



# Angus Advisor

► AUGUST herd management tips

## Southeast Region

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

### Spring-calving herds

- End breeding season early this 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.
- 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

- Score cows for body condition.
- Separate thin cows from the rest of the herd and feed them extra grain until calving.
- Prepare for calving season; make sure you have all necessary equipment and supplies.
- Continue fly control program.
- Continue high-selenium trace-mineral salt.
- Move cattle to some hay fields to give pastures a rest.

- Fertilize pastures that will be stockpiled for fall/winter grazing.
- Market calves early this month if not already done, or continue backgrounding program.

### Fertilize pastures for stockpiling in August

- Pastures that will be used for stockpiling need to be grazed down to about 2 inches (in.). This should be done in early August west of the northern areas of the region and mid- to late August in the southern areas. Pastures should then be fertilized with 50-80 pounds (lb.) of nitrogen (N). Ammonium nitrate or ammonium sulfate are the best forms of nitrogen fertilizer to use for stockpiling because they are less volatile than urea or some other forms of nitrogen fertilizer. Ammonium nitrate and ammonium sulfate will “wait for rain” and are less likely to burn pastures or lose their nitrogen value. Poultry litter is another good option for stockpiling, but some of the organic nitrogen might be slower to be released. Cattle should be removed from stockpiled pastures during fertilization until after the first killing frost, or late November in areas that get light frosts.

### Grazing hay fields an option

- Second-cutting grass hay results in

nutritious forage for winter use. However, producers often overlook the option of grazing some hay fields in August instead of making hay. In dry years, the quantity of second-cutting hay available to bale barely pays for the fuel to harvest it. In addition, pastures used earlier can become overgrazed. Grazing a hay field instead of harvesting it by machine can give pastures a rest while saving fuel. The resulting increase in cow body condition, calf gain, pasture growth and extended grazing season will offset the loss of hay. Water is often a limitation to grazing hay fields, but producers who think creatively can find ways to provide water with limited investment.

## Midsouth Region

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

### Spring-calving herds

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

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## Rocky Mountain West Region

by *Steve Paisley, University of Wyoming, spaisley@uwyo.edu*

- Review your weaning health program with your veterinarian. If the weather turns hot and dry, weaning calves early — in July and August — can really test your herd health program. Preconditioning programs become very important when considering weaning in dusty, hot and dry conditions. Purchase the needed vaccines so you will be ready to give your preconditioning vaccinations at the appropriate times prior to weaning.
- This also would be a good time to review beef quality assurance (BQA) procedures and, if you are not one already, to ask about becoming a BQA-certified producer. If your veterinarian does not have this information, contact your state beef council.
- Managing calves from birth to harvest according to BQA-approved procedures will become more essential as additional branded beef products are developed. Often this amounts to documenting current practices. Don't limit your number of potential buyers by failing to become BQA-certified.
- If grazing forages become limited, consider weaning calves early, particularly off the 2- and 3-year-old females. In some extreme circumstances, supplemental feed may be needed. Not only will early weaning reduce nutrient demand on the land, it will reduce nutrient stress on young females. Terminating lactation allows them to improve body condition before forage quality and availability decline. It also reduces the cow's water requirement, allowing her to travel farther and improve grazing distribution.
- After calves are weaned, consider grazing them on meadow regrowth if it is available. Research at the University of Wyoming suggests that, as long as an ample quantity of this high-quality forage is available, their performance will be similar to those calves still nursing their dams while grazing range forage. However, the nonlactating dams will have the opportunity to gain considerable weight before winter weather arrives.
- If you consign spring-born bull calves to bull tests or steers to feedlot tests and carcass evaluation programs, check entrance requirements now. Make sure you wean at an appropriate time and administer the required health program. Good health does not ensure success in these programs, but you won't have success without healthy calves.

control is one key management factor in minimizing the spread of this disease.

2. Harvest Sudan and Sudan hybrids for hay in the boot stage, which generally corresponds to 3 to 4 feet (ft.) in height. A routine nitrate test on forage before harvesting may be advisable, particularly if soil moisture has been scarce prior to harvest.
3. Treat cattle for grubs after heel fly activity ceases and before larvae reach the back, generally between July 1 and Oct. 1.
4. 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.
5. Identify pasture weed problems to aid in planning control methods needed next spring. Adjust stocking rate and grazing system to control undesirable plants and forage accumulation for prescribed fire.

## Midwest Region

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

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 pasteurella at least three weeks prior to weaning.
  4. Revaccinate all calves for blackleg.
  5. Vaccinate replacement heifers for brucellosis (Bang's disease) at 4 to 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.

