



# Angus Advisor

► MAY herd management tips

## Southeast Region

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

### Spring-calving herds

- Calving should be coming to an end.
- Give prebreeding vaccinations to cows for infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), parainfluenza-3 virus (PI<sub>3</sub>), bovine viral diarrhea (BVD), bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV) and leptospirosis.
- Use modified-live virus (MLV) vaccines on open cows with calves; use killed vaccines on pregnant cows.
- Begin estrus synchronization programs for artificial insemination (AI); some herds may begin AI this month.
- Breed heifers two to four weeks before cows.
- Get breeding soundness exams (also referred to as BSEs) done on bulls.
- Supplement first-calf heifers with energy through breeding.
- Implant commercial calves at turnout if not implanted at birth.
- Keep high-quality, high-magnesium (Mg), high-selenium (Se) minerals available.
- Make first cutting of hay.
- Start creep-grazing and/or management-intensive grazing (MiG).

### Fall-calving herds

- Creep-graze calves while on cows.
- Give preweaning vaccinations (IBR, PI<sub>3</sub>, BVD, BRSV, pasteurized) to calves.
- Wean commercial calves based on marketing plan for calves. In most value-added programs, calves must be weaned 45 days.
- Wean and weigh registered calves, and report data to the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR<sup>SM</sup>) program.
- Weigh and condition score cows at weaning; send data to AHIR.
- Implant commercial calves at turnout.
- Deworm calves if needed.
- Make first cutting of hay.
- Continue feeding high-magnesium minerals to prevent grass tetany.
- Continue management-intensive grazing; hay pastures with excess forage.

### Grazing management important during dry spring

This spring appears to be an unusually dry one in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic. Grazing management in early and mid spring is not something we usually worry about. Warm

days, cool nights and plentiful rainfall usually make too much grass the problem, not too little. However, allowing cattle to graze early spring pastures too short could mean trouble this dry spring.

When pastures are grazed to shorter than 4 inches (in.), it creates conditions that magnify the effect of dry weather on grass growth. Grazing below 4 in. removes too much leaf area, so regrowth is slowed or stunted. In addition, removing this much leaf area allows the ground to be exposed to the drying actions of sun and wind. This exposure exacerbates drought conditions.

Feeding and grazing strategies include rapid rotational grazing and supplementation. Rapid rotational grazing allows cattle to graze the pastures down to 4 in., then they are moved to the next pasture. If pasture recovery and regrowth are not sufficient by the time the cattle come back to the pasture, they should be supplemented. Periodic hay feeding and grain supplementation on a sacrifice pasture will increase season-long grazing productivity and health of the remaining pastures.

## Midsouth Region

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

### Spring-calving herds

- Vaccinate calves with seven-way clostridial bacterin, intranasal IBR and PI<sub>3</sub> (consult your local veterinarian for specific recommendations). Replace missing animal identification (ID) tags in calves and cows.
- If recommended by your veterinarian, vaccinate heifer calves for brucellosis (Bang's disease) between 4 and 10 months of age.
- Late May to early June is a good time to deworm cows and bulls that are grazing cool-season forages, such as fescue and brome.
- Turn bulls out with cows after the 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.

### Fall-calving herds

- Purebred breeders in the Southern Great Plains wean fall-born calves anywhere from April through July. An optimum, although not always practical, calf vaccination program includes vaccination of calves two to six weeks prior to weaning. This timing

coincides with the month of May for many producers.

- Look for and record cows that should be culled due to calf performance, feet, leg, eye, udder and attitude problems. These records are often more practical to collect and record prior to the weaning date.
- At weaning, vaccinate calves according to your veterinarian's recommendations, weigh and condition score cows, and weigh calves.
- Transfer whole-herd records to your national breed association for processing.

### General recommendations

- Continue or implement a fly and tick control program for all cattle.
- Rotation graze or hay weeping love grass at about 35-day intervals (rest four weeks, graze one week).
- Plant Sudan grass and Sudan hybrids for summer grazing or hay, fertilizing according to soil test.
- There is no need to feed high-phosphorus (P) mineral supplements during the lush forage growing period. In fact, the National Research Council (NRC) reduced the phosphorus requirement for beef cows in the latest version of its beef cattle publication.
- In this region, foot rot is a common problem through late May, June and early July. Limited research indicates that the addition of chlortetracycline to mineral supplements can reduce the incidence of this problem. Adequate zinc (Zn) supplementation is also important.

## Midwest Region

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

Breeding season is beginning or continuing for many operations; therefore, both females and males must be reproductively fit.

- 1) Several estrus synchronization procedures have been developed. To determine the correct synchronization program to use, consider the following: age group of females (yearling replacement heifers vs. cows); commitment of time and efforts for heat detection; potential number of females that are anestrous [days postpartum, body condition scores (BCSs), calving difficulty]; labor availability; and the return on

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investment for total commitment to the breeding program.

- 2) Handle semen properly and use correct AI techniques to maximize fertility.
- 3) Natural-service bulls should have body condition, eyes, feet, legs and reproductive parts closely monitored during the breeding season. Resolve any problems immediately.
- 4) All bulls should have passed a breeding soundness examination prior to turnout.

Begin your calf-preconditioning program. Vaccination, castration and parasite control at a young age will decrease stress at weaning time. This is the time to add value to the calf crop.

Implanting calves older than 60 days of age will increase weaning weight.

Properly identify all cows and calves. Establish premises numbers for compliance with state and national ID programs.

Use best management practices (BMPs) to establish sustainable grazing systems.

Use good management practices when planting annual forage sources and harvesting perennial forages.

Maintain records that will verify calving

season, health programs and management practices.

### Northwest Region

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#### Cow-calf management

Identify late-calving cows, recognizing that they are responsible for lost income. In an 80-day breeding season, a cow that calves in the last 25% of the calving season vs. the first 25% loses 100-120 pounds (lb.) of weaning weight. Even in a well-managed 60-day calving season, cows calving in the last 25% will have calves weighing 70-90 lb. less

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than early-calving cows. Late-calving cows can be identified as candidates to be sold or treated with a gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH)/CIDR® protocol to move up their breeding dates.

Consider/plan for your horn and face fly control program.

A May 1 turnout date should result in calves being born Feb. 10. Consider breeding yearling heifers 20 days before the cow herd.

Vaccinate 2- to 3-month-old calves for clostridial diseases (eight-way).

Sudden temperature changes or extreme differences in day and night temperatures are powerful precursors for pneumonia. Monitor calf behavior to detect changes in health status. Treat respiratory conditions diligently with protocols developed in consultation with your veterinarian.

### **Pasture management**

Consider creep-grazing as a way to optimize calf utilization of high-quality forage.

If grazing legume pastures, beware of the risk for bloat. Feeding poloxalene in mineral blocks will reduce the risk for bloat. Also, turning cattle onto legume pastures that are free from morning dew has been shown to

reduce bloat. Have the appropriate equipment and supplies to correct bloat problems, including a speculum, a ½-in.-diameter tube 4 to 5 feet (ft.) long, anti-foaming agents and a trocar.

If drought conditions are a concern, consider early-weaning management options. With proper management, calves can be weaned at 120-160 days of age.

Prepare equipment for forage harvest. Secure necessary inventory for an efficient harvest, such as twine/sickle sections, etc. Recognize that nutrient quality in forage drops when the plants develop seedheads.

