

Angus Advisor

November Beef Cow Herd Management Tips

Upper Midwest Region

by Harlan Ritchie, Extension Beef Specialist
Michigan State University

- If you have access to cornstalk fields, consider these alternatives:
 - Graze at a rate of 1-2 acres/cow for 60 days. You may need to supplement with protein and energy after the first 30 days.
 - Harvest dry stalks as large stacks or bales. Beware: If too damp (more than 40% moisture), they will spoil.
 - Ensilage stalks that are too damp, but be sure to add enough water to bring moisture content up to 60%. Finely chop the stalks for maximum compaction in the silo.
- Wean summer calves before hard winter sets in. Unless you creep-feed, they will do better on grain plus hay or silage than if left on their mothers.
- If you keep calves to feed over the winter, aim for the following minimum levels of performance.

Replacement heifers

Size	ADG
Small-framed	1 to 1.5 lb./day
Large-framed	1.5 to 1.75 lb./day
Show heifers	may need to gain faster

Steer calves

Production goal	ADG
Go to grass following summer	0.75 to 1.75 lb./day
Finished by following spring or summer	2.75 lb./day or greater

Bull calves

Production goal	ADG
Fed out and sold in spring as yearlings	2.75 lb./day or greater

- Be aware of the cutoff date for using grubicides in your region. In northern states this is approximately Nov. 15. This date becomes progressively earlier as you move south. If in doubt, consult your veterinarian.

Southern Region

by R.S. Sand, Extension Beef Specialist
University of Florida

- Have soils tested.
- Observe fall-calving cows daily to detect calving difficulty.
- Use mineral with high level of magnesium if grass tetany has been a problem in the past.
- Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
- Maintain adequate nutrient level for cow herd.
- Calve in well-drained pastures.
- Survey pastures for poisonous plants.
- Start summarizing your annual records, both production and financial. This will allow time to make adjustments for tax purposes.

Rocky Mountain West Region

by Doug Hixon, Extension Beef Specialist
University of Wyoming

- With calf weaning completed, it's a good time to critically evaluate the calf crop produced and to start making plans for improvement when you design your breeding program for next summer.
- Pregnancy-test the cow herd. Cull open cows and those cows with physical problems — no teeth, lameness, bad udders, bad eyes or extremely poor condition for no apparent reason. These unsound cows may cost more in time, dollars and frustration than they are worth.
- Once nonpregnant and unsound cows are culled, attention can be given to culling low producers — if it is economically feasible and if numbers of high-quality, available replacements allow for more culling.
- Cows bred to calve in March and April are still in the mid-third of gestation, and since they aren't lactating, their nutritional requirements are relatively low. This is a time when body condition can be enhanced.
If ample dry, standing forage or crop residue is available, it can serve as an excellent energy source. Low-quality forage utilization, however, may be improved by offering some "natural" protein supplementation or access to meadow regrowth.
- Switching cows from a dry range forage to a lush meadow regrowth provides ideal conditions for acute bovine pulmonary edema and emphysema (ABPE), also known as cow asthma. This nutritional disease may occur from one to 14 days after pasture transition.

Several years ago Washington State University researchers determined this condition resulted from the accumulation of an intermediate compound, 3-methyl indole (3MI), from the metabolism of the amino acid tryptophan. They also found that by feeding 200 milligrams (mg) of monensin from one day prior to seven days after the pasture change, levels of 3MI, and hence incidence of ABPE, were greatly reduced.

Management practices that reduce the abruptness of the change and keep hungry cows from stuffing themselves with the lush forage also will help reduce this respiratory problem.

- Determine target breeding weights for freshly weaned, potential replacement heifers. Determine the number of days until you want to breed, and calculate the average daily gain (ADG) you will need to obtain over this period.
Develop a growing ration that will allow your heifers to attain their target breeding weight without becoming overconditioned. This will help assure that heifers reach puberty and are cycling adequately before you're ready to start breeding them.

Midwest Region

by Twig Marston, Extension Beef Specialist
Kansas State University

- Continue herd nutrition programs started in October.
- Check weaned calves regularly for health problems.
- Grow weaned calves economically; balance diets to optimize growth.
- Control lice in herd.
- Complete culling herd of open cows, low producers and those with physical faults.
- Check with Extension office for upcoming informational meetings.
- Graze crop residues to extend grazing period. Supplement as needed.

