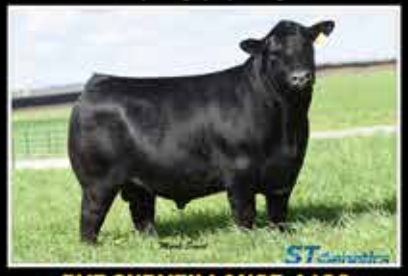
*Well into the top 1% for marbling and ribeye EPDs, use Drive to add carcass excellence in a front pasture package.*



## HA COWBOY UP 5405

REG. NO. 18286467

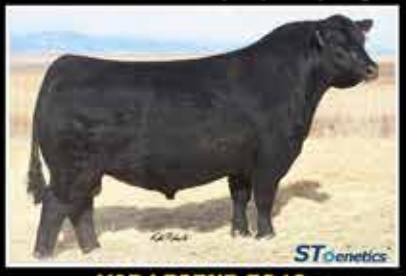
*Breed Changer, wide based, long spined, big bodied, sound made, with excellent feet and legs.*




## PVF SURVEILLANCE 4129

REG. NO. 17954726

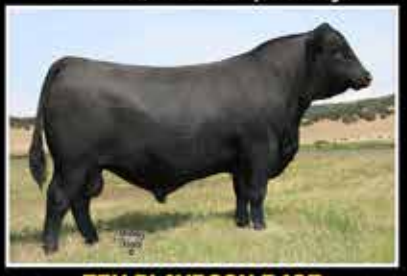
*An outcross show sire that can be used on daughters of First Class, Style, Lutton, Primo and many others.*




## VAR LEGEND 5019

REG. NO. 18066037

*Bold ribbed, square hipped, use Legend to add muscle, performance and a breed-leading EPD package.*



## TEX PLAYBOOK 5437

REG. NO. 18414912

*Payweight's most unique and complete son combining a powerful phenotype with unmatched EPDs.*

**BOVINE ELITE, LLC**

SEMEN & EMBRYO SALES • AI & ET EQUIPMENT SALES • AI / PALPATION CLINICS • SEMEN & EMBRYO WAREHOUSING
PROFESSIONAL EXPORTING • AI CONSULTING & SIRE SELECTION • TRUTEST SCALES

(979) 693-0388 OR (800) 786-4066 • INFO@BOVINE-ELITE.COM
3300 LONGMIRE DRIVE • COLLEGE STATION, TX 77845

Visit our website for a complete listing of bulls available

**WWW.BOVINE-ELITE.COM**