



# Angus Advisor

► JULY herd management tips

## Southeast Region

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

### Spring-calving herds

- Check bulls regularly for performance and injury.
- End breeding season; pull bulls.
- Feed first-calf heifers separately; give them the best forage and supplement.
- Continue your fly control program.
- Treat pinkeye early and aggressively.
- Continue feeding high-selenium (Se) trace salt.
- Continue creep-grazing.
- Do mid-summer deworming and implanting on commercial herds early in the month.
- Start grazing warm-season grasses.
- Move cattle to some hay fields to give pastures a rest.

### Fall-calving herds

- Continue fly control program.
- Do mid-summer deworming on replacement heifers, pregnant heifers (2-year-olds) and 3-year-old cows.
- Continue high-selenium trace mineral salt.
- Move cattle to some hay fields to give pastures a rest.
- Vaccinate commercial calves for value-added programs; line up certification.
- Wean commercial calves if selling in a

weaned value-added program in late August or September (weaned for 45 days).

- Remember to weigh and condition score cows at weaning for Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR).

### Young cows need extra nutrition during the breeding season

First- and second-calf heifers are still growing as well as lactating during the breeding season. These heifers will need about the same total amount of energy as a mature cow, but they eat about 15%-20% less feed. So, these young cows need 4 to 5 pounds (lb.) of corn, corn gluten or barley daily to meet their extra energy needs and breed back quickly.

### Stockpiled pasture extends the grazing season into early winter

Endophyte-infected fescue is a curse for most producers in the Southern and Mid-Atlantic states in July and August, as the effects of the toxins reduce calf gains and milk production. Cattle should be moved off of fescue pastures and onto other forages in mid-summer, if possible.

However, fescue is an excellent forage to stockpile for grazing in late fall and early winter. In mid-July or early August, pastures should be fertilized with 60 units of nitrogen (N) per acre after cattle have been removed. The grass is allowed to grow or "stockpile"

until the first killing frost or Thanksgiving. Fescue growing in late summer and early fall is vegetative and highly nutritious, and it retains its nutrients after it stops growing.

Producers can use continuous or strip-grazing to allow cows to harvest stockpiled fescue. On average, each acre of stockpiled fescue will produce 3,000 lb. of dry matter (DM), or about 60 to 90 days of grazing for one cow.

Research from Virginia Tech and other universities indicates that the nutrient content of stockpiled fescue will be 60% total digestible nutrients (TDN) and 11%-12% crude protein (CP) well into January. Because of the low cost and high quality of stockpiled fescue, it works well for commercial and seedstock operations.

## Rocky Mountain West Region

by **Steve Paisley**, University of Wyoming, [spaisley@uwyo.edu](mailto:spaisley@uwyo.edu)

**Mineral requirements.** Once cattle are on green grass, mineral requirements are probably being met by Mother Nature unless you have an area-specific, known deficiency that must be supplied. Otherwise, a source of salt offered free-choice, either in loose or block form, may be the only thing you need. Continued drought conditions in some areas

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## Midsouth Region

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

### Spring-calving herds

Remove bulls after a 60- to 90-day breeding season.

Calf performance can be enhanced through creep-grazing using sorghum/Sudan grass or alfalfa pasture.

July is an excellent time to implement a self-limited, high-protein creep-feeding program (such as 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.

Check with your veterinarian regarding the potential value of deworming nursing calves during mid- to late summer. Response to the anthelmintic will vary substantially depending on the region, local conditions, grazing intensity and previous parasite management.

### Fall-calving herds

Wean fall-born calves before the middle of July to allow cows time to regain body condition before calving again. Calf performance is probably marginal this late anyway.

At weaning, vaccinate calves according to your veterinarian's recommendations, deworm calves, pregnancy-check cows and heifers, weigh and condition score cows, and weigh calves. Transfer records for your whole herd to the American Angus Association.

A small package of high-protein supplement, such as supplement in the Oklahoma Gold program, can facilitate around 2 lb. average daily gain (ADG) on weaned heifers and bull calves grazing abundant native pastures during July, August and September. A strategic deworming program and the inclusion of a feed additive, such as Bovatec®, Rumensin® or chlortetracycline, are important features in this program.

### General recommendations

Continue fly and tick control programs 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.

Harvest Sudan grass and Sudan hybrids for hay in the boot stage, which generally corresponds to 3 feet (ft.) to 4 ft. in height. A routine nitrate test on forage before harvesting may be advisable, particularly if soil moisture has been scarce prior to harvest.

Treat cattle for grubs after heel fly activity ceases and before larvae reach the back, generally between July 1 and Oct. 1.

Remove intensive early stocking (IES) cattle from native grass pastures by July 10.

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.

may create unique mineral concerns as mineral-content-limited forage and water force animals to alter their grazing preferences.

**Feed and water concerns.** As stock ponds get low during late summer, one of the nutrition and health concerns is the quality of the remaining water. In the fall, adult cows typically require 7-11 gallons (gal.) of water per day, depending on outdoor temperature and milk production. Poor-quality stock water can actually decrease water intake, putting additional stress on the animal.

