

# Angus Advisor

## Beef Cow Herd Management Tips—Rocky Mountain West Region

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### JULY

1. Branding should be completed by now, except for possible late-born calves. See April and May tips (in March issue) on vaccines and their administration to calves and cows.
2. Once the cattle are on green grass, mineral requirements probably are being met by Mother Nature unless you have a specific, known deficiency that must be supplied. Otherwise, a source of salt, either in loose or block form, offered free-choice, may be the only thing you need. By this time the possibility of grass tetany is probably past, and magnesium oxide in the salt mix is probably not needed. (See May tips.)
3. The breeding season should be underway at this time. Continuously monitor breeding pastures for possible injury to bulls, and make sure you are not seeing an unusual number of females returning to estrus after initial service. First-service conception should be 65%-70%, whether breeding by natural service or artificial insemination (AI). Limit breeding season with yearling bulls to 45-60 days.
4. Develop an effective fly-control program. Fly tags can be used. If resistance has become a problem, switch type of tags. Pyrethroids and organophosphates are your two choices. Best results will be seen if you don't put tags on before flies reach an economic threshold. Tags should offer 150 days of protection. Other fly-control options might include spraying, oilers or dust bags.
5. If pinkeye is normally a problem, you might check with your veterinarian about using a pinkeye vaccine.
6. Water is our most important nutrient, and the warm months in the arid or semiarid West emphasize its importance. Make sure a clean, fresh supply of water is available at all times.
7. Repair handling facilities and other associated equipment and facilities as needed through the slower days of summer.
8. Forage quality should be kept in mind as producers harvest their hay. Don't let forages get too mature prior to harvest in an attempt to increase tonnage. If quality, as it is associated with protein level, is sufficient, you may avoid having to purchase expensive supplements in order to meet the cows' nutrient requirements.

### AUGUST

- If you know the cows you plan to salvage this fall, August and early September are good times to market them. The market is typically stronger than in October and November when it's flooded with open cows following pregnancy checks.
  - Consider your calf-marketing plan. Commercial producers might evaluate various marketing alternatives, including splitting and marketing various segments at different times in order to spread out risk. Of course, prices and costs associated with holding calves longer rather than selling at weaning must be evaluated before the decision is made.
  - Review your weaning health program with your veterinarian. Purchase the needed vaccines so you will be ready to give your preconditioning vaccinations at the appropriate times prior to weaning.
- If grazing forages become limited, consider weaning calves early, particularly off the 2- and 3-year-old females. This will not only reduce nutrient demand on the land, but it also will reduce nutrient stress on these young females. Terminating lactation allows them to improve body condition prior to the onset of winter. In some circumstances, supplemental feed may be needed.
  - If you are a seedstock producer who consigns spring-born bull calves to bull tests or either a seedstock or commercial producer who consigns steers to feedlot tests and carcass evaluation programs, check entrance requirements. Make sure you wean at an appropriate time, and administer the required health program. Good health does not ensure success in these programs, but you won't have success without healthy calves. **AJ**