



Angus Advisor

► JUNE herd management tips

Midsouth Region

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

Spring-calving herds

- Follow the vaccine program outlined for May, if not done at that time.
- Consult your veterinarian regarding the need to deworm young cows and calves if not done in May. This investment will depend a great deal on the location of your operation, among other factors.
- Check for heat during early morning and late evening hours.
- 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.
- For those breeders who choose to creep-feed calves grazing native pastures, consider using a limit-fed, high-protein creep, such as the feed described in the Oklahoma Silver program. In this program, calves consume around 1 pound (lb.) per day of supplement. Weight gain is improved substantially, and calves do not become fleshy compared to free-choice, lower-protein creep-feeding programs.

Fall-calving herds

- Wean fall-born calves in June or early July, if not done in May. A dam's milk production and calf performance decline dramatically during the month of July due to declining forage quality.
- At weaning, vaccinate calves according to your veterinarian's recommendations, deworm calves, weigh and condition score cows, and weigh calves. Transfer records for your whole herd to the American Angus Association.
- A high-protein supplementation program, such as the Oklahoma Gold program, can facilitate around 2-lb. average daily gains (ADGs) on weaned calves grazing native pastures during June and July.

General recommendations

- Continue fly and tick control programs for all cattle.
- In Oklahoma, we experience more foot rot problems in June compared to any other month. Develop a plan for treatment with your veterinarian, and acquire the necessary supplies.

- Plan to harvest native grass hay during early July to achieve near-optimum balance between quality and quantity of hay. Harvest Bermuda grass hay, or graze at about 30-day intervals when precipitation is abundant. All else being equal (maturity, precipitation, soil fertility, etc.), Bermuda grass harvested for hay in June has higher digestibility than Bermuda grass harvested in the hot summer months of July and August.
- Begin grazing Sudan grass and Sudan hybrids when 18 to 24 inches (in.) in height.
- Federal and state estimated tax payments are due June 15.

Midwest Region

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

June is a month to let Mother Nature take her course. Native grasses are usually at peak production; therefore, little supplementation is needed, with the exception of some minerals.

Cow-herd nutrition

- Provide plenty of clean, fresh water.
- Provide free-choice minerals to correct any mineral deficiencies or imbalances.
- Monitor grazing conditions and rotate pastures if possible and practical.
- Consider creep-feeding if it's cost-effective.

Herd health

- Monitor and treat pinkeye cases.
- Provide fly control. Consider all options; price and efficiency will dictate the best options to use.
- Monitor and treat for foot rot.
- To reduce heat stress, avoid handling and transporting cattle during the hottest times of the day.

Forage and pasture management

- Check and maintain summer water supplies.
- Place mineral feeders strategically to enhance grazing distribution.
- Check water gaps after possible washouts.
- Harvest hay in a timely manner; think quality and quantity.

Reproductive management

- If using AI, do not expect all females to

conceive. A common practice is to breed once or twice with AI, then turn out cleanup bulls for the balance of a 65-day breeding season. A 42-day AI season with estrus synchronization at the front end gives most females three chances to conceive by AI.

- Watch bulls for libido, mounting and breeding function.
- Record breeding dates to determine calving dates.
- By imposing reproductive pressure (45-day breeding season) on yearling heifers, no late-calving 2-year-olds will result. This will increase lifetime productivity and profits.

Genetic management

- Monitor herd performance. Then identify candidates to cull because of poor performance.

General management

- Check equipment (sprayers, dust bags, oilers, haying equipment, etc.), and repair or replace as needed. Have spare parts on hand because downtime can make a big difference in hay quality.

Northwest Region

by **Thomas Hill**, Oregon State University, thomas.w.hill@oregonstate.edu

Monitor breeding activity as much as possible. During the first 21 days of the breeding season, 50%-70% of the cow herd should become pregnant. This would result in approximately one cow or heifer out of every 30 (at a minimum) becoming pregnant every day for the first three weeks of the breeding season. The second cycle should have one cow or heifer out of every 30 being bred every two days; the third cycle, on average, should have one cow or heifer being bred every three days.

If too many females are returning to heat, consult your veterinarian or Extension specialist to consider management issues such as cow nutrition; bull battery effectiveness; and reproductive problems associated with vibriosis, leptospirosis and cystic cows.

Recognize that calves persistently infected (PI) with bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) are created when females 42 to 125 days pregnant are exposed to cattle with BVD infections. Controlling BVD requires a

comprehensive vaccination program, a biosecurity farm plan, and not exposing cows during the first four months of pregnancy to cattle with an unknown BVD status. This exposure can be as subtle as fence-line contact.

Monitor or create a strategic deworming/internal parasite control program for your operation. Strategic programs focus on breaking the life cycle of internal parasites. Deworming is most effective when anthelmintics are administered based upon parasitic life cycles and *not* the convenience of the herdsman's schedule.

Cattle are infected by internal parasites most often when grazing forage in the cooler months, when forages are wet from rain or morning dew. Cattle in drylot situations, where bunk-feeding is practiced, have a low to zero risk of ingesting internal parasites.

