



# Angus Advisor

► AUGUST herd management tips

## Southeast Region

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

- End breeding season early in the month if not already stopped; pull bulls.
- Feed first-calf heifers separately; give them the best forage, and supplement if needed.
- Plan marketing of calves.
- Line up preweaning vaccinations for calves to be sold in value-added programs.
- Continue fly control program.
- Continue feeding high-selenium (Se) trace-mineral salt.
- Continue creep-grazing and grazing warm-season grasses.
- Fertilize pastures that will be stockpiled for fall-winter grazing.
- Move cattle to some hay fields to give pastures a rest.

### Fall-calving herds

- Condition score cows.
- Separate thin cows from the rest of the herd, and feed them the best pasture or a grain supplement until calving.
- Prepare for calving season, making sure you have all needed equipment and supplies.
- Continue fly control program.
- Continue feeding high-selenium trace-mineral salt.
- Move cattle to hay fields to give pastures a rest.
- Fertilize pastures that will be stockpiled for fall-winter grazing.

- Market commercial calves early in the month if not already done or continue backgrounding program.

### Conditions may dictate strategy

Most parts of the region are very deficient to almost normal in rainfall this summer. In almost all regions, deep soil moisture is deficient. The resulting low forage production is cause to review plans for late summer nutrition and weaning strategies.

Regardless of calving season, producers should score cows for body condition this month and adjust feed accordingly. If you need a refresher on condition scoring, check out [www.cowbcs.info](http://www.cowbcs.info).

In fall-calving herds, cows need to be a body condition score (BCS) 5 by calving. If cows are thin or pasture is extremely limited, cows should be supplemented. Based on forage availability, cows will need 5-10 pounds (lb.) of corn, corn gluten feed, soyhulls, or other locally available high-energy byproducts. Young cows and thin cows can be fed together.

For spring-calving herds, the situation is more complex if forage is limited and/or cows are thin. In commercial herds, early weaning is probably the best strategy. Dry cows will regain body condition on limited forage or first-cutting hay. Calves can be backgrounded on alternative feeds such as corn gluten feed or soyhulls. These alternative feeds can often be self-fed, and calves will gain 2-3 lb. per day. Check with your Extension educator or nutritionist about self-feeding options.

In purebred herds, early weaning can be used, but make sure your youngest calf meets the minimum age for Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR<sup>SM</sup>) weaning weights.

Creep-feeding calves and supplementing cows are other options. Creep-feeding calves tends to be inefficient, with 8-10 lb. of feed needed for 1 lb. of gain. Remember, calves substitute creep feed for pasture, so creep-feeding only slightly reduces nutrient needs of the cow. Supplementing cows may be the best solution if pasture is abundant but forage quality is low. Cows will benefit from increased body condition (or reduced condition loss), and calves will benefit from sustained milk production by dams. In addition, calves will eat alongside the rest of the herd if sufficient bunk space is allowed.

Feeding hay or grazing hay fields are other options. The key is to monitor cow condition and calf growth and adjust your feeding program using the most economical energy sources.

## Midsouth Region

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

### Spring-calving herds

1. Creep-feeding may be warranted if forage is limited or low in quality and/or if feedgrains are relatively inexpensive.
2. A self-limited, high-protein creep-feeding program (such as the Oklahoma Silver program) enhances weight gain without

## Northwest Region

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### Planning/scheduling

- Prepare your weaning strategy and fall cow work schedule. Inventory your winter feed resources.
- Time of weaning will require an assessment of available forage. If cow body condition scores (BCS) of 4 are common, early weaning would be a viable management option. First- and second-calf females will have the greatest challenge to maintain body condition with limited forage resources.
- Work with your health professionals to ensure that you have an effective vaccination protocol for weaned calves. Newly weaned calves will be susceptible to respiratory infections and clostridial diseases. An effective vaccination program involves managing cattle in order for an immune response to occur. Vaccinate before weaning, allowing time for immunity to occur before cattle are put at risk. Use proper vaccine types and handling methods to ensure safe and effective application. Order and store vaccines as appropriate.
- In addition to weaning, fall cattle work will include pregnancy checking cows and brucellosis (Bang's disease) vaccination for replacement heifers. Schedule help as needed.

- Inventory your winter feeding needs. Try to take advantage of forage byproducts such as crop byproducts (grass seed or wheat straw and cornstalks), cannery waste and grain products to lower production costs.
- Cattle trucking options will be limited again this fall. Make contacts 30-60 days in advance to make sure you will have available transportation. Early scheduling may allow for more back-haul options that may reduce costs.

### Cattle health and management

- Maintain adequate vitamin and mineral supplementation.
- Control and prevent pinkeye infections.
- Monitor internal parasite risk, especially if cattle were not dewormed in July.
- Identify cattle with missing tags so replacement tags can be made and implemented during the weaning process.
- Attempt to have calves started on hay or creep feed to facilitate a low-stress weaning event.
- Maintain cows in a BCS of at least 5.

causing calves to become excessively fleshy, because intake is limited to around 1 lb. of supplement per head per day. After about 30 days of creep consumption, a salt concentration of around 10% may be required to achieve this low level of intake.

3. Evaluate body condition of young cows. Wean calf in August or early September if cow BCS is 4 or lower (on a 9-point scale).
4. Secure the appropriate products and supplies for the fall herd health program.
5. If the cow herd can be gathered during August or September, an effective strategy is to vaccinate calves two to six weeks prior to weaning and again at weaning. In fact, many value-added health programs recommend this protocol to maximize immune response in weaned calves.

