

Managing for Reproductive Success

Applied Reproductive Strategies in Beef Cattle Conference set for Aug. 20-21, in Knoxville, Tenn.

by Jenna Stevens

For most cattle producers, July is a time to worry about flies and forage quantity, but it is also important to consider fertility assessment in your cow herd. Chances are bulls were turned out to pasture weeks ago and now it is up to them to get the cows bred, right? Not quite.

As a producer it's up to you to develop a plan to help those cows achieve maximum reproductive

performance and to set them up to be successful for the next breeding season. If you haven't thought this far ahead, now is an ideal time to look at management practices that can reduce the number of open cows in your herd and ensure long-term reproductive outcomes. A great way to learn more about this is to attend a summer conference on beef cow reproductive management.

This year's Applied Reproductive Strategies in Beef Cattle (ARSBC) Conference in Knoxville, Tenn., is scheduled for later this summer and will help producers develop a plan to keep cows in peak breeding condition. The ARSBC Conference is the main event sponsored by the Beef Reproductive Task Force and gives producers a chance to spend time with the researchers at the forefront of cutting-edge reproductive and genetic technology.

Maximize reproductive performance

Ky Pohler, assistant professor of beef cattle production at Texas A&M University (TAMU), has researched pregnancy detection methods to help producers minimize the number of open cows in their herds.

"The ability to successfully diagnose pregnancy in our cow herds and make management decisions with these results is

critical for increasing efficiency and profitability," Pohler says.

He also suggests using both early- and mid-gestation detection to ensure a pregnancy is indeed viable in the first 30 days and again after the 90-day mark.

"Cows that are pregnant at day 30 of gestation and end up not pregnant at a day 90 pregnancy diagnosis are very inefficient and really amount to spending 90 days open."


If you are someone who is not using pregnancy detection in your herd, Pohler says the best way to incorporate it is to couple it with another task you need to complete. If you are already getting the cows in to give them vaccinations or to pour them for flies, it is easy to check for pregnancy at that time.

Most veterinarians today have access to a variety of pregnancy detection tools, such as ultrasound

equipment, that can be brought right to the farm. One of the benefits of using ultrasound technology is that it allows pregnancy diagnosis much earlier than the traditional rectal palpations and it can provide a visible witness to the developing pregnancy. Blood-based pregnancy detection is another method of diagnosis and the sample collection is something most producers can do themselves.

Regardless of which method is used, Pohler says pregnancy detection can be key in maximizing the reproductive performance and profitability of your cow herd.

To learn more about managing the reproductive health of your cows, make plans to attend this year's ARSBC Conference scheduled for Aug. 20-21, 2019. The conference will feature Pohler's work along with other reproductive specialists from across the country. This two-day event will also include a vendor trade show as well as hands-on lab sessions in pregnancy detection, semen processing and handling, and reproductive tract scoring.

For more information about how to register for this year's conference visit the ARSBC website at www.appliedreprostrategies.com. 

Editor's note: Jenna Stevens is the Current Ag Concerns executive director.

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