

2008 Cattle Industry Annual

Chart Your Course

Producers discuss production techniques, resource management and marketing opportunities at 2008 Cattlemen's College.®

by API staff

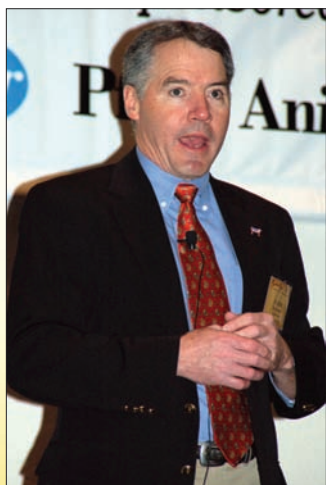
This year marked the 15th anniversary of the Cattlemen's College,® sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health. Conducted Wednesday, Feb. 6, during the 2008 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show in Reno, Nev., the daylong series of workshops was designed to help producers assess their operations and to identify ways to become more efficient while producing beef for today's consumer.

Topics for this year's educational event were scheduled within three tracks: marketing (MA), production (PR) and resource management (RM). Strategies gleaned from the college will help producers begin "Charting Their Course."

Angus Productions Inc. (API) provided online coverage of the Cattlemen's College at www.4cattlemen.com. Visit the Cattlemen's College page for summaries of the sessions, as well as PowerPoints, proceedings and audio where available.

MA101: Stair Steps to Profitability

Cattle-Fax Executive Vice President Randy Blach said the most often asked question he hears is, "Do we still have a cattle cycle?" Blach and fellow market analysts discussed some of the reasons why cattle markets have strayed from their usual patterns. Also



offered were suggestions for improving profitability under current and future industry conditions.

"I think it's safe to say the cattle cycle we've grown up with is on life support," Blach stated. "The present [government] farm policy, food policy and energy policy don't support the cattle cycle."

A couple of years ago, the

► **Left:** According to Cattle-Fax's Randy Blach, the cattle cycle as we have known it is on life support.

U.S. cattle tally was low enough that analysts expected producers to start retaining more females to rebuild the national herd. It hasn't happened, Blach said, due to several factors. Weather was a significant reason with drought affecting large portions of cow country, creating shortages of grazed and harvested forage. Land values have climbed higher, with grazing land values in many areas increasing more than 100% during recent years.

Ethanol production, encouraged by government mandates and production subsidies, has shifted corn utilization from feed to fuel. Increasing amounts of land formerly in pasture or hay production is now being planted to corn. Additionally, some grazing lands are being claimed by alternative uses such as recreation, wind farms and urban sprawl.

It all sets the stage for high grain and forage prices, and until some of these things change, Blach said, the cattle cycle won't work. To remain profitable, he added, producers will have to find a way to cope. According to Colorado State University (CSU) animal scientist and Cattle-Fax consultant Tom Field, some producers are doing just that. He cited results of a survey indicating the most profitable producers excel at controlling costs and maximizing the prices received for their cattle.

Blach predicted higher grain prices are here to stay. Consequently, the feeder cattle market will favor heavier cattle that won't have to be fed as long as lighter calves. And that will be unfavorable for many producers selling calves at weaning. He advised producers to consider ways to own their calves longer to add weight and value.

Blach also recommended considering practices by which producers can differentiate their cattle from average or commodity cattle. The stair steps to profitability he noted



► Producers who will be able to cope with the current situation are those who can maximize price while minimizing production cost, said CSU's Tom Field, who also addressed attendees of the "Stair Steps to Profitability" Cattlemen's College session.



Convention & Trade Show

included creating a herd performance history, through collection of feedlot and carcass data, to attract buyers.

Blach called preconditioning a proven practice, noting how preconditioned weaned calves brought a \$5- to \$8-per-hundredweight premium to bawling calves. Additional steps for adding value to cattle include source- and age-verification and participation in process-verified programs (PVPs) or "natural" programs with potential for added premiums.

