

ANGUS ADVISOR



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

Midwest Region



by Eric Bailey

University of Missouri

baileyeric@missouri.edu

General comments

August is a great month to get a head start on developing a winter feeding plan for your cow herd. Considering most of Missouri and surrounding states have experienced drought conditions this summer, planning may seem daunting, yet necessary. However, with a bit of creativity and other inputs, this scenario is manageable. Being short of hay does not have to be a reason to liquidate the herd if you have capital, equipment and labor available.

First, start by taking inventory of your equipment and labor availability for winter feeding. Do you have the ability to store large quantities of meal or pelleted feeds? Commodity feeds like distillers' grains, soyhulls, wheat midds and corn gluten feed have nutritional profiles making them desirable cow feeds, but they are of no use to your cows if your operation lacks equipment to store and feed. Can you feed small pellets or meals with your equipment (troughs to feed into, means of transporting from storage to the cows) and labor? Our goal in this scenario is to supplement the necessary calories (energy) to replace what would normally come from hay,

so these feeds must be provided daily for maximum benefit.

If feed storage is a major concern and the goal is stretching your hay supply as long as possible, there are a couple of options to think about. I get a number of questions about hay waste and the ideal type of hay feeder. This is the wrong question to be asking. If the goal is to minimize hay waste, then do not allow the cows to be picky. Only feed them one day's worth of hay at a time. I typically like to allow for 3.0%-3.5% of a cow's weight per day in hay under this system. A tractor implement to unroll round bales of hay prices at around \$1,500 online, which is not very many hay rings, especially if one is investing in the sophisticated ones purported to reduce hay waste. Hay rings have a place when feeding daily is not an option but waste will always be greater than "limit-feeding."

Finally, if labor and equipment are stretched thin before winter feeding, perhaps it is time to consider a deep cull of your herd to better match feed availability. Producers have chased growth-oriented genetics over the past couple of decades and not reconsidered stocking rate. Forage intake is proportional to body weight, meaning a 1,400 pound (lb.) cow needs much more feed than a 1,000 lb. cow. When is the last time you evaluated stocking rates and cow size? If you have more cows than your pastures can support, you are going to be locked into a cow welfare system where you must provide

supplemental feed for part of the year.

Final thought: producers who last the longest in the cow business are not the ones who make the most money in the good years. They are the ones who lose the least amount of money in the bad years.

Southern Great Plains



by David Lalman

Oklahoma State University

david.lalman@okstate.edu

Spring-calving herds

- Prepare for weaning by purchasing health program supplies, ensuring that working and weaning facilities are in good condition, and planning a nutrition program for weaned calves. This should include planning and managing for availability of high-quality pasture for the freshly weaned calves if possible.
- Fenceline weaning can be accomplished using a high-quality fence in a small pasture area or with either cows or calves in a drylot and the other group outside in the pasture.
- If calves are weaned in a drylot, health is generally better if they can be turned back out on grass as soon as

Continued on page 62

Angus Advisor *continued from page 61*

they have quieted and cows have lost interest. Generally, this occurs in about two to three full days.

- Calf vaccination timing strategies include: a) two to six weeks prior to weaning, then booster vaccinations can be administered at weaning; b) at weaning followed by booster two to six weeks after weaning; c) modified-live vaccine at branding time (40 to 90 days of age), followed by booster vaccination at weaning. This strategy should only be followed in appropriately vaccinated cow herds. Consult your veterinarian for details.
- Insecticide ear tags should be removed by August if they are no longer effective. Tags that remain in cows beyond the effective period allow insects to build resistance to that drug for future years.

Fall-calving herds

- Yearling replacement heifers grazing native pastures may benefit from a small amount (around 1 lb. per day) of high-protein supplement to ensure adequate growth and development prior to breeding in November. A feed additive such as Bovatec or Rumensin will further improve forage utilization and weight gain.
- Calves that were first vaccinated at weaning require booster vaccinations within two to four weeks.
- Purchase calving supplies and prepare ID tags. The incidence of dystocia due to heavy birth weight is lower in fall-calving systems. However, producers should be prepared to deal with occasional dystocia cases associated with abnormal presentations.

General recommendations

- Monitor herd health for the possibility of an outbreak of pinkeye (infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis). Once started, the spread of this disease can be very difficult to control, so it is better to treat animals early and address preventive management steps.
- One of the primary culprits in spreading the disease is thought to be horn flies and face flies.
- Another agitant thought to facilitate this disease is intense ultraviolet radiation. Therefore, shade is important for all animals, and eye patches can be used on infected animals to minimize both sunlight and exposure to flies.
- When treating cattle for pinkeye, wear gloves and protective clothing and discard or disinfect clothing and equipment used before moving on to treat or handle another animal.
- Drought continues throughout much of the Southern Great Plains. Be prepared to investigate nitrate concentration in susceptible forage species (forage sorghum varieties primarily). An excellent resource related to testing and management of nitrate susceptible forage can be found at <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Rendition-5136/unknown> and <http://water.okstate.edu/news-events/news/acs/test-forage-before-cutting-to-avoid-nitrate-toxicity-challenges>.

