



# Angus Advisor

► JULY herd management tips

## 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
ADG	average daily gain
AI	artificial insemination
AIMS	Angus Information Management Software
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
CHAPS	Cow Herd Analysis and Performance System
CP	crude protein
cwt.	hundredweight
DM	dry matter
EPD	expected progeny difference
ET	embryo transfer
FMD	foot-and-mouth disease
GnRH	gonadotropin-releasing hormone
IBR	infectious bovine rhinotracheitis
ID	identification
IM	intramuscular
in.	inch
lb.	pound
LCT	lower critical temperature
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
SPA	Standardized Performance Analysis
TB	bovine tuberculosis
TDN	total digestible nutrients
THI	temperature-humidity index
trich	trichomoniasis
Zn	zinc

## Midwest Region

by **Twig Marston**, University of Nebraska, [tmarston2@unl.edu](mailto:tmarston2@unl.edu)

July and August are months when forages are maturing, weaning time is approaching and weather dictates several key management decisions.

### Breeding season

- Limit the breeding season by removing bulls after 60 days with the cows and 45 days with the heifers. Cull cows that have not conceived after three or four services by a fertile bull and/or a well-run AI program. These steps will contribute to a more uniform calf crop, making winter nutritional management easier and increasing the success rate of next year's breeding season.
- Keep accurate and complete breeding records. Store records in safe places, and make sure they are organized and legible.

### Herