



# Angus Advisor

▶ JUNE herd management tips

## Southern Great Plains

by **David Lalman**, Oklahoma State University, [dlalman@okstate.edu](mailto:dlalman@okstate.edu)

### Spring-calving herds

- ▶ Follow the vaccine program outlined for May, if not done at that time.
- ▶ Consult your veterinarian regarding the need to deworm young cows and calves. This investment will depend a great deal on the location of your operation, among other factors.
- ▶ Check for heat during early morning and late evening hours.
- ▶ 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. A conservative rule of thumb is to expose bulls to about 10 cows per year of age, and up to 30 open cows.

- ▶ For breeders who choose to creep-feed calves grazing native pastures, consider using a limit-fed, high-protein creep beginning around the end of June. Locally, we refer to this approach as the Oklahoma Silver program, where calves consume around 1 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. The conversion of feed to additional weight gain is drastically improved compared to a traditional creep-feeding program.

- ▶ Begin grazing Sudan grass and Sudan hybrids when 18- to 24-in. high.
- ▶ Federal and state estimated tax payments are due June 15.

## Midwest Region

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

June is a month to let Mother Nature take her course. Native grasses are usually at peak production; therefore, little supplementation is needed, with the exception of some minerals. Cool-season grasses are reaching maturity, making them less palatable and lower in nutrient quality.

### Cow-herd nutrition

- ▶ Provide plenty of clean, fresh water.
- ▶ Provide free-choice minerals to correct any mineral deficiencies or imbalances.
- ▶ Monitor grazing conditions and rotate pastures if possible and practical.
- ▶ Consider creep-feeding if it's cost-effective.

### Herd health

- ▶ Monitor and treat pinkeye cases. Provide fly control. Consider all options; price and efficiency will dictate the best options to use.
- ▶ Monitor and treat for foot rot.
- ▶ To reduce heat stress, avoid handling and transporting cattle during the hottest times of the day.

### Forage and pasture management

- ▶ Check and maintain summer water supplies.
- ▶ Place mineral feeders strategically to enhance grazing distribution.
- ▶ Effective herbicide application will improve range and pasture species profiles.
- ▶ Check water gaps after possible washouts.
- ▶ Harvest hay in a timely manner; think quality and quantity.

### Reproductive management

- ▶ If using AI, manage for maximum pregnancy rates. A common practice is to use estrus synchronization, inseminate once or twice with AI, and then turn out bulls for the balance of a 65-day breeding season. A 42-day AI season with estrus synchronization at the front end gives most females three chances to conceive by AI.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 116

### Guide to abbreviations and acronyms

To make the Angus Advisor more concise and consistent, we have used the following abbreviations or expressions:

\$Values	dollar value indexes
AI	artificial insemination
ADG	average daily gain
BCS	body condition score
BLV	bovine leukemia virus
BMP	best management practices
BQA	beef quality assurance
BRD	bovine respiratory disease
BRSV	bovine respiratory syncytial virus
brucellosis	Bang's disease
BSE	bovine spongiform encephalopathy
BVD	bovine viral diarrhea
Ca	calcium
EPD	expected progeny difference
FMD	foot-and-mouth disease
GnRH	gonadotropin-releasing hormone
IBR	infectious bovine rhinotracheitis
ID	identification
in.	inch
lb.	pound
lepto	leptospirosis
Mg	magnesium
MiG	management-intensive grazing
MLV	modified-live virus
N	nitrogen
P	phosphorus
PI	persistent infection
PI <sub>3</sub>	parainfluenza-3 virus
preg-check	pregnancy-check
Se	selenium
sq. ft.	square feet
TB	bovine tuberculosis
trich	trichomoniasis
Zn	zinc

### Fall-calving herds

- ▶ Wean fall-born calves in June or early July. A dam's milk production and calf performance decline dramatically during the month of July due to declining forage quality.
- ▶ At weaning, vaccinate calves according to your veterinarian's recommendations, deworm calves, weigh and condition score cows, and weigh calves. Transfer records for your whole herd to the American Angus Association.
- ▶ A high-protein supplementation program, such as the Oklahoma Gold program, can facilitate around a 2-lb. ADG in weaned calves grazing native pastures.

### General recommendations

- ▶ Continue fly and tick control programs for all cattle.
- ▶ In Oklahoma, more foot rot cases are observed in June than any other month. Develop a plan for treatment with your veterinarian, and acquire the necessary supplies.
- ▶ Plan to harvest native grass hay during early July to achieve near-optimum balance between quality and quantity of hay. Harvest Bermuda grass hay, or graze at about 30-day intervals when precipitation is abundant. All else being equal (maturity, precipitation, soil fertility, etc.), Bermuda grass harvested for hay in June has higher digestibility than Bermuda grass harvested in the hot summer months of July and August.

