



# Repro Tracks

► by **Cliff Lamb**, University of Florida

## An introduction

*As you all may know, Dr. Bill Beal has been writing the Repro Tracks article for the Angus Journal for the past eight years. I have truly enjoyed reading Beal's insights into numerous reproductive-management topics during those years, but unfortunately he has decided to step down as the author of this column. However, recently, I was asked if I would consider taking on this task for future Angus Journal publications. I doubt that I will be as perceptive or as engaging as Dr. Beal, but I plan to use my resources to provide readers insight into common questions that producers may ask.*

*Therefore, I encourage you to send me questions you may have related to reproductive management of your cattle operations. In response, I plan to obtain input from experts who may have the answers and plan to provide research-based answers to practical questions. The format of future articles should not differ much from what you have been reading in the past.*

### Qualifications

For those readers who do not know me, I will provide a little background. In 1998 I graduated from Kansas State University with a doctorate in reproductive physiology. Shortly after completing my doctorate, I became a beef cattle specialist at the University of Minnesota. After spending 10 years at the University of Minnesota, I moved to the University of Florida to serve as a beef cattle specialist.

My primary research efforts focus on applied reproductive physiology in cattle emphasizing efficient reproductive

management of beef cows and heifers, plus development of reliable estrous-synchronization protocols for replacement heifers and postpartum cows. Since moving to Florida, I have also expanded my research to explore the interactions of nutrition on reproduction and the role that feed efficiency may play in female production systems.

The impact of some of this research may have significant economic benefits to U.S. beef cattle producers. One of our recent publications (Rodgers et al., 2012) demonstrated that for every cow exposed to fixed-time artificial insemination (TAI), a producer will gain an additional \$49 per cow after weaning. Today, approximately 1 to 2 million cows are exposed to TAI, resulting in up to a \$98 million increase in weaned calf value per cow that is inseminated.

Using this research, we developed a model that may be useful to beef producers to incorporate their own costs and determine the value of estrous synchronization in their own operations. This model has been converted into a smartphone application for Android and iPhone/iPad users and is called the 'AI Cowculator' (see Fig. 1).

The AI Cowculator may be downloaded free of charge and is a decision-aid tool to assist producers to determine whether they should consider TAI rather than purchasing herd sires for their cow herds. We encourage producers and members of the allied industry to download the AI Cowculator and utilize this tool to assist in making bull-buying and breeding-season decisions. In a future article

I will provide a detailed overview of the AI Cowculator.

Throughout the next few "Repro Tracks" articles, I hope to address reproduction-related factors that may enhance profitability of beef cattle operations. However, I also plan to provide readers opportunities to find additional resources that may assist in reproductive management of their operations.

### Repro task force

For example, I am a member of the Beef Reproduction Task Force, which was developed to provide leadership and consistency in programming to the beef industry in the area of reproductive management. The goals of the Task Force are to evaluate current methods for managing reproduction and identify the most profitable management strategies; to discuss, evaluate and develop methods for delivery of extension programs; and to unify current and future recommendations delivered to industry. I encourage readers to access the Beef Reproduction Task Force website, <http://beefrepro.unl.edu/>, to gain additional knowledge that may not be addressed in this column.

One activity that the Task Force leads is the Annual Applied Reproductive Strategies in Beef Cattle (ARSBC) Conferences. This year the ARSBC Conference will be in Staunton, Va., Oct. 15-16. As the program develops, information will be made available on the Task Force website. (The *Angus Journal* provides coverage of this event at [www.appliedreprostrategies.com/](http://www.appliedreprostrategies.com/).)

There never seems to be a shortage of reproduction-related issues or questions, and I look forward to addressing those issues in the coming articles. I hope you will all be willing to participate in the column by providing questions and commenting on columns that have been written. The interaction is an exciting prospect!

EMAIL: [gclamb@ufl.edu](mailto:gclamb@ufl.edu)

Fig. 1: Front page of the AI Cowculator App