— Article & photos by Troy Smith

PR104: Feeding Trends With Ethanol Products

A Cattlemen's College presentation regarding availability and use of feed products or byproducts of the ethanol industry featured comments from James Mintert, Kansas State University (K-State) agricultural economist, and Greg Lardy, North Dakota State University (NDSU) beef cattle specialist.



► Continued expansion of the ethanol industry is not about economics; rather it is about government-mandated fuel standards, said K-State's James Mintert.

Mintert said the availability of ethanol byproducts has grown with expanding ethanol production, and recent federal legislation expanding the Renewable Fuels Standard assures continued growth of the ethanol industry. Mintert called the argument for increasing ethanol use to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil more feel-good rhetoric than reality.

"The driver for the ethanol industry is not economics. Demand is driven by government policy, and that has huge implications for the livestock industry over the next few years," Mintert said.

Mintert said use of corn for fuel will soon rival its use for feed. Projections for 2008 indicate 30% of corn stocks will be devoted to ethanol production. Any glitches in 2008 corn production are likely to cause grain prices to spike "off the chart." Mintert says more frequent price spikes should be expected along with higher average prices in the future.

"That means cattle producers should pay more attention to corn price risk," Mintert warned.

Lardy said the future will bring greater availability and more use of byproducts by all cattle production segments. He said the majority of byproduct feeds are likely to result from increased production through the dry-milling process. Through that process, starch is removed for making ethanol, with remaining contents concentrated in the byproducts, which are high in protein and energy. The most commonly used forms are dried and wet distillers' grains (DGs).

"Generally," Lardy said, "distillers' grains are fed at 10% to

15% of the diet [on a dry-matter (DM) basis] as a source of supplemental protein. Fed at higher levels, they're probably being used as an energy source. Economics will determine the proper level, but the maximum recommended level is 40% of the diet."

However, Lardy noted that feeding byproducts at high levels usually results in dietary nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) levels in excess of requirements. Byproducts may also be high in sulfur (S), resulting from addition of sulfuric acid to enhance fermentation during processing. The sulfur content of the diet and water source should not exceed a total of 0.4% of the diet.

Sulfur toxicity can result in polioencephalomalacia in cattle.

Lardy said the physical nature of byproducts, particularly wet distillers' grains, creates transportation, handling and storage challenges. Nutrient content also may be variable. Offering a warning for the future, Lardy explained how ethanol processors are exploring processes for extracting fat from distillers' grains for production of biodiesel.

"That will change the nutrient content, lowering energy values of dried and wet distillers' grains," he said. "But it may allow the use of higher levels in some rations."

— Article & photos by Troy Smith



► All phases of the beef production will likely see increased use of ethanol byproducts, said Greg Lardy, NDSU.

MA201: Creating Value With Your Cattle

In a departure from the customary Cattlemen's College format, the "Creating Value with Your Cattle" session provided an opportunity for audience members to submit questions to producers with experience in marketing cattle through programs designed to capture premiums for added value.

Panel participants included Mike John, a Missouri producer and past president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). John's operation includes a commercial cow-calf herd and calf-growing enterprise, as well as retained ownership cattle.

Also included was Bob Harrell Jr., who manages his family's California ranch, with commercial and registered cow herds and a feedlot. Harrell also serves on the management team for

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Country Natural Beef (CNB), a rancher-owned beef-marketing cooperative.

Rounding out the panel was Texan Leslie Callahan, who operates a feeder cattle order-buying and trading company.

Larry Corah, a staffer for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), served as moderator.

In response to a question asking what specific information contributes to added value, Harrell said it depends on the producer's target market. However, in most markets, Harrell said, basic information would include genetic background and health protocol, plus age and source verification.

John explained that age verification is a requirement for any marketing program that serves export markets. It requires a birth date for each calf, or at least the birth date of the oldest calf in a group, with third-party verification. Harrell added that meeting this requirement qualifies cattle for up to a \$25-per head premium in some programs. In his experience, Callahan said, volume matters. Buyers may want large numbers of cattle that meet specific requirements for age and other criteria, which may challenge smaller producers.