- ▶ Follow one of the recommended Beef Reproduction Task Force estrus synchronization protocols (listings available from your Extension service, genetic companies and semen suppliers).
- ▶ Watch bulls for libido, mounting and breeding function.
- ▶ Record breeding dates to determine calving dates.
- ▶ By imposing reproductive pressure (45-day breeding season) on yearling heifers, no late-calving 2-year-olds will result. This will increase lifetime productivity and profits.

### Genetic management

- ▶ Monitor herd performance. Then identify candidates to cull because of poor performance.

### General management

- ▶ Check equipment (sprayers, dust bags, oilers, haying equipment, etc.), and repair or replace as needed. Have spare parts on hand because downtime can make a big difference in hay quality.

## Western Region

by **Randy Perry**, *California State University, Fresno*, [randyp@csufresno.edu](mailto:randyp@csufresno.edu)

### Fall-calving herds

The main focus is to keep weaned calves healthy. Cows are on cruise control.

### Reproductive management

**Pregnancy-check.** Cows should be pregnancy-checked if not already done. Avoid retaining open cows even if they have been excellent producers, as typically the problem will recur. In addition, if very many open cows are held over, they steal the profits from the cows that are doing their job and weaning a calf. If the reason for cows being open is a bull or semen problem, then that is an entirely different situation.

### Nutritional management

**Body condition.** Monitor body condition of cows. The period from weaning until 50 days prior to the next calving is the least important from a nutritional standpoint. Therefore, if you want to let cows slip in terms of body condition that is OK provided body condition is re-deposited before the start of the next calving period.

**Heifer and bull development.** The developmental period from weaning until yearling time and beyond to the start of the breeding period is critical in terms of influencing the future productivity of both

bulls and heifers. Both sexes need to be developed at adequate rates so that differences in terms of genetic potential for growth can be exhibited. However, neither sex should be developed at extremely high rates since excessive fat deposition can hinder future reproductive performance and detrimentally affect foot and leg soundness. Our ADG targets in our program from weaning until yearling time are 1.5 lb.-1.75 lb. per day for heifers and 2.5 lb.-3.0 lb. per day for bulls.

### Health management

**Weaned calves.** Weaned calves should be treated to control any internal or external parasites. Heifer calves should be vaccinated for Bang's disease if not already done, and both bulls and heifers should be PI-BVD tested if that is part of your animal health management program. The disease of the highest concern in weaned calves is typically BRD, and the first 30 days after weaning is the most critical period.

**Pregnant cows.** If late-term abortions have been a problem in the past, consider booster vaccinations for the respiratory diseases and leptospirosis at pregnancy check time. Some producers may be vaccinating only at pregnancy check time; however, we prefer to vaccinate between calving and breeding and then revaccinate at weaning and pregnancy check for diseases that are a problem.

### Marketing

Selling bulls this fall may present some added challenges this year, as many commercial cows have been liquidated in California due to drought conditions during the last couple of winters. Therefore, it is extremely important that producers be very proactive in developing marketing plans to respond to those challenges.

In addition, as I have mentioned in previous columns, be extra selective in selecting bulls. With the high feed costs, it does not make any sense to develop average bulls that would be a challenge to market on good years let alone difficult years like this year could be. Castrating calves at weaning time results in a considerable amount of animal stress. However, some of the banders work very effectively on calves of this age and size.

### Spring-calving herds

The main focus areas will be breeding season and suckling calf health.

### Reproductive management

**Breeding season.** Depending on desired

calving dates, the AI breeding period should be close to being concluded. Monitor return heats for any patterns that may arise in terms of low conception rates with specific sires. If a problem exists with a specific sire, switch sires for return services. Also consider using GnRH injections with repeat inseminations. In addition, be sure that cleanup bulls have been semen- and trich-tested and are ready for use in terms of vaccinations and health, body condition, and foot and leg soundness.

### Nutritional management

**Mineral supplementation.** Be sure cows are receiving adequate levels of calcium, phosphorus and trace minerals that are deficient in your area. Minerals should be supplemented on a year-round basis, and the period from calving until conception is the most critical in terms of influencing reproductive performance.

