



A system that is working well for many producers is the use of hybrid millets. It should not be planted before the soil temperature reaches 60° F. It is well to stagger plantings about two weeks apart. One patch can be grazed down, mowed and fertilized. With sufficient moisture, this can be done several times. These millets have lasted well until frost. I am well aware that the hybrid millets we grow cannot be grown all over the nation, but in each area of the U.S. there is one temporary grass that can be used to keep your calves moving at weaning time.

The grazing should be ready and the fence in good repair before the calves are weaned. Calves can be pulled off their dams and moved directly to this grazing. A good electric fence inside the existing fence saves a lot of time and avoids trouble. If your fences aren't ready, calves should be put in a tight shady lot and fed hay and limited grain until they are accustomed to being away from their dams.

Fresh water and shade are musts. Water should be located in the shade.

Calves usually will adjust much quicker if they are fed about 1 lb. of grain per hundredweight for the first month.

Let's look at some cow lot arithmetic. If we wean at 450 lb. at 200 days, breed at 700 lb. at 450 days, we have 250 days to gain 250 lb. We can't let calves back up very much and have them grown out well enough to breed.

Let's remember some of those stresses we have gone through, then see if we can't spread them out for our calves to minimize stress at weaning time. A

# Let's Make Weaning a Happier Time

by Dr. O'Dell G. Daniel

*Reducing stress at weaning time pays off. Calves should be castrated far enough in advance of weaning to be completely healed. Necessary vaccination should be taken care of ahead of time. Grazing should be ready and fences in good repair. And calves usually will adjust much quicker if they get about 1 lb. of grain per hundredweight for the first month.*

**D**o you remember your first Army hike down a dusty road carrying a heavy pack? That was stress. Do you remember the series of shots you took prior to heading overseas? That was stress. Do you remember your new bride's first meals that you choked down after leaving mama's table? That was stress.

These are the kinds of stresses many of us put our calves through at weaning time. Many of the following suggestions probably won't be practical for large operations but certainly can be put to use to advantage on smaller ones.

Many of our southeastern producers are calving in the fall to take advantage of small grain pasture during the winter. These fall calves are ready to wean by early to mid-summer. Thus comes our big question. How can we wean calves in the summer with a minimum of stress?

Separation from mama is quite a bit of stress in itself. Add to that a lack of nutritious milk, and it gets more unbearable. For these reasons, we should do many of our other jobs such as castration, vaccination, branding, etc., ahead of time.

Calves should be castrated far enough in advance of weaning that they will be completely healed. Actually, castration probably should be done by the time calves are two months of age. Vaccination should be done well in advance of weaning.



*Dr. O'Dell G. "Dan" Daniel, an Angus breeder since 1947, has spent more than 20 years at the University of Georgia, where he is presently head of the school's Extension Animal Science Dept.*