All panelists cited the importance of a documented health history. John said all calves qualifying for the MFA program are subject to a vaccination protocol and must be weaned 45 days, at home, and fed according to a standardized nutrition program. Callahan said he will not bid on cattle that have not received preconditioning vaccinations.

The panelists favored testing all herds for cattle persistently infected with bovine viral diarrhea (PI BVD). Harrell and John called it almost mandatory for seedstock operations and advisable for commercial operations.

"Some feedyards want PI-tested calves and yearlings, but they're not always willing to pay extra for them," Callahan said. "I



► Panelists (from left) Mike John, Bob Harrell and Leslie Callahan answered producers' questions about how to create value for your cattle.

think it will become an even bigger issue in the future. I'd like to see everyone do it, and then handle calves testing positive so they don't go into someone else's herd."

The panelists also agreed that "natural" programs hold much potential for continued growth. John cited the lack of standardized protocols among current programs but predicted improvement in time.

"Right or wrong, some people have the perception that [growth] hormones are bad and antibiotics are bad. So we give them what they want," Harrell said. "It costs more to feed cattle [without implants or antibiotics], so the beef has to sell at a higher price to consumers."

All three producers agreed on the important role genetics play in adding value to cattle. Proven genetics can enhance marketing of calves marketed at weaning or any time afterward, but not all of the added value is captured unless the producer retains ownership all the way to harvest.

— Article & photo by Troy Smith

PR102: Control, Manage, Treat What We Can't Prevent

Each year thousands of dollars are spent by cattlemen trying to prevent or treat their livestock. Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) is top of producers' minds when it comes to disease. Because of its potential financial effect, BRD has received more attention than any other disease. It is a concern to the entire industry — from cow-calf producer to feedlot manager.

During Wednesday's Cattlemen's College, Mike Apley of K-State and Mitch Blanding and Glenn Rogers, both of Pfizer Animal Health, discussed ways to reduce and treat BRD.

The best way to control BRD is to start at the ranch, Rogers said. Although he admitted BRD cases are usually minimal at the ranch, cow-calf producers can do things to ensure calves receive adequate levels of colostrum at birth, that cow health is maintained and that proper vaccination programs are implemented.

Rogers pointed out that sometimes the answers to preventing disease aren't so obvious. "Things like using a low-birth-weight [bull] and bulls with low calving ease EPDs (expected progeny differences) can mean lower stress on calves at birth, and that can affect health later down the road."

Blanding said combating BRD involves the "BRD Triad" — prevention, control and therapy. Blanding suggested that if producers make the right choices with animal health and animal receiving programs early, it can mean cattle will be more responsive to treatment later on.

All of these points are important in keeping cattle healthy and profit margins high, but Apley said that without a system to document their actions, their efforts are useless. Case definitions and treatment protocols are two things Apley called necessary for the success of any animal health program.

Case definitions define or characterize the symptoms that will determine whether that animal needs to be treated. Also, keeping track of when the animal is treated and with what product is another important component to success. "Too many times we put that animal in the chute and say, 'Hmm, I think we should use this,'" he said.



► Without a system to document management to keep cattle healthy, cattlemen's efforts are useless, said K-State's Mike Apley during Wednesday morning's cattlemen's college.

"I have seen places floundering with their therapy; part of the reason is because they couldn't agree on protocols. There would be huge discrepancies on whether treatment took place on weekends or weekdays and what products were to be used," Apley said, adding that consistent protocol implementation is the only way you can measure whether your program is really working.

BRD is treatable and preventable. However, as these three individuals commented, it takes a program to see successful treatment in your herd.

— Article & photo by Crystal Young

PR103: Develop a Disease Control Plan for Your Ranch

Cattlemen's College attendees heard from veterinary experts on calf scours and bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) during the PR103



► UNL's Dave Smith equated calf scours to dominos: Once the first one falls they all tumble down. However, he shared, there are three ways to prevent this domino effect.

session titled, "Developing a Disease Control Plan for Your Ranch." David Smith of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln outlined the Sandhills Calving System and how it can help reduce instances of calf scours. Dan Givens from Auburn University spoke about detecting and preventing instances of persistently infected (PI) BVD cases. The academics were followed by Montana producer Tom Hougen, who talked about his personal experience with BVD.

