ANGUS ADVISOR

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

Southern Great Plains

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Fall-calving herds

- If possible, ask to see the dams (and their records) of bulls you are interested in purchasing, whether for use in natural matings or artificial insemination. Selection for udder quality, foot structure, conformation, docility and a long history of reproductive success begins with bull and semen purchases.
- Prepare for the breeding season by purchasing semen and other breeding supplies. Also, testing all of your breeding equipment.
- Evaluate herd bulls for semen quality and purchase new ones using a balanced, multiple-trait selection approach.
- Closely monitor late-calving heifers as the frequency of calving difficulty may be higher in heifers that have long gestation periods.
- Purchase herd health products needed for the fall "branding" time herd health program.

Spring-calving herds

- Due to rapidly declining forage quality in the Southern Great Plains, October represents the latest practical time to wean in most seedstock operations. Calves should be individually weighed, initial or booster vaccinations administered, and other timely herd health management steps completed.
- Individually weigh, condition score and preg-check cows and bred heifers. Remember that cow body weight and body condition score data should be recorded within 45 days of calf

Continued on page 52

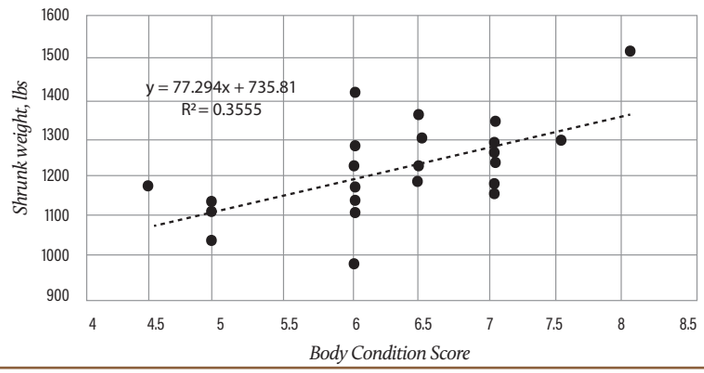
Calibration

Plot the scores against weights collected at the same time. While this relationship does not reflect weight and condition change over time for a single animal, it will give you a good indication of your condition scoring "accuracy." In the graph below, body condition score has been plotted on the X axis and body weight is plotted on the Y axis.

Next, in Microsoft Excel you can add a trendline, which draws a linear regression line through the data and calculates the regression equation for you. In the "Format Trendline" menu, select the option to "display equation on chart" and this will show you the equation and therefore, the slope of the line (also known as the linear regression coefficient). In this small data set, each one unit change in body condition was related to 77 lb. more body weight.

The more variable the actual body condition of the cows in a data set and the more cows evaluated on the same day by the same technician, the better this calibration works. You should use no fewer than 30 cows, only data from cows in approximately the same stage of production, and only data from cows ranging from about 5 to 8 years of age. If the slope is 100 or more, your scores are too rigid, meaning you are probably not giving thin cows thin (enough) scores and you are not giving fat cows fat (enough) scores. If the slope is 60 or less, your subjective scores are too sensitive.

Relationship of Weight and Body Condition Score



Angus Advisor *continued from page 50*

weaning weight data.

- Body condition scoring is a critical component in the mature cow weight expected progeny difference (EPD). This information is increasingly important as the beef industry strives to improve cow efficiency and optimize mature cow size for different environments. Body condition scoring is a subjective measure, therefore it is important for producers to fine-tune their skills and "calibrate" their scores once in a while. A good rule of thumb is there should be about 80 pounds (lb.) of weight change for every unit body condition score change in a mature cow. An excellent resource, including a photo library, can be found at *www.angus.org/Nce/MatureCowSize.aspx.*
- Cull females that are open this fall. Research has shown that retained open cows average about 60% pregnancy rate going forward.
- Report whole-herd records to the American Angus Association office.
- Treat cows and calves for internal and external parasites as recommended by your veterinarian. This is best timed after the first killing frost, although many understandably do this at the time of weaning since the cattle are gathered.
- If your spring-calving cows are marginal in body condition at weaning, and assuming grazing lower-protein tallgrass native rangeland, begin supplementing protein in October.

Western Region

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Fall-calving herds

Main focus: Finish the calving season and prepare for breeding season.

- **Sire selection.** Continue developing a list of potential artificial insemination (AI) sires. Focus on bulls that will produce high-quality herd replacements. Talk to other producers about bulls that have worked well for them. I also like to read bull sale reports and see if any sires are consistently producing the high-selling bulls in numerous programs.
- **Prebreeding vaccinations.** Be sure to get cows and heifers vaccinated with prebreeding vaccinations at least 30 days prior to the start of the breeding season. At a minimum, females should be receiving at least 2 vaccinations: 1) the respiratory complex plus leptospirosis and possibly vibriosis; and 2) either a 7- or 8-way clostridial vaccination.
- **Deworming.** Consider deworming females at the same time that they are vaccinated with either an injectable, paste or pour-on product. We prefer to deworm twice per year and use an orally active product in the fall and a pour-on product in the spring or early summer.
- **Mineral injection.** Consider injecting females with Multimin at the same time that vaccinations are given. Boluses such as selenium or copper could be used in place of Multimin.
- **Retained placenta.** Continue to monitor females for the incidence of retained placenta. If problems arise, treat them promptly with a prostaglandin injection (5 or 6 cc). If that treatment does not result in the females cleaning promptly, then re-inject with another prostaglandin injection and combine that injection with an antibiotic infused into the uterus or given either intramuscular (IM) or subcutaneously.
- **Mineral supplementation.** Be sure that females are receiving adequate levels of calcium, phosphorus and trace minerals that are deficient in your area. Mineral supplementation becomes even more important as we approach the breeding season.
- **Body condition score.** Continue to monitor body condition score (BCS) of calving females. The target BCS level is 5.0 (on a scale of 1 to 9) for both cows and heifers. Ideally, this level of body condition should be maintained during the breeding season. However, this becomes more difficult as forage resources start to get depleted at this time of year and at the same time cows' nutrient requirements increase due to an increasing lactation curve.
- **Overconditioned.** Avoid getting cows overconditioned during the breeding season

as reproductive performance starts to decline if cows are above a BCS of 6.5 to 7.0. This is not typically a problem on most operations. However, if you are somebody that likes to waste money and over feed cows, then it could be a problem on your operation.

