



# Angus Advisor

► MAY herd management tips

## Midsouth Region

by **David Lalman**, Oklahoma State University, [dalman@okstate.edu](mailto:dalman@okstate.edu)

### Spring-calving herds

- Vaccinate calves with seven-way clostridial bacterin, intranasal infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR) and parainfluenza-3 virus (PI<sub>3</sub>). Consult your local veterinarian for specific recommendations. Replace missing animal identification (ID) tags in calves and cows.
- If recommended by your veterinarian, vaccinate heifer calves for brucellosis (Bang's disease) between 4 and 10 months of age.
- Consider early weaning calves at 40 to 90 days of age if first-calf heifers are in body condition scores (BCSs) of less than 5 and cows are in BCSs of less than 4. This strategy will work to get thin cows and late-calving cows to cycle, although it is an "if all else fails" alternative due to the high level of labor and management required. Several universities have fact sheets that provide management recommendations for early weaning.
- Late May to early June is a good time to deworm cows and bulls that are grazing cool-season forages, such as fescue and brome.
- Turn bulls out with cows after the artificial insemination (AI) program is completed. The bull-to-cow ratio will vary depending on the number of cows or heifers serviced to AI and the age of the bull.

### Fall-calving herds

- Purebred breeders in the Southern Great Plains wean fall-born calves anywhere from April through July. An optimum, although not always practical, calf vaccination program includes vaccination of calves two to six weeks prior to weaning. This timing coincides with the month of May for many producers.
- Look for and record cows that should be culled due to calf performance, feet, leg, eye, udder and attitude problems. These records are often more practical to collect and record prior to the weaning date.
- At weaning, vaccinate calves according to

your veterinarian's recommendations, weigh and condition score cows, and weigh calves.

- Transfer whole-herd records to your national breed association for processing.

### General recommendations

- Continue or implement a fly and tick control program for all cattle.
- Most of our pastures and rangelands have been overgrazed for the past year due to the extreme drought conditions. Consider reducing your traditional stocking rate 20%-40% this year to allow some recovery to occur. Some type of rotational grazing program that allows longer rest periods, if combined with reduced stocking rate, will also be beneficial to long-term pasture and rangeland productivity.
- Rotation-graze or hay weeping love grass at about 35-day intervals (rest four weeks, graze one week).
- Plant Sudan grass and Sudan hybrids for summer grazing or hay, fertilizing according to soil test.
- There is no need to feed high-phosphorus (P) mineral supplements during the lush forage growing period. In fact, the National Research Council (NRC) reduced the phosphorus requirement for beef cows in the latest version of its beef cattle publication.
- In this region, foot rot is a common problem through late May, June and early July. Limited research indicates that the addition of chlortetracycline to mineral supplements can reduce the incidence of this problem. Adequate zinc (Zn) supplementation is also important.

## Midwest Region

by **Twig Marston**, Kansas State University, [tmarston@oznet.ksu.edu](mailto:tmarston@oznet.ksu.edu)

Breeding season is beginning or continuing for many operations; therefore, both females and males must be reproductively fit.

- 1) Several estrus synchronization procedures have been developed. To determine the correct synchronization program to use, consider the following: age group of females (yearling replacement heifers vs. cows); commitment of time and effort for

heat detection; potential number of females that are anestrus [days postpartum, BCSs, calving difficulty]; labor availability; and the return on investment for total commitment to the breeding program.

- 2) Handle semen properly and use correct AI techniques to maximize fertility.
- 3) Natural-service bulls should have body condition, eyes, feet, legs and reproductive parts closely monitored during the breeding season. Resolve any problems immediately.
- 4) All bulls should have passed a breeding soundness examination (sometimes referred to as a BSE) prior to turnout.

Begin your calf-preconditioning program. Vaccination, castration and parasite control at a young age will decrease stress at weaning time. This is the time to add value to the calf crop.

Implanting calves older than 60 days of age will increase weaning weight.

Properly identify all cows and calves.

Establish premises numbers for compliance with state and national ID programs.

Use best management practices (BMPs) to establish sustainable grazing systems.

Use good management practices when planting annual forage sources and harvesting perennial forages.

Maintain records that will verify calving season, health programs and management practices.

## Northwest Region

by **Thomas Hill**, Oregon State University, [thomas.w.hill@oregonstate.edu](mailto:thomas.w.hill@oregonstate.edu)

### Cow-calf management

Identify late-calving cows, recognizing that they are responsible for lost income. In an 80-day breeding season, a cow that calves in the last 25% of the calving season vs. the first 25% loses 100-120 pounds (lb.) of weaning weight. Even in a well-managed 60-day calving season, cows calving in the last 25% will have calves weighing 70-90 lb. less than early-calving cows. Late-calving cows can be identified as candidates to be sold or treated with a gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH)/CIDR® protocol to move up their breeding dates.

