



Angus Advisor

► JULY herd management tips

Southeast Region

by **John Hall**, Virginia Tech, 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 best forage and supplement.
- Continue fly control program.
- Treat pinkeye early and aggressively.
- Continue feeding high-selenium (Se) trace mineral salt.
- Continue creep-grazing.
- Do midsummer deworming and implanting (commercial herds only) early in month.
- Start grazing warm-season grasses.
- Move cattle to hay fields to give pastures a rest.

Fall-calving herds

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

► Wean calves if selling commercial calves in a weaned value-added program in late August or September so they will be weaned for 45 days by sale day.

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

Fescue affects fertility during hot weather

Many producers in the “fescue belt” are familiar with depressed reproductive rates in beef cows during June, July and August. The toxins (ergot alkaloids) produced by the fungus in endophyte-infected fescue affect the ability of cattle to regulate body temperature. As a result, the increased body temperature in cows damages embryos in the first few days after fertilization. This increases early embryonic mortality and lowers pregnancy rates.

Recent research from the University of Tennessee indicates that eggs fertilized by semen from bulls grazing endophyte-infected fescue had decreased early cleavage rates after fertilization. In addition, this impairment of bull fertility could not be detected by standard prebreeding evaluations of bulls.

Producers managing breeding seasons that extend into the summer should avoid grazing cattle on fescue during the June-August period, if possible. Alternatively, increasing the clover and non-fescue grass percentages in the pasture should reduce the effects of fescue.

Midsummer deworming and vaccination a key strategy

In the humid South and Mid-Atlantic states, cattle benefit from strategic deworming. Internal parasites usually reach an economic threshold in late June or early July in our region. This month is the ideal time to deworm calves and young cows. Use a dewormer that has persistent activity for the best results. Strategic deworming of calves will increase weaning weights by 15-40 pounds (lb.).

Along with deworming, July is an optimum time to begin vaccinating spring calves for bovine respiratory disease (formally known as shipping fever complex). Vaccines that contain infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), parainfluenza-3 virus (PI₃), bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) and bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV) should be used. Immunizing calves against *Pasteurella haemolytica* (including leucotoxoid) and *Haemophilus somnus* may also be advisable. Check with your veterinarian for vaccination recommendations for your area.

Midwest Region

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

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.

Midsouth Region

by **David Lalman**, Oklahoma State University, 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.

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 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, BVD, PI₃, BRSV and possibly 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.

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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.

Northwest Region

by **Thomas Hill**, Oregon State University,
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Breeding management

- ▶ Determine your options relative to calving season length. Removing bulls from breeding pastures July 20 will end the subsequent calving season about April 1.

- ▶ Separate yearling bulls from mature bulls after the breeding season so yearling bulls can continue to grow and develop on better feed resources.
- ▶ If a split AI/natural-service breeding scheme was used, pregnancy-checking cows 100 days after AI will allow many veterinarians to determine if the fetus is sired by AI or natural service.

Calf management

- ▶ Monitor feed quality and availability. Early weaning is a possible solution to extending limited forage resources. Successful, well-managed programs can wean calves at 120-150 days of age. Early weaning can reduce cow energy requirements by 35%-50%.
- ▶ Separate bull calves from heifer calves by 6 months of age to avoid heifers being bred and creating added stress on the bull calves.
- ▶ Consider implanting steers and nonreplacement heifer calves. Seventy days preweaning is the optimum time to implant in order to capture the greatest economic return. It is important to use only implants labeled for suckling beef calves.
- ▶ July is an optimum time to evaluate the need to treat calves for internal parasites. Ideally, after treatment, calves can be turned out onto clean ground or regrowth from forage cut earlier for hay.
- ▶ Consider creep feed as an economical method to increase calf performance. Many successful creep diets are widely known.

Common to successful creep diets will be a dietary bypass protein fraction and an ionophore that will assist with control of coccidiosis. Creep diets with high starch or grain content have been shown to reduce forage utilization.

- ▶ Be sure to check tattoos on any cattle that will be shown or sold this summer or fall.
- ▶ Be prepared to manage cattle for warmer temperatures. When temperatures increase from 70° F to 90° F, total water intake can increase by 2½ times. Cool water will not only enhance feed consumption but is critical to moderating heat stress. Water sources in direct sunlight or fed by above-ground waterlines exposed to sunlight will increase the risk of heat stress. Cattle become susceptible to heat stress when temperatures reach 90° at 35% humidity. Even moderate heat stress will affect growth, immune response, cow milk production and cow and bull fertility. When temperatures reach 100° and 55% humidity, cattle are subject to severe stress.

Program improvements

Plan to attend or watch on television the Western Video Market Cattle Sale July 10-13 in Reno or the Superior Livestock Video Royale July 31-Aug. 4 in Winnemucca, Nev. These sales represent a great opportunity to evaluate the trends, demands and value of commercial cattle produced in the West.