Sandhills Calving System. Smith equated calf scours to dominos: Once the

first one falls they all tumble down. However, there are three ways to prevent this domino effect. First, producers could eliminate the agent, which would keep the first domino from falling. The

second option is to increase the host's resistance, making them less likely to fall. Or producers could prevent effective contact with the disease. This would have the same effect as spreading the dominos out; when one falls it couldn't hit another.

"The first option is not possible," Smith said. "The agents of scours, including bacteria, viruses, protozoa and fungi, are present in every herd."

So it becomes a battle between exposure and immunity. Smith says there is a window of vulnerability from 1 to 3 weeks of age in which calves are very susceptible to scours. This is also the same age when they can transmit the disease to other calves.

The second option of increasing resistance can be monitored by ensuring calves drink sufficient colostrum after birth.

However, prevention of spreading also must be explored. Smith found that there was a greater risk of calf scours as the calving season progressed. This makes sense because the potential for exposure is multiplied, especially by the presence of older calves. A new calving system concept emerged from this problem.

"Let's have eight one-week calving seasons instead of one eight-week calving season," Smith said. The system he described is the Sandhills Calving System. In this program the first group of females that calve are left in the first pasture, while the remaining bred females are moved on to the next pasture. This pattern continues on a weekly basis, with pairs being left as the heavies move on to a new pasture each week. This limits potential for exposure because all calves in a pasture are born within a week of one another.

"This is the number one thing we've done over the years that has benefited us economically," said Terry Clements, a Nebraska rancher who implemented the Sandhills system. Clements and others have found that the calving system dramatically reduces death loss from scours and minimizes the need for antibiotic use.

Dealing with persistent infection. Givens said the good news about BVD is that, unlike calf scours, its agents aren't naturally present in the environment. This makes the goal for most farms to become completely BVD-free very reasonable.

Calves can become persistently infected in utero during the first five months of gestation. By following these tips, Givens said instances of BVD-PI cattle can be eliminated from an operation.

The first step is to test to identify and remove PI animals.

"Testing tells you if you need to practice biosecurity or biocontainment," Givens said. Biocontainment is preventing a disease on the farm from spreading to other individuals; whereas, biosecurity is preventing the disease from even entering the farm.

Givens' second recommendation is producers should not let cattle lacking BVD testing onto their farms, especially within the first five months of the breeding season.

"The greatest danger is movement and mixing of cattle," Givens said.

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To go along with this, Givens said to avoid cattle coming into contact with cattle from outside herds off of the farm. If this is not possible, he recommended a 21-day quarantine for nonpregnant animals when they return to the farm. If a female in the first five months of her pregnancy comes in contact with outside cattle, Givens recommended isolation until the calf is born and tested.

Givens' fourth recommendation was preventing people wearing boots and coveralls that may have been around other herds from coming in contact with the cattle.

"You can kill BVD with dishwashing detergent," Givens said. This is all it would take to remove the pathogen from clothes. But without cleaning, contamination from another herd is a real possibility.

Fifth, Givens told ranchers they shouldn't allow dirty or contaminated equipment or vehicles from other herds to come in contact with their cattle. This especially applies to ranchers who share equipment with other producers.

Givens' sixth recommendation was fly control and his seventh was to limit wildlife contact, especially deer.



► Dan Givens from Auburn University spoke about detecting and preventing instances of persistently infected (PI) BVD cases.

Firsthand experience. Tom Hougen, owner of the Hougen Ranch in Melstone, Mont., experienced BVD firsthand.

Starting in fall 2002, Hougen was experiencing sick calves and unexplained abortions. In January 2003 he happened to attend a producer meeting on BVD.

"Then one day after treating four or five heifer calves it was like something hit me in the head," Hougen said of his fall 2003 realization. "One of those calves looked like the pictures of BVD calves I'd seen."

