

replacements, pregnancy diagnosis, deworming and treatment for other parasites, retagging, culling decisions, and possibly freeze-branding replacements.

Fall-calving herds

1. Calves should be individually identified and weighed within 24 hours of birth.
2. Identify herd sires to be used in the AI program and purchase semen.
3. Plan the herd health program to be administered at “branding” time. Recent research published by Oklahoma State University (OSU) veterinary scientists indicates that, in properly immunized cow herds, an MLV combination vaccine given at branding, followed by revaccination at weaning is as effective a vaccination strategy as vaccine given preweaning (21 to 30 days), followed by revaccination at weaning.
4. Lactating fall-calving cows will likely lose some body condition during the calving and early lactation period. Ideally, your cattle genetics, forage management and

supplementation program would result in limited weight and body condition loss during this critical period. In other words, when these components of your program are not “in sync,” the cows will lose weight too rapidly, resulting in few cows cycling at the beginning of the breeding season and low conception rates. Either that or you will have to spend a lot of money to keep this from happening.

General recommendations

1. While the Southern Great Plains region basically lost April and May from a forage production standpoint, most of the region has been blessed with excellent summer precipitation. In fact, summer rains have delayed much of the hay harvest throughout the region. We will be fortunate to have abundant standing forage and harvested hay available this coming winter. As always, some of it will be low-quality due to late harvest or rain damage. Also as always, if you will be in the market to purchase hay, be sure to take the time to either request or require a forage test. Forage testing and monitoring cow condition are the best tools to use in

determining an appropriate nutrition program for fall and winter. A list of certified commercial laboratories is available at www.foragetesting.org.

2. Concentration of critical minerals in forage declines as forage matures and as leaf-to-stem ratio declines from grazing pressure. Minerals that are of particular concern in the predominant forage species found in the Southern Great Plains include phosphorus, copper, zinc and selenium. Vitamin A is also critical when animals consume drought-stressed forage over a long period of time. A balanced supply of vitamins, macrominerals and microminerals is an important component of the overall herd health program, which influences health of weaned calves, as well as reproductive success.
3. Late-summer applications of about 50 lb. per acre of nitrogen can produce high-quality Bermuda grass or fescue pasture from October through December. Pastures should be grazed, hayed or otherwise mowed before the fertilizer application is made. Forage production will be highly dependent on late-summer precipitation.



How to Lose the Argument on Animal Welfare

by **Troy Smith**, field editor

Sometimes all that is required for disagreement, regardless of the issue, is two people with different points of view. According to Dave Daley, fifth-generation California rancher and interim dean of agriculture at Chico State University, the “window” through which a person looks at the issue of animal welfare influences how they see the problem. In fact, whether a person thinks animal welfare actually is a problem depends on his or her window.

Daley spoke to an audience gathered for the 4th International Symposium on Beef Cattle Welfare July 16-18 in Ames, Iowa. In his leadoff presentation, Daley urged attendees to remember that members of the general public look through windows very different from those of people who are involved in animal agriculture. Even among the general public, perspectives regarding animal welfare vary greatly.

However, Daley fears livestock industries are in danger of losing the public's trust. To an extent, it is already happening. Daley said industry members should consider whether they are at least partly to blame. Have their conversations about animal welfare with people having different perspectives ever become heated? Daley listed several ways

producers and others associated with livestock production can lose such arguments.

“Don’t assume science will provide a solution,” warned Daley. “There is a growing public perception that scientific results can be bought. Many people think if the livestock industry sponsors a study, its results are suspect.”

Neither should a contentious animal management practice be defended because it is most economical. Justification on the basis of economics, said Daley, is a poor argument. It is best to take it out of the discussion.

Dailey said blindly defending all agricultural practices is a huge mistake. He warned that industry advocates lose credibility by trying to defend all of agriculture. Not everything can be defended and there is always room for improvement.

According to Daley, people can’t effectively advocate on behalf of animal agriculture by attacking people who disagree with them. Rather, they should be willing to discuss the issue. That means be willing to listen as well as talk. Remember that disagreeing with you does not mean other people are stupid.

“You can be too defensive,” cautioned

Daley. “Don’t assume that the lunatic fringe represents the general public. Many people are not worried about animal welfare.”

Too often, said Daley, people within the industry are reactive instead of proactive. He urged more effort to build coalitions. Daley also warned against industry in-fighting, including criticizing or mocking nonconventional production systems. He sees room for different methods and believes the market will sort success from failure.

Daley believes there are welfare issues with which livestock industries must deal due to growing concern among the general public. Leading his short list is extreme animal confinement. Stress associated with transportation is another, along with procedures that cause short-term pain, such as castration, dehorning and branding. To some well-meaning people, development and implementation of production “standards” seems the logical solution. Without consideration of differences among production systems, due to geography, environment and scale, Daley fears the solution could become the problem.



Editor’s Note: Troy Smith is a cattleman and freelancer from Sargent, Neb.