- **Protein and energy supplementation.** Be certain that both protein and energy requirements of females are being met. If possible, try to have females in a state of positive energy balance (gaining weight) going into the breeding season. However, this is not easy to achieve because of the conditions described in the point above.
- **Nursing calf health.** Treat calves for either scours or pneumonia promptly. It is well advised to have first and second treatment options for both conditions.

Spring-calving herds

Main focus: Getting calves weaned and keeping them healthy.

- **Minimize weaning stress.** Try to minimize stress on weaned calves as much as possible. Pasture weaning is a big advantage. Try to avoid dry, dusty lots for weaned calves. Shade is extremely valuable and either sprinklers or a water wagon to control dust are well worth the trouble and expense in my opinion.
- **Temperature changes.** Hopefully, Mother Nature cooperates in terms of weather changes as weaned calves are getting adjusted and transitioned to a new environment. In our experience, the difference in temperature between the daytime high and nighttime low is extremely important. If that number exceeds 40 degrees, we experience a lot more problems with respiratory disease.
- **Started on feed.** Get calves started on feed as smoothly as possible. Try to avoid any big changes either in terms of the amount of consumption or the type of ration being fed. Transition calves slowly from a total forage diet to a combination of roughages and concentrates.
- **Rate of development**. Be sure that both weaned bull and heifer calves are being developed at adequate rates of gain so that differences in terms of genetic potential for growth can be exhibited. However, neither sex should be developed at extremely high rates as excessive fat deposition can hinder future reproductive performance and detrimentally impact foot and leg soundness.
- Our target level of performance in developing bulls is an ADG of 3.0 to 3.5 lb. per head per day. A general rule of thumb concerning the level of concentrates for bulls to achieve that level of performance is 1% of their body weight. (Example — 600 lb. bull calves need 6 lb. of grain or concentrates per head per day; 900 lb. bulls need 9lb., etc.).
- Our target levels of performance in developing heifers is an ADG of 1.5 to 1.75 lb. per head per day. I prefer to develop females on pasture without them ever receiving any grain or concentrates. They must have access to good pasture resources to achieve this level of performance. For many producers, they don't have good pasture available during the fall and winter and thus they must feed their females in a lot during this time of year.
- **Parasite control.** After weaning, control internal and external parasites. Heifer calves should be Bang's vaccinated.
- **Business or operational plan.** Fall and early winter are good times of the year to put some thought into developing or refining business and marketing plans for your operation. Get input from employees and involve them in the process. Many times we set operational goals without input from the people who are going to be involved in helping us to achieve those goals. It is typically much easier to get "buy-in" from employees if they feel they had input in developing the mission and goals of an operation.

Midwest Region

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General comments

Planning for winter feed needs

Continued on page 54

Angus Advisor *continued from page 53*

will be critically important after the poor forage growth pastures across Missouri in 2018 have had. Even if you are not in drought in your area, there are some ideas to consider in the recommendations below.

It takes about a 1,200-lb. round bale to feed a cow (40 lb. per day for 30 days) for a month during the winter, assuming there is not stockpiled pasture to graze. It will take about a ton of silage to feed a cow (70 lb. "as-fed" per day for 30 days) for a month under the same scenario. I am assuming that stockpiled pasture forage reserves are poor and that most will need to feed every bite a cow gets this winter.

Silage will not require additional supplement (outside of salt and mineral) and cows will perform excellently on it. Understand that this is a rule of thumb; it is my expectation that pregnant cows not nursing calves will need 10-20% less than this figure and fall-calving cows close to rebreeding will need 10-20% more.

Hay is likely going to need supplemented to balance cow nutrient requirements. My biggest gripe with the hay marketing system is that hay quality is evaluated subjectively. I suspect that many producers buy hay that feeds poorer than what their expectation was. In a climate where round bales are selling for more than $85 per bale, it is time to consider how to use as little hay as possible in a winter feeding plan.

I am advising producers to buy as little of this overpriced hay as possible and replace with daily feeding of a supplement. On an energy basis, 1 lb. of corn will replace 2 lb. of low-quality hay (less than 50% TDN). Limit the corn to 6 lb. per cow per day to keep rumen microbes healthy and functioning efficiently.

If hay is below 7% crude protein, consider adding at least 0.5 lb. of crude protein per cow per day, from a non-corn supplement. With commodity prices where they are currently, a 75% corn, 25% soybean meal supplement fed at 6-8 lb. per cow per day will be an excellent supplement for poor-quality hay. Cows should perform well and your pocketbook will not take such a major blow.

If limiting hay, consider going down as low as 10 lb. per cow per day, to keep the rumen healthy and functioning efficiently. At minimum, try to minimize waste of the overpriced hay by unrolling, limiting access (4-8 hours per day) or investing in hay rings. I would be more than happy to elaborate on developing a winter feeding plan if you send me an email. AJ