Hougen called his veterinarian out to take samples. As he suspected, many of the calves tested positive for PI BVD. A feeder he sold steers to tested and found similar results.

"I'm assuming we lost at least 20 calves that fall between the two of us," Hougen said.

Up to that point, Hougen hadn't been vaccinating for BVD. Going into 2004, he set up a modified-live virus (MLV) vaccination program. He also put together a plan to PI test all the calves born on the ranch. Of the 1,320 calves tested, 39 calves tested positive. Between branding in mid-May and weaning in early November, 20 of the PI calves died. Hougen isolated the 19 remaining PI calves, 14 of which died due to adverse weather or other stressful situations during the winter.

By following a strict vaccination-and-testing protocol, Hougen said he is fairly certain he no longer has any PI BVD cattle on his ranch. However, the experience did leave behind some useful lessons he shares with other producers.

"We need to be aware as ranchers that there is that critical time, and we need to know where our cows are in that time," Hougen said. "If you suspect you have a problem, whole-herd test," he recommends. If these test results come back PI positive Hougen says that there is no question what needs to be done.

"Once a PI, always a PI," he said. "So you just need to get rid of them."

— Article & photos by Chelsea Good



► By following a strict vaccination-and-testing protocol, rancher Tom Hougen said he is fairly certain he no longer has any PI BVD cattle on his ranch.

RM 103: Estate planning

The fear of all fears ... death. Are you ready for it? More importantly, do you have all your affairs in order? Is your will up-to-date? Is your family going to have a heaping load of expenses after you die? Attendees of Wednesday's Cattlemen's College learned some easy tips to ensure financial security for their families after departing this world.

"Two things will happen soon," said Wythe Willey of the organization Cattlemen Advocating Through Litigation Fund (CATL Fund). "Soon a huge transfer of property from older to younger generations will take place as WWII veterans and Baby Boomers die. And, soon there will be a large about of money from younger to older generations due to Social Security tax."

Willey said this doesn't have to become a major problem. The easiest way to ensure financial safety is to plan ahead, know what you've got and know where you want it to go.

"It takes a lot of effort. Plans should be as simple as possible; they should be tailored to you and your situation," Willey said. "If you read a line in your will and don't understand it, it's time to rewrite it and make it easy."

For agricultural families it can be a somewhat harder task. The speakers suggested you make special accommodations for your

children who stay home and help maintain the farm. It is on rare occasion that children who move to the city actually want to go back to the farm after the parents die. So make sure that you don't create a sibling argument over what to do with the land.



► Joe Guild of CATL Fund provided session attendees with a checklist of estate-planning basics to discuss with an attorney and things to compile before the first attorney visit.

for you and your dealings is the ability to call upon a professional.”

Joe Guild of CATL Fund provided session attendees with a checklist of the basics to discuss with an attorney and things to compile before the first attorney visit:

- Do your homework and engage an attorney who specializes in estate planning. Satisfied testimonials from friends and neighbors are usually the best recommendations.
- Inventory your assets and liabilities.
- The tools in the tool box:
 - Will
 - Power of attorney (finances and management)
 - Durable power of attorney for health care
 - Corporation or partnership
 - Life insurance
 - Conservation easements
 - Gifting plans
 - IRAs (individual retirement accounts)
 - Trusts
 - Charitable foundations
 - Charitable giving
 - Joint tenancy with right of survivorship
 - Discuss the current status of the estate and gift tax, commonly called the death tax
 - College funds
- Get other advisors, if needed.
 - Accountant
 - Appraiser
 - Realtor
 - Stockbroker

