



Angus Advisor

► JANUARY herd management tips

Southeast Region

by John Hall, Virginia Tech, jhall@vt.edu

Spring-calving herds

- Begin to gather calving supplies.
- Keep late pregnant cows gaining 1.0 pound (lb.) per day.
- Pregnant heifers and 3-year-olds should gain 2.0-2.5 lb. per day.
- Keep high-quality minerals available.
- Review calving assistance procedures.
- Stockpile a few gallons of colostrum.
- Attend performance-tested bull sales and/or order semen for artificial insemination (AI).
- Treat cattle for lice if needed.
- Soil-test pastures not tested in the last three years.
- Order clover seed for frost-seeding later this winter.

Fall-calving herds

- Begin/continue breeding.
- Check cow and bull condition.
- Supplement energy to young bulls during breeding season.
- Send in forage test if not done earlier this year.
- Continue to check calves closely for health problems.
- Reimplant September- and early October-born calves that were implanted at birth (commercial herds).
- Treat cattle for lice if needed.
- Soil-test pastures not tested in the last three years.
- Order clover seed for frost-seeding later this winter.

January nutrition could be critical

Forage availability was highly variable this fall in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern states. As a result of abnormal pasture availability and quality this fall, many herds entered the winter in less than optimal body condition. Cattlemen should condition score their cows and make adjustments to the winter feeding program. Cows need to reach a body condition score (BCS) of 5 to 6 (on a 9-point scale) by 30 days before calving.

Remember, winter weather conditions in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic states can be worse than in the Midwest. Temperatures that hover near freezing, combined with rain and sleet, increase the energy needed by cattle to stay warm. The air temperature below which cattle expend energy to keep warm is the lower critical temperature (LCT). Wet cattle expend energy to keep warm at temperatures as high as 60° F. In contrast, dry cattle with

winter hair coats use little extra energy to keep warm until 32° F to 20° F or less. During extended periods of wet, cold weather, producers should increase the amount of energy fed to cows by 1% for each degree below the LCT to prevent weight loss. In practice, producers need to feed 1.25 to 1.5 lb. of energy supplement (i.e. corn, corn gluten feed, soyhulls or barley) to pregnant cows and 1.6 to 2.0 lb. of supplement to lactating cows for every 10 degrees below the LCT.

Midsouth Region

by David Lalman, Oklahoma State University, dlalman@okstate.edu

Spring-calving herds

Due to rapid fetal growth, energy and protein requirements are approximately 25% greater during late gestation compared to mid-gestation.

A 1,200-lb. Angus cow in good body condition requires a minimum of about 13 lb. of total digestible nutrients (TDN) and 2 lb. of protein per day during late gestation. Consequently, hay or other forages should contain a minimum of 54% TDN and 8% protein to meet requirements for maintenance prior to calving.

Prepare calving facilities and equipment. Purchase and organize calving supplies such as tags, naval dip, tattoo equipment and ink, calf scales, etc.

Check first-calf heifers (due to calve) several times daily for possible calving difficulties.

Feed during evening hours to encourage daytime calving.

Fall-calving herds

Continue supplemental feeding of bulls, cows and calves.

If a creep-feeding program is desired, consider limit-feeding a high-protein (30%-40%) supplement, such as recommended in the Oklahoma Silver program. When available, small-grains winter pasture is an excellent creep-grazing resource for fall-born calves.

A high-calcium (Ca), high-magnesium (Mg)

mineral supplement should be provided to lactating cows grazing small-grains forage.

General recommendations

Break ice in ponds and water tanks at least once daily when necessary.

Evaluate the mineral supplementation program, considering forage and feed mineral contributions along with requirements.

Test soil to determine phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and lime needs for spring-seeded legumes, such as lespedeza, sweet clover, red clover and white clover.

Plan the financial management program for the year, including cash flow and deadlines for payment of interest.

Midwest Region

by Twig Marston, Kansas State University, tmarston@oznet.ksu.edu

Cow herd management

- Historically, cull cow prices are beginning to rise. Finish culling cows in order of priority:
 1. Those that fall within the "Four-O Rule" — open, old, ornery and oddball.
 2. Those with physical/structure problems (feet and legs, eyes, teeth, etc.).
 3. Poor producers.
- Continue feeding or grazing programs started in early winter. Fully utilize grain sorghum and cornstalk fields. Severe winter weather may begin to limit crop residue utilization, so be prepared to move to other grazing and feeding systems.
- Supplement to achieve ideal BCS at calving. Use this formula to compare the basis of cost per lb. of crude protein (CP):

$$\text{Cost of supplement, \$ per hundredweight (cwt.)} \div (100 \times \% \text{ CP}) = \text{cost per lb. of CP.}$$
 Use this formula to compare energy sources on basis of cost per lb. of TDN:

$$\text{Cost, \$ per ton} \div [2,000 \times \% \text{ dry matter (DM)} \times \% \text{ TDN in DM}] = \text{cost per lb. of TDN.}$$
- Control lice; external parasites could increase feed costs.
- Provide an adequate water supply.

Table 1: Wind chill factors

		Temperature (°F)						
		0	5	10	15	20	25	30
Wind speed (mph)	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30
	5	-5	1	5	10	15	20	25
	10	-8	-6	-4	4	9	14	19
	15	-16	-11	-6	-1	4	9	14
	20	-20	-15	-10	-5	-1	3	8
	25	-27	-22	-17	-13	-9	-2	3
	30	-36	-31	-26	-21	-16	-11	-6
35	-50	-45	-40	-35	-30	-25	-20	
40	-66	-62	-59	-53	-48	-43	-34	

Table 2: Beef cattle lower critical temperatures

Coat description	Lower critical temperature
Summer coat	59° F
Wet coat	59° F
Fall coat	45° F
Winter coat	32° F
Heavy winter coat	18° F

Depending on body size and stage of production, cattle need 5-11 gallons (gal.) of water per head per day, even in the coldest weather.

- ▶ Sort cows into management groups. BCS and age can be used as sorting criteria. If you must mix age groups, put thin and young cows together, and feed separately from the mature, properly conditioned cows.
- ▶ Use information from forage testing to divide forage supplies into quality lots. Higher-quality feedstuffs should be utilized for replacement females, younger cows, and thin cows that may lack condition and that may be more nutritionally stressed.
- ▶ Consult your veterinarian regarding pre- and

postpartum vaccination schedules.

- ▶ Continue mineral supplementation. Vitamin A should be supplemented if cows are not grazing green forage.
- ▶ Plan to attend local, state and regional educational and industry meetings.
- ▶ Develop replacement heifers properly. Weigh them now to calculate necessary average daily gain (ADG) to achieve target breeding weights. Target the heifers to weigh about 60%-65% of their mature weight by the start of the breeding season. Thin, lightweight heifers may need extra feed for 60-80 days to “flush” before breeding.
- ▶ Bull calves to be fed out and sold in the

spring as yearlings should be well onto feed. Ultrasound measurements should be taken around one year of age and provided to your breed association.

- ▶ Provide some protection, such as a windbreak, during severe winter weather to reduce energy requirements. The LCT is the temperature (including wind chill factor, see Table 1 on page 116) at which a cow requires additional energy to simply maintain her current body weight and condition. The LCT for cattle varies with hair coat and body condition (see Table 2). Increase the amount of dietary energy provided 1% for each degree (including wind chill) below the LCT.