#### **Fall-calving herds**

1. Yearling replacement heifers grazing native pastures may benefit from a small package (around 1 lb. per day) of high-protein supplement in order to ensure adequate growth and development prior to breeding in November.
2. Calves that were first vaccinated at weaning require booster vaccinations within two to four weeks.

#### **General recommendations**

1. Continue fly and tick control program for all cattle. The incidence of pinkeye is particularly high during late summer. Fly control is one key management factor in

minimizing the spread of this disease.

2. Harvest Sudan grass and Sudan hybrids for hay in the boot stage, which generally corresponds to a height of 3-4 feet (ft.). A routine nitrate test on forage before harvesting may be advisable, particularly if soil moisture has been scarce prior to harvest.
3. Consider managing a portion of Bermuda grass and fescue pasture for late-summer fertilization and fall grazing. Standing forage should be removed by haying or grazing during early August. Fifty to 100 lb. of nitrogen (N) fertilizer should be applied during mid- to late August. Depending on rainfall, forage accumulation has ranged from about 20 lb. to 40 lb. of forage per pound of nitrogen fertilizer applied. Stockpiled forage can be grazed from October through December, and protein concentration is frequently between 10% and 15% of dry matter (DM).
4. Treat cattle for grubs after heel fly activity ceases and before larvae reach the back, generally between July 1 and Oct. 1.
5. Closely monitor water source quantity and quality during hot, dry summer months. Concentration of minerals and other compounds can become excessive (toxic) in stagnant water sources during extended dry periods.
6. Identify pasture weed problems to aid in planning control methods needed next spring. Adjust stocking rate and grazing

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system to control undesirable plants and forage accumulation for prescribed fire.

## Midwest Region

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August is when forages are maturing, weaning time is approaching and weather is dictating several key management decisions.

### Breeding season

1. Look for unsound cows that need to be culled from the herd.
2. Identify cull prospects. Cull the cows that are not conceiving after three or four services by a fertile bull.
3. Limit the breeding season. Remove bulls after 60 days with cows, 45 days with heifers.

These methods contribute to a more uniform calf crop, make winter feed management easier and increase the success rate of next year's breeding season.

### Cow herd nutrition

1. Provide ample amounts of clean, fresh drinking water.
2. Consider creep-feeding if:
  - ▶ drought conditions develop and persist;
  - ▶ range conditions limit milk production;
  - ▶ creep-feed/grain prices are relatively low; and/or
  - ▶ value of gain allows for economic benefits.
3. Tips for successful creep-feeding:
  - ▶ Limiting intake will usually increase feed efficiency.
  - ▶ Use an ionophore or other feed additive to maximize efficiency.
  - ▶ Protein level should be equal to or greater than 16%.
  - ▶ High salt levels may help limit intake, but can be tough on feeders.

- ▶ Prepurchase bulk-rate, winter-supplementation needs prior to seasonal price increases.

### Herd health

1. If pinkeye is likely to be a problem, consider the following preventive and therapeutic measures.

#### *Preventive:*

- ▶ Make sure the herd is receiving adequate vitamins and trace minerals in its diet.
- ▶ Consider using a medicated trace-mineral package.
- ▶ Consider vaccination for pinkeye and infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR) (consult your local veterinarian).
- ▶ Control face flies.
- ▶ Clip pastures with tall, coarse grasses that may irritate eyes.
- ▶ Provide ample shade.

#### *Therapeutic:*

- ▶ Administer an intramuscular (IM) injection of long-acting oxytetracycline

when symptoms are first noticed.

- ▶ Shut out irritating sunlight by patching eyes, providing shade, etc.
  - ▶ Control flies.
  - ▶ Consult your veterinarian.
2. Consider revaccinating show animals for respiratory diseases.
  3. Vaccinate suckling calves for IBR, bovine viral diarrhea (BVD), parainfluenza-3 virus (PI<sub>3</sub>), bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV), and possibly pasteurilla at least three weeks prior to weaning.
  4. Revaccinate all calves for blackleg.
  5. Vaccinate replacement heifers for brucellosis (Bang's disease) at 4-10 months of age.
  6. Monitor and treat foot rot.

#### **Forage/pasture management**

1. Enhance grazing distribution with mineral placement away from water sources.
2. Observe pasture weed problems to aid in

planning control methods needed next spring.

3. Monitor grazing conditions and rotate pastures if possible and practical.
4. If pastures will run out in late summer, get ready to provide emergency feeds. Start supplemental feeding before pastures are gone to extend grazing.
5. Harvest and store forages properly. Minimize waste by reducing spoilage.
6. Sample harvested forages and have them analyzed for nitrate and nutrient composition.
7. Plan a winter nutritional program through pasture and forage management.
8. For stocker cattle and replacement heifers, supplement maturing grasses with an acceptable degraded intake protein (DIP)/ionophore (feed additive)-type supplement.

#### **General management**

1. Avoid unnecessary heat stress — don't handle or truck cattle during the heat of the day.
2. Repair, replace and improve facilities needed for fall processing.
3. Order supplies, vaccines, tags and other products needed at weaning time.
4. Consider weaning earlier than normal if:
  - ▶ drought conditions develop and persist;
  - ▶ range conditions limit milk production;
  - ▶ cows lose body condition; or
  - ▶ facilities and management are available to handle lightweight calves.First-calf heifers have the most to gain.
5. Resist the temptation to feed cows without weaning; feeding early-weaned calves is more efficient.
6. Prepare to have your calf crop weighed and analyzed through your state, regional or breed performance-testing program. 