Consider/plan for your horn and face fly control program.

A May 1 turnout date should result in calves being born Feb. 10. Consider breeding yearling heifers 20 days before the cow herd.

Vaccinate 2- to 3-month-old calves for clostridial diseases (eight-way).

Sudden temperature changes or extreme differences in day and night temperatures are powerful precursors for pneumonia. Monitor calf behavior to detect changes in health status. Treat respiratory conditions diligently with protocols developed in consultation with your veterinarian.

### **Pasture management**

Consider creep-grazing as a way to optimize calf utilization of high-quality forage.

If grazing legume pastures, beware of the risk for bloat. Feeding poloxalene in mineral blocks will reduce the risk for bloat. Also, turning cattle onto legume pastures that are free from morning dew has been shown to reduce bloat. Have the appropriate equipment and supplies to correct bloat problems, including a speculum, a ½-in.-diameter tube 4 to 5 feet (ft.) long, anti-foaming agents and a trocar.

If drought conditions are a concern, consider early-weaning management options. With proper management, calves can be weaned at 120-160 days of age.

Prepare equipment for forage harvest. Secure necessary inventory for an efficient harvest, such as twine/sickle sections, etc. Recognize that nutrient quality in forage drops when the plants develop seedheads.

## **Southeast Region**

by **John Hall**, Virginia Tech, [jbhall@vt.edu](mailto:jbhall@vt.edu)

### **Spring-calving herds**

- ▶ Calving should be coming to an end.
- ▶ Give prebreeding vaccinations to cows for IBR, PI<sub>3</sub>, bovine viral diarrhea (BVD), bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV) and leptospirosis.
- ▶ Use modified-live virus (MLV) vaccines on open cows with calves; use killed vaccines on pregnant cows.
- ▶ Begin estrus synchronization programs for AI; some herds may begin AI this month.
- ▶ Breed heifers two to four weeks before cows.
- ▶ Get breeding soundness exams done on bulls.
- ▶ Supplement first-calf heifers with energy through breeding.
- ▶ Implant commercial calves at turnout if not implanted at birth.
- ▶ Keep high-quality, high-magnesium (Mg),

high-selenium (Se) minerals available.

- ▶ Make first cutting of hay.
- ▶ Start creep-grazing and/or management-intensive grazing (MiG).

### **Fall-calving herds**

- ▶ Creep-graze calves while on cows.
- ▶ Give preweaning vaccinations (IBR, PI<sub>3</sub>, BVD, BRSV, pasteurized) to calves.
- ▶ Wean commercial calves based on marketing plan for calves. In most value-added programs, calves must be weaned 45 days.
- ▶ Wean and weigh calves.

- ▶ Weigh and condition score cows at weaning.
- ▶ Implant commercial calves at turnout.
- ▶ Deworm calves if needed.
- ▶ Make first cutting of hay.
- ▶ Continue feeding high-magnesium minerals to prevent grass tetany.
- ▶ Continue management-intensive grazing; hay pastures with excess forage.

### **Breeding management for cows grazing fescue**

Tall fescue is the predominant pasture

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forage species throughout much of the region. Most tall fescue is KY-31, which contains an endophyte that produces toxins detrimental to cattle. In addition to reducing milk production, the endophyte toxins can impair reproduction. Although the ideal situation would be to have cows graze non-fescue or endophyte-free pastures during the breeding season, this alternative grazing is not a viable option in most of the region. The exception is the far southern portions of the region where Bermuda grass is the major grazing forage.

Producers can improve reproductive efficiency of cattle grazing endophyte-infected fescue through cattle and forage management. Cows grazing endophyte-infected pasture cannot dissipate heat as well as cows on noninfected pastures. As a result, during high environmental temperatures, cows on fescue are more heat-stressed, resulting in decreased pregnancy rates. Moving the breeding season earlier in the spring or moving to fall calving will avoid attempting to get cows pregnant during high temperatures. Using estrus synchronization will increase the number of cows becoming pregnant early in the breeding season before environmental temperature becomes too high.

Diluting the amount of endophyte that cows consume by increasing the amount of clover in the pasture or supplementing feeds such as corn gluten feed, soy hulls or non-fescue hay can also improve pregnancy rates. Reducing exposure to endophyte toxins may be especially important for bulls. Research from the University of Tennessee indicates that endophyte toxins damage sperm in a manner that cannot be detected during the standard breeding soundness exam. Moving bulls to noninfected pastures before the breeding season and increasing the amount of clover in breeding pastures may be important to bull fertility.

### **It may be a dry spring in the region**

Initial rainfall reports and forecasts in many parts of the region indicate that spring and early summer could be dry in our area. Other parts of the region are currently very wet. With the high price of feed, producers who think they may have reduced hay crops or pasture availability may want to consider their feed options now. Locking in feed prices or locating another pasture or hay field to rent before the weather turns too dry may be important to cost-effective production.

