

# Angus Advisor

July Beef Cow Herd Management Tips

## Upper Midwest Region

by Harlan Ritchie, Extension Beef Specialist  
Michigan State University

1. If calves are 4 months old, vaccinate replacement heifers for brucellosis, depending on state, and all calves for clostridial diseases (blackleg, etc.) if these diseases are a problem in your area.

2. If pinkeye is apt to be a problem, consider the following preventive and therapeutic measures.

### Prevention:

- Make sure your herd has been receiving adequate vitamin A.
- Vaccinate against IBR virus.
- Consider pinkeye vaccination.
- Control face flies.
- Clip grazed-over pastures so tall, coarse grasses do not irritate eyes.
- Provide ample shade.

### Therapy:

- Administer an intramuscular injection of long-acting oxytetracycline when symptoms are first noticed.
  - Inject 1 cc antibiotic into the eyelid.
  - Shut out irritating sunlight by gluing a patch over the eye with back-tag cement or locking the animal in dark quarters.
3. If too many females return to heat, take a good look at your bull; your cow's nutrition; and reproductive disorders such as IBR, leptospirosis, vibriosis, trichomoniasis, haemophilus, cystic ovaries or uterine infection. Consult your veterinarian.
4. If you creep feed on a free-choice basis, simply use a corn-oats mixture. Exotic ingredients are expensive and not necessary. Small-framed calves should get mostly oats so they don't get fat. Larger-framed calves can take more corn. A typical conversion rate is about 9 pounds (lb.) creep per 1 lb. extra calf gain. Avoid creeping heifer calves — research has shown it may lower their future milk production.
5. Recent research has shown that salt-limited creep feeding for 30-90 days prior

to weaning is more cost-effective than unlimited (free-choice) feeding.

- Conversion rates range from 3-7 lb. creep per 1 lb. extra calf gain.
- Intake must be limited to no more than 3 lb. creep per calf per day to achieve these conversion rates; 2 lb. per day is ideal.
- Start calves on less than 2% plain white salt in the creep mix. As consumption increases, elevate salt level to 8%-12% so as to limit intake.

6. Remove bulls after 90 days of breeding, preferably 60 days.

7. If it looks like pastures will run out, get ready to provide emergency feed. Options could include leasing your neighbor's idle pasture or planting a summer annual such as Sudan grass or brassicas (rape, turnips, etc.) for fall grazing.

## Southern Region

by R.S. Sand, Extension Beef Specialist  
University of Florida

- Control weeds in summer pastures.
- Apply nitrogen to warm-season pastures if needed.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for army worms and mole crickets. Treat if necessary.
- Wean calves and cull cow herd.
- Watch for evidence of foot rot, and treat.
- Consider preconditioning calves before sale. Include vaccination for shipping fever and IBR at least three weeks before sale.
- Check dust bags.
- Update market information and plans.
- Revaccinate calves at weaning for blackleg.

## Rocky Mountain West Region

by Doug Hixon, Extension Beef Specialist  
University of Wyoming

1. Branding should be completed by now except for possible late-born calves. See April and May tips on vaccines and their administration to calves and cows.

2. Once we get out on green grass, mineral requirements are probably being met by Mother Nature unless you have a specific known deficiency that must be supplied. Otherwise, a source of salt, either in loose or block form, offered free-choice, may be the only thing you need. By this time the possibility of grass tetany is probably past, and magnesium oxide in the salt mix is probably not needed. (See May tips.)

3. The breeding season should be underway at this time. Continuously monitor breeding pastures for possible injury to bulls, and make sure you are not seeing an unusual number of females returning to estrus after initial service. First-service conception should be 65%-70%, whether breeding by natural service or artificial insemination (AI). Limit breeding season with yearling bulls to 45-60 days.

4. Develop an effective fly-control program. Fly tags can be used. If resistance has become a problem, switch type of tags. Pyrethroids and organophosphates are your two choices. Best results will be seen if you don't put tags on before flies reach an economic threshold. Tags should offer 150 days of protection. Other fly-control options might include spraying, oilers or dust bags.

5. If pinkeye is normally a problem, you might check with your veterinarian about using a pinkeye vaccine.

6. Water is our most important nutrient, and the warm months in the arid or semi-arid West emphasize its importance. Make sure a clean, fresh supply of water is available at all times.

7. Repair handling facilities and other associated equipment and facilities as needed through the slower days of summer.

8. Forage quality should be kept in mind as producers harvest their hay crop. Don't let forages get too mature prior to harvest in an attempt to increase tonnage. If quality, as it is associated with protein level, is sufficient, you may avoid having to purchase expensive supplements in order to meet the cow's nutrient requirements.

## Midwest Region

by Twig Marston, Extension Beef Specialist  
Kansas State University

July is usually a month to let Mother Nature take her course. Native grasses are approaching peak production; therefore, little supplementation is needed, with the exception of some minerals.

### Herd nutrition

- Provide plenty of clean, fresh water.
- Provide free-choice mineral to correct any mineral deficiencies or imbalances.
- Monitor grazing conditions, and rotate pastures if possible and practical.
- Consider early weaning if drought conditions develop and persist.
- If ammoniated wheat straw is planned for winter needs, follow these rules:
  1. The best time is immediately after harvest, prior to weather deterioration.
  2. The ammoniation process is temperature-sensitive — fastest during hot days.
  3. Apply 3% anhydrous ammonia (60 lb./ton of straw).
  4. Do not ammoniate wheat hay or any other intermediate or high-quality forage. Production of imidazole can cause cattle hyperactivity and death.
  5. The process doubles crude protein content, enhances intake and is cost-effective.

### Herd health

- Provide fly control. Consider all options. Price and efficiency will dictate the best option(s) to use.
- Monitor and treat pinkeye.
- Monitor and treat foot rot.
- Avoid handling and transporting cattle during the hottest part of the day — reduce heat stress.
- Vaccinate replacement heifers for brucellosis if within proper age range (4-10 months).

### Forage/pasture management

- Check and maintain summer water supplies.
- Place mineral feeders strategically to enhance grazing distribution.
- Check water gaps after possible washouts.
- Harvest hay in a timely manner; think quality and quantity.
- Harvest Sudan and Sudan hybrids for hay in the boot stage — normally 3-4 feet tall. It is a good idea to do a routine nitrate test on a field before harvesting hay.
- Provide ample shade.

### Reproductive management

- If using AI, do not expect all females to conceive. A common practice is to breed twice with AI, then turn out clean-up bulls for the balance of a 65-day breeding season. A 42-day AI season with estrous synchronization at the front end gives most females three chances to conceive.

- Watch bulls for libido, mounting and breeding function.
- Record cow breeding dates to determine calving dates.
- If the herd is divided into small groups, rotate bulls during the breeding season.
- 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.
- If females are returning to heat after observed being bred, suspect:
  - Early embryonic death

- AI technician/semen quality
- Bull fertility/function
- Inadequate body condition score (BCS)
- Insufficient days postcalving
- Reproductive disorders — IBR, vibrio, leptospirosis, cystic ovaries, uterine infections, etc.

### General management

- Monitor herd performance, and identify candidates to cull because of poor performance. 