**Energy balance.** Energy balance is the relationship between the amount of energy that is consumed vs. the amount that is used for various physiological functions such as maintenance, lactation and reproduction. It has a major effect on fertility and, thus, it is critical that cows are in a state of positive energy balance or gaining weight during the breeding season. The best way to determine energy balance is to monitor body condition. Regardless of whether cows are grazing irrigated pastures or native grasslands, June is normally a month when cows will be grazing pastures that are of sufficient quality to maintain cows in positive energy balance without any need for supplementation.

### Health management

**Treatment protocol.** Treatment protocols and products should be on hand for scours and pneumonia in suckling calves. You are well-advised to have first and second treatment options for both conditions and be sure that the protocols have been communicated to the appropriate personnel. Early summer is typically the time of year when we experience the most problems with pneumonia in young calves. Monitor calves closely and be quick and aggressive with treatment, as young calves will go downhill quickly.

### General management

Although most Angus breeders are not accustomed to this practice, this is a year when I think producers should consider castrating the bottom portion of their bull calves at a young age while they are suckling their mothers. Some producers are reluctant to do this because of the effect it has on

contemporary groups and performance records. In addition, in most purebred programs there is not a lot of profit in selling a \$600 weaned steer calf. However, with development costs at about \$3 per head per day, expenses add up quickly when bulls are being fed in a drylot situation. If bulls and heifers can be developed on pasture, then these expenses can be greatly reduced.

## Southeastern Region

by **Jane Parish**, *Mississippi State University*,  
jparish@ads.msstate.edu

### General recommendations

**Hurricane season.** Hurricane season on the U.S. Gulf and Atlantic coasts begins June 1. Prepare now for possible storms. Decide on evacuation routes in advance. Cattle trailers must be kept in good repair and safe for hauling livestock on short notice. Repair loose boards and tin on barns, pens and other farm structures near livestock. Make fencing repairs ahead of time so fencing is as strong as possible before a storm hits. Have emergency supplies on hand and in a secure location prior to a severe storm. Make sure cattle are current on all vaccinations.

Ensure that cattle are uniquely and permanently identified in case there are questions later about ownership of loose cattle. Pictures and video of livestock and other farm possessions taken prior to a hurricane may serve as useful records for insurance and disaster payment purposes after the storm has passed. Keep insurance up to date, and know the details of what is and what is not covered under each specific insurance policy.

**Nutritional management.** Stocker operators should continue to be flexible in determining the number of head to purchase and then stock pastures according to current and projected available forage amounts. Portable electric fencing is an excellent tool for implementing rotational-grazing, limit-grazing, strip-grazing or creep-grazing systems. These MiG systems are essential for stretching forage supplies and associated expense outlays to improve profit margins. Provide proper mineral supplementation and fresh water at all times, checking these supplies often.

### Control summer weeds and brush.

Allow remaining cool-season annual legumes to reseed. Manage pastures to rotationally graze young growth and harvest excess for hay. Overgrown pastures may need to be clipped. Target the production of high-quality hay by harvesting Bermuda grass hay at four- to five-week intervals,

weather permitting, to keep standing hay crops from becoming too mature and fibrous.

Fertilize hay fields between cuttings or on a regular interval to replace soil nutrients removed by hay production and improve hay yield and quality. Using soil tests can help optimize fertilizer investments. Record hay yields, forage-test each cutting and develop a hay storage program that will minimize storage losses and allow matching of forage test results with individual lots of hay for use in hay feeding and supplementation decisions. Continue to maintain hay-harvesting equipment.

**Health management.** During periods of hot weather and high humidity, observe cattle frequently and take precautions to prevent losses related to heat stress. Work cattle during cooler parts of the day instead of during the heat of the day. Try to work cattle early in the morning, before the temperature rises to uncomfortable levels. Limit the amount of time cattle must spend in a confined area with limited air movement. If cattle remain in a confined area for an extended period, provide them access to fresh, cool water. Very excitable cattle are particularly prone to heat stress. Practices that reduce cattle stress are beneficial during hot weather.

Make sure adequate shade is available for cattle in the summer months. Artificial shades should be constructed to be from 7- to 14-ft. high and covered with shade cloth to allow air movement. A minimum recommendation is to provide shade at 80% of the requirement. Minimum shade requirements are 18 sq. ft. per head for 400-lb. calves and 25 sq. ft. per head for 800-lb. stockers.

Horn and face fly season is likely now well under way. Effective fly-control programs need to be implemented as soon as the fly population starts to build. Order fly control products, and begin a control program in a timely manner. Consider the type of fly control chemicals (organophosphate, organochloride or pyrethroid) used last year. Rotate chemical classes. Remove insecticidal fly tags as they become ineffective. Watch for pinkeye problems during this time of year. Consider options for anaplasmosis control as biting insects become abundant. Internal parasite control practices are another component in a complete herd-health program developed in consultation with a veterinarian. BQA-consistent practices should be included in the health program. Vaccinate all calves more than 3 months old

for blackleg. Check with a veterinarian for state guidelines on calfhood brucellosis vaccination programs for heifers.