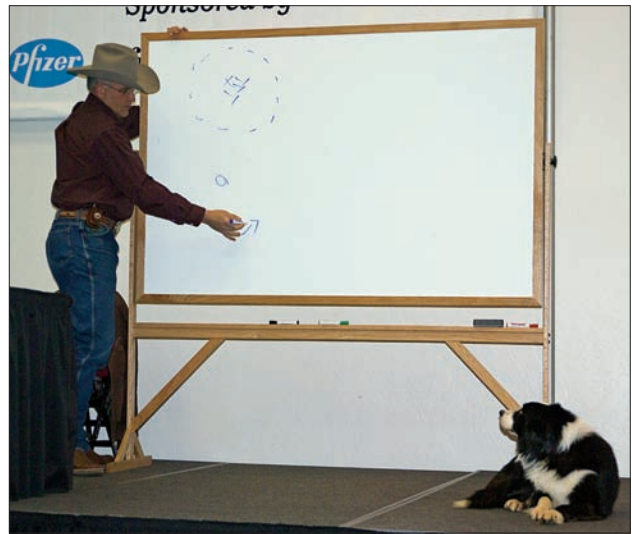
In 2009, the maximum tax rate for the death tax will be 45% with a \$3.5 million exclusion. The Tax Reconciliation Act of 2001 will eliminate the death tax for 2010. But in 2011, a sunset clause

in the act will reset the death tax to 2001 levels. So, in 2011 the maximum tax rate will be 55% with a \$1-million exclusion.

“If you're lucky enough to die in 2010, your family won't have an estate tax,” Guild joked. “It is important to ask the questions: ‘How much is my estate worth?’ and ‘Am I going to be exempt?’”

Many things were suggested to help ensure minimal expenses after death. However, the best solution for you and your family is to assess all assets and liabilities and get a lawyer to help develop a plan that suits your needs. Remember, you don't know how long you have before you die, but you don't know how long you have to live either — or how much money it will take to do it. So be sure to save for a healthy retirement, as well as saving for your after-death expenses.

— Article & photo by Tosha Powell



PR201: Low-Stress Cattle Handling with Border Collies

Near the middle of his presentation, Elvin Kopp showed a video clip of his dogs rounding up and herding his cattle in while he sat on his horse. After a brief pause he asked, “How much less stress can you have? All I did was sit on my horse and watch.”

Kopp, a cattlemen from Alberta, Canada, explained the most important part of training a dog is to look at things from their point of view.

“Good or bad, all dogs have a pecking order,” Kopp said. “The first step is eye contact. This is why it's very important to make the dog look you in the eye when you talk. The second step is verbal, and the final is physical. The closer you can come to a 51%:49% dominant/obedient relationship, the better off you will be.”

To reduce stress for both producers and cattle, Kopp stated how important it is for the dog to understand and work flight zones.

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"I teach dogs to work that flight zone," Kopp said. "To do this I teach when a cow gives, the dog needs to give a little, too. The power of eyes is incredible." This involves the dog looking in and out when it isn't trying to drive anywhere.

To get his dogs to do exactly what he wants them to, Kopp starts working with them at a very early age. He begins when they are just off their mother's milk and needing other forms of nourishment. When it's time to feed, water or otherwise take care of them, he walks into their pen. As young as the pups are, they are very curious and come over to investigate. As they do, Kopp says a simple command. They then associate this with food or another necessity.

"Once you do this for a while, they will develop a repetition," Kopp said. "They know where their food, exercise and everything come from, and they need you. Those first eight to 10 months are very important."

A dog's herding instinct comes from the alpha wolf. "Now how does the 'alpha' get the others to help it?" Kopp asked. "It lets the others eat from the kill. This is why it is so important to re-establish that pecking order." At the same time, Kopp recommended being careful to not take the spirit out of the dog.

The best correction command is a simple growl, Kopp said. The growl says to the dogs, "Hey, I'm talking to you in your language." It gets their attention, and it's easy as long as they understand that concept."

Another step Kopp advised anyone training a dog to think about is how would you do it on foot?

"Try to teach that to your dog," Kopp said. "But it's always important to teach your dog to win. Never send it into a situation that you think it can lose. That would teach the dog that it's OK to lose, and then it will give up early. If there's ever a situation, go in and help your dog. Teach it to win, never lose, win, win, win."

— Article & photo by Mathew Elliott

PR101: Beef Briefs: The Bottom Line on Reproduction

Four speakers came together for the Cattlemen's College session "Beef Briefs: The Bottom Line on Reproduction." With expertise from four states, the speakers took turns and also worked together to put on the session about reproduction.