Most water tests report total dissolved solids (TDS) as a measure of the concentration of dissolved salts. TDS levels less than 3,000 parts per million (ppm) are generally safe for livestock. Levels of 3,000 to 5,000 ppm may not dramatically affect adult livestock, but they may cause poor performance and characteristic looseness in young, growing livestock. TDS levels of 5,000 to 7,000 ppm should not be offered to pregnant or lactating animals.

Sulfate levels are another water quality concern. High iron (Fe) and sulfate levels can affect trace-mineral absorption, especially copper (Cu), but high-sulfate water can also increase the risk of polioencephalomalacia (polio). Symptoms may include blindness, signs of nervousness and uncoordinated movement.

The amount of summer moisture can also

affect the incidence of cow asthma (pulmonary emphysema and edema). Typically, cattle are not moved to lower meadows until after heavy frosts, but limited forage can force many ranchers to move cattle down early.

Cow asthma is typically associated with a sudden change from dry pastures to green, lush meadows, where the rumen bacteria produce a toxic compound that causes an allergic reaction in the lungs. Ionophores such as Rumensin® and Bovatec® [at least 150-200 milligrams (mg) per head per day] will help prevent this situation if ingested at least one day prior to going on lush forage through the first week. However, supplements generally are not fed until cattle are closer to home.

An additional grazing caution is drought-related livestock poisoning by weeds. As forages get short, livestock may select plants that they typically avoid. Some plants to consider include lupines, camas, locoweed and crazyweed, larkspur, cocklebur, and chokecherry. Symptoms are very similar for many of these plants and include difficult, rapid and unusual breathing; loss of coordination; and staggering.

**Early weaning.** If summer grass is limited, early weaning of part (heifer calves, for example) or all of the calf crop may be an important consideration. Research conducted at South Dakota State University suggests that

early weaning can reduce the cow's forage needs by 25%-30%.

Early weaning can have an even larger effect in herds that summer on intermountain and mountain pastures. In addition to the forage savings, removing the calf also encourages the cows to search farther for grass, making better utilization of high plateaus, etc.

Finally, weaning calves at an early age, as young as 70-90 days, will allow thin cows to rebreed more quickly.

## Midwest Region

by **Twig Marston**, Kansas State University,  
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July and August are months when forages are maturing, weaning time is approaching and weather dictates several key management decisions.

### Breeding season

► Limit the breeding season by removing bulls after 60 days with the cows and 45 days with the heifers. Cull cows that have not conceived after three or four services by a fertile bull. These steps will contribute to a more uniform calf crop, making winter nutritional management easier and increasing the success rate of next year's breeding season.

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### Herd nutrition

- ▶ Provide ample amounts of clean, fresh drinking water.
- ▶ Consider limited-intake creep-feeding if drought conditions develop and persist, range conditions limit milk production, creep-feed or grain prices are relatively low, or value of gain allows for economic benefits.
- ▶ For a successful limited-intake creep-feeding program, limit intake to less than 2 lb. per head per day. Use an ionophore or other feed additive to maximize efficiency. The protein level should be at least 16%. High salt levels may help limit intake, but can be tough on feeders.
- ▶ Prepurchase bulk-rate winter supplements prior to seasonal price increases.

### Herd health

- ▶ If pinkeye is likely to be a problem, consider the following preventive and therapeutic measures:

**Prevention:** Make sure the herd is receiving adequate dietary vitamins and trace minerals. Consider using a medicated trace-mineral package and vaccinating for pinkeye and infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR). Control face flies. Clip pastures that have tall, coarse grasses that may irritate eyes, and provide ample shade.

**Therapy:** 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.

- ▶ Consider revaccinating show animals for respiratory diseases. Vaccinate suckling calves for IBR, bovine viral diarrhea (BVD), parainfluenza-3 (PI3), bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV) and possibly pasteurized whole cell Pasteurella at least three weeks prior to weaning. Revaccinate all calves for blackleg. Vaccinate replacement heifers (4-10 months of age) for brucellosis (Bang's disease).
- ▶ Monitor and treat foot rot.

### Forage/pasture management

- ▶ Observe pasture weed problems to aid in planning the control methods needed next spring.
- ▶ Monitor grazing conditions and rotate pastures if possible and practical. Enhance grazing distribution by placing the minerals away from water sources. If pastures won't last all summer, get ready to provide emergency feeds. Start supplemental feeding before pastures are gone to extend grazing.
- ▶ For stocker cattle and replacement heifers, supplement maturing grasses with an acceptable level of degradable intake protein and ionophore (feed additive).

- ▶ Harvest and store forages properly. Minimize waste by reducing spoilage. Sample harvested forages, and have them analyzed for nitrate and nutrient composition.
- ▶ Plan your winter nutritional program through pasture and forage management.

### General management

- ▶ Avoid unnecessary heat stress. Don't handle or transport cattle during the heat of the day.
- ▶ Repair, replace and improve facilities needed for fall processing.
- ▶ Order supplies, vaccines, tags and other products needed at weaning time.
- ▶ Consider earlier-than-normal weaning 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. Resist the temptation to feed the cows without weaning; feeding early-weaned calves is more efficient.
- ▶ Look for unsound cows that need to be culled from the herd.
- ▶ Prepare to have your calf crop weighed and analyzed through your state, regional or breed performance-testing program.