Many states offer disease monitoring and certification programs for beef cattle operations. Johne's disease and PI BVD programs are examples of animal health programs available in the region. Ask a local or state veterinarian about available state animal health programs.

Apply for a ranch premises ID number from the state veterinarian's office if not already done. This is a key component of disease and disaster preparedness for beef cattle operations throughout the region. Producers with valid premises IDs should consider use of official 840 ear tags for animal ID. Work to develop a ranch-level disease and disaster preparedness plan. Local Extension educators and veterinarians can assist in these planning efforts.

### Marketing and financial management.

Small- and large-scale producers alike may benefit from forming alliances with neighbors for group marketing of cattle and purchasing of bulk inputs. Continue good production and financial recordkeeping. With relatively high input price levels, enterprise budgeting and cash flow analyses are worthwhile exercises. The information from these budgets and reports can be used to make knowledgeable production and marketing decisions.

### Spring-calving herds

**Calving and calf management.** Calving should be completed, and calving records should be well-organized now. Review records of calving ease scores and dam body condition at calving. Calf registration expenses generally increase as calves age, so submit calving information early to breed associations to take advantage of lower fees. Consider marketing late-calving females that do not fit the chosen calving season.

**Breeding management.** Spot-check cows and heifers to observe returns to heat. Confining cattle to a limited grazing area makes this easier. Be ready to remove bulls after a 45- to 60-day breeding season. Remove bulls 283 days prior to the end of the desired calving season (before June 20 to end the Spring 2009 calving season in March). Keep bulls in small pasture traps with effective fences.

Obtain semen and other needed AI supplies and prepare facilities for breeding. Implement a proper heat-synchronization protocol if desired. AI cattle about 12 hours after observation of standing heat.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 118

For both natural service and AI systems, maintain good breeding records including heat detection, AI dates, dates bulls are turned in and out, ID of herd females and breeding groups, dates bred, returns to heat, and expected calving dates.

**Nutritional management.** Continue to monitor body condition of the breeding herd. Supplement the forage program if cows are thin or forage quantity or quality is limiting. Place cattle with the highest

nutritional needs (growing cattle, lactating first-calf heifers and cows) on the highest-quality grazing and hay. Initiate a feeding program to make sure bulls are in good condition (target BCS of 6) at the start of the next breeding season. Provide additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls.

### **Fall-calving herds**

**Breeding herd management.** Maintain bulls in small pasture traps with effective fences, and manage bulls to start the next breeding season in good condition. After weaning, cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness (eyes, udders, feet, legs and

teeth), health status and performance records. Develop plans for marketing cows based on market conditions and cow body condition. Manage market cows in keeping with BQA guidelines.

Select replacement heifers based on performance and other relevant factors. Establish permanent ID (tattoos or brands) for bred heifers that will remain in the herd. Plan a heifer development program based on nutritional resources and gain needed to reach target breeding weights.

**Calf preconditioning, weaning and marketing.** To precondition calves, vaccinate and revaccinate for respiratory and

other diseases based upon veterinary advice. Plan to wean calves at least 45 days before shipment off the ranch. Wean calves based on market and pasture conditions. Make sure fences surrounding weaned calf pastures are in good shape, and repair fences where needed. Implement weaning strategies, such as fenceline weaning, that minimize calf stress. Train calves to eat from a bunk and drink from a water trough during the preconditioning period. This is a good time to castrate and dehorn late calves if not done previously. Continue a high level of nutritional management for early-weaned calves.

Make sure registered cattle are weaned within age windows accepted by the American Angus Association. Record weaning weights and cow BCS as measures of animal and herd performance and nutritional status. Calculate and evaluate weaning percentage (calves weaned per cows exposed to breeding) and cow efficiency (calf weight per cow weight). Report weaning data on registered cattle to breed associations in a timely manner. Weaning performance reports should be used by both seedstock and commercial operations in determining which cattle to retain and which cattle to market.

Consider optimum marketing times and methods for fall-born calves. Run a breakeven analysis on retained ownership options, including stocker and finishing programs, and consider risk management strategies before finalizing marketing plans. Calf verification programs may be an attractive option for feeder calf marketing. Prepare for special feeder calf sales as appropriate. Breeders should share information on breed association-sponsored feeder-calf marketing programs with bull customers to help in marketing their calves.