Consider managing a portion of Bermuda grass and fescue pasture for late-summer fertilization and fall grazing. More information is available at www.beefextension.com.

Western Region



by Randy Perry

California State University–Fresno
randyp@csufresno.edu

Fall-calving herds

Main focus: Prepare for the calving season

- **Sire selection:** the start of the breeding period is still months away, however, now is the time to start developing a list of potential artificial insemination (AI) sires. For most successful purebred producers, sire evaluation is a never-ending process. In my opinion, it is the single most important management decision made each year in a purebred or seedstock operation of any species.
- **Emphasis on female progeny:** when selecting potential AI sires, many producers place emphasis on selecting bulls that are going to produce the most marketable bull progeny. I don't question the economic importance of bull progeny as bull sales represent the single most important component of total sales in most purebred operations. However, I would argue we should be placing more emphasis on using bulls that are going to produce the best daughter progeny in terms of future herd replacements. This requires a much more thorough analysis than simply looking at the expected progeny difference (EPD) profile and percentile rankings. In my opinion, most of our Angus cattle today are acceptable in terms of their EPD profile. The challenging aspect is finding sires that will produce daughter progeny that

are strong in terms of their disposition, their “natural” fleshing ability, their foot and udder quality, and phenotypic balance or quality.

- **Vaccinations:** if any pre-calving vaccinations are going to be administered, such as a scour vaccine, they should be given far enough in advance of the calving season to avoid handling cows that are extremely close to parturition.
- **Calving supplies and equipment:** be sure equipment is in working order and supplies are on hand to assist females once calving starts. In addition, if injections, such as selenium, are going to be administered at birth, be sure that an adequate supply of those products is on hand.
- **Mineral supplementation:** 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 and can be varied depending on the time of the year and available forage resources. Mineral boluses or injectable products can be used in addition to loose or block mineral products. MultiMin is an injectable product that seems to be getting more popular every day.
- **Body condition:** the target level of body condition at calving is a minimum body condition score (BCS) of 5.0 for mature cows and 6.0 for 2-year-old heifers on a scale of 1 to 9.
- **Protein and energy supplementation:** both protein and energy requirements need to be met in order to achieve the desired level of

body condition as described previously. If cows are grazing dry native forage, typically protein is more limiting as compared to energy. Be sure supplements are priced on a cost per unit of protein or energy depending on which nutrient is most limiting in your situation. In situations where forage quality is limited but there is plenty of forage or pasture available, protein will be the more limiting nutrient. In situations where forage quantity is lacking, such as drought or short feed conditions, then energy typically will be the more limiting nutrient.

- **Heifer development:** the developmental period from weaning until breeding time is critical in terms of influencing the future productivity of females. Females should be developed to reach approximately 55% to 60% of their projected mature weight at the start of the breeding period and 80% of their projected mature weight at calving.
- **Low-maintenance females:** if you want to develop a herd of low-maintenance females, let heifers “rough it” a little more during the development period and combine that developmental strategy with an extremely short breeding period for yearling heifers. You will have a higher percentage of open females when you combine those two management strategies, but you can develop a herd of highly fertile and easier fleshing females by combining these two practices.
- **Treatment protocol:** have treatment protocols and

products on hand for both scours and pneumonia in suckling calves. It is well advised to have first and second treatment options for both conditions.

Spring-calving herds

Main focus: Cows and calves are on cruise control

- **Natural service bulls:** bulls should be turned out and hopefully are doing their job. Watch for return heats from natural service dates and if a high percentage of females are coming back into heat, replace sires if that is an option.
- **Mineral supplementation:** it is important that minerals are supplemented on a year-round basis. Supplements should be formulated to meet deficiencies specific to your region or area.
- **Protein and energy supplementation:** most spring-calving cows in the West graze irrigated pastures. Typically cows grazing irrigated pastures are receiving adequate levels of both protein and energy; therefore, supplementation is not needed.
- **Pinkeye prevention:** mid-summer is the time of the year when problems with pinkeye can become quite prevalent and thus treatments can become time consuming. The incidence of pinkeye can be reduced by clipping tall, mature grasses; controlling flies with dust bags, pour-ons, and/or fly tags; and treating problems quickly and aggressively. Recommendations for treatment were included in last month’s column. **AJ**