Collecting a fresh representative fecal sample from 3%-5% of the cattle in a management group can provide important baseline information when your veterinarian conducts a fecal egg count for internal parasites, including worms, coccidia and flukes (if grazing in wet areas). Consult your health professionals, pharmaceutical technical support staff and Extension agent to ensure you have a cost-effective parasite control program.

Pinkeye (keratoconjunctivitis) will start to become an issue in the early summer and remain a management concern for several months for cattle less than 1 year of age. Ninety percent of pinkeye cases will be caused by one of several different strains of *Moraxella bovis*. The other 10% can be a symptom of other bacterial infections or infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR).

The effect of calf vaccinations will be highly influenced by a match of the vaccine to the causative infectious strain of *M. bovis*. Pinkeye outbreaks can be reduced in number and severity by early detection and treatment, by reducing environmental precursors such as excessive dust and grazing of tall grass stands, and by avoidance of pastures with mature seedheads.

Controlling face flies will help prevent pinkeye. The most effective method of face fly control is the forced use by cows and calves of dust bags or oilers. To be effective, placement must allow both cows and calves access, which is a management issue that requires strategic placement of these devices. Insecticide-impregnated ear tags are a management option. Pyrethroid-based ear tags are considered to be more effective for face fly control. Ear tag protocols work best when both cow and calf are tagged. Tags should be applied when approximately 200 flies per head are noticed and a pour-on should be applied at the same time.

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Select candidates for fall production or consignment sales. Appropriate condition, presentation and halter-breaking of heifers can increase marketability.

Implement a forage-harvest strategy that can enhance nutritional feed value. Feeding value will be enhanced by reducing the amount of time required for hay to cure, reducing leaf loss due to mechanical movement of the forage, baling plant material with less than 20% moisture, and cutting forage in the afternoon as opposed to the morning to increase the soluble sugar content in the plant. Also, dense bales will have a greater ability to shed rain and, therefore, will have less damage to the interior of the bale.

Proper hay storage will reduce losses due to precipitation events. A mid-sized bale [4 feet (ft.) × 8 ft.] will absorb 20 gallons (gal.) of water for every 1 in. of precipitation. This added moisture will affect feed quality. Optimizing forage yield vs. plant digestibility is an important management factor.

Southeast Region

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

Spring-calving herds

- ▶ Finish AI; turn out cleanup bulls.
- ▶ Check bulls regularly for performance and injury.
- ▶ Feed first-calf heifers separately; give them the best forage and supplements.
- ▶ Use 48-hour calf removal for thin cows and first-calf heifers at the beginning of the breeding season.
- ▶ Begin fly control program.
- ▶ Begin creep-grazing.
- ▶ Continue feeding high-magnesium (Mg) minerals to prevent grass tetany; you may be able to switch to high-selenium (Se) trace salt late in the month.
- ▶ Deworm all calves, and implant commercial calves late this month or early next month.

Fall-calving herds

- ▶ Condition score cows; plan nutrition/grazing program based on body condition score (BCS).
- ▶ Begin fly control program.
- ▶ Deworm replacement heifers and pregnant heifers (2-year-olds).
- ▶ Plan marketing program for calves.
- ▶ Give preweaning vaccination for respiratory diseases to all calves.
- ▶ Plan to market commercial calves through a value-added program; line up certification, if needed.
- ▶ Wean commercial calves if selling in July or August.

- ▶ Remember to condition score and weigh cows at weaning for Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®).
- ▶ Switch to high-selenium trace mineral salt.

Forage management

- ▶ Finish making first-cutting hay early in month.
- ▶ Start grazing warm-season grasses.

Bull management is important to breeding season success

Bulls need to be observed during the early and mid-point of the breeding season. Young bulls should be observed periodically during the first week they are turned out with cows to ensure they are finding cows in heat and mating. Older bulls also may have lost libido during the winter. The standard bull breeding soundness assessment does not include libido testing.

Bulls should maintain a BCS of 4-5 (on a 9-point scale) to be in optimum nutritional status during the breeding season. Thin or injured bulls should be replaced immediately, as should bulls showing no interest in cows.

A high percentage of cows exhibiting heat during the middle of the breeding season is cause for concern. If cows were in good shape (BCS 5 or higher) when bulls were turned out, then cows in heat may indicate the bull may not be settling cows. However, if cows were thin at the beginning of the breeding season, the increase in cows in heat mid-breeding season may indicate that cows are just beginning to cycle.

Injuries occur more often in commercial multi-sire mating groups. Multi-sire breeding groups work best when bulls are matched according to age and size. An injured bull that cannot breed cows but can still exert dominance will prevent other bulls from breeding cows. In extensive operations, bulls should be monitored at least weekly.

Commercial operations may benefit from rotating bulls halfway through the breeding season. Rotation to a new set of cows reinvigorates some bulls and enhances libido. In addition, exchanging bulls may increase overall pregnancy rates in cows that were with a subfertile bull early in the breeding season.

Finally, research from several universities indicates that fertility rates in cows in the Southeast drop after middle to late June. The high temperatures reduce conception rates and embryo survival, especially on fescue pastures. Spring-calving herds in the Southeast should try to complete the breeding season by early July.