Fixed-time artificial insemination (FTAI) in heifers and cows. Dave Patterson, University of Missouri (MU), focused on synchronization strategies for heifers and cows. Starting with heifers, Patterson asked the question, how do long-term and short-term CIDR®-based products compare in heifers?

"Until recently, there have been no comprehensive studies in estrous cycling and pre/peripubertal beef heifers studying the long-term protocol for (CIDR Select) and short-term CIDR-based protocols (Co-Synch + CIDR)," he said. Patterson explained the results of a recently completed study comparing



► MU's Dave Patterson provided an overview of some fixed-time AI protocols and their success in heifers and cows.

the short-term and long-term CIDR protocols.

The short-term CIDR protocol consisted of administering gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH), then inserting a CIDR. On Day 7 the CIDRs were pulled and the heifers received a prostaglandin (PG) injection. They were AI-bred 54 hours later.

The CIDR Select protocol began with insertion of the CIDR for 14 days. Nine days later, heifers were administered GnRH, followed seven days later with a PG injection. Seventy-two hours later, the heifers were AI-bred.

Results showed pregnancy rates to the long-term CIDR protocol proved to be approximately 15% higher in both cycling and pre/peripubertal heifers.

Patterson then shared a study on cows that analyzed pregnancy rates following synchronization with Co-Synch + CIDR and timed AI fixed at 55 hours or 66 hours after the PG injection. Among cows exhibiting estrus, the study reported a 65% pregnancy rate to FTAI at 54 hours and an 81% pregnancy rate to FTAI at 66 hours. Among females that did not show estrus, FTAI at 54 hours resulted in a 54% pregnancy rate and FTAI at 66 hours resulted in a 58% pregnancy rate.

Patterson concluded that significantly more cows exhibited estrus prior to FTAI when performed at 66 hours vs. 54 hours, and cows that exhibited estrus prior to FTAI had higher fixed-time AI pregnancy rates than cows that did not exhibit estrus.

Consider body condition. Cliff Lamb from the University of Florida reminded producers to consider body condition's role in reproductive performance.



► Cliff Lamb (left) and Rick Funston talked about nutrition's role and the role of body condition in reproductive performance.



Studying the effects of body conditioning score (BCS), Lamb compared a BCS 7 and a BCS 5 female, then reduced the feed intake. The females then reached a BCS 3. Wanting to know how each would recover, it was shown there were some nutritional memories. Females formerly a BCS 7 had to recover to a BCS of 6 to start cycling again, while those that started at a BCS 5 didn't have to recover as much to begin cycling.

Nutrition before birth. Reproduction is the single most important factor for profitable beef production," stressed Rick Funston, University of Nebraska.

With that stated, Funston wanted to know if nutrition before birth affected the animals. He shared a study in which March-calving cows were split into two groups — one with calves weaned in August and one with calves weaned in November. In each of those groups there were subgroups, with those that were fed protein supplements and those not fed supplements.

After three years, the supplemented group had higher birth weights, weaning weights, adjusted weights and pregnancy-check rates. Providing supplementation before birth did have an effect on the animal.

Gender-sorted semen. Sandy Johnson of Kansas State

University finished the session by providing the audience an update on gender-sorted semen. Johnson began by explaining a few of the drawbacks to the technology.

"Sexed-semen will not be from the highest demand bulls," Johnson said. "With 63% of the semen cells wasted in the sorting process, it costing \$30 over unsorted semen and fertility at only 70% to 90% under excellent conditions, semen will not be used from high-demand bulls. But technology will improve down the road."

— Article & photos by Mathew Elliott



► Sandy Johnson provided an update on gender-sorted semen.



► A daylong series of workshops, Cattlemen's College was designed to help producers assess their operations and to identify ways to become more efficient while producing beef for today's consumer.

For additional summaries of Cattlemen's College sessions visit www.4cattlemen.com, API's event coverage site, which is made available through sponsorship by Salt Creek Ranch of Memphis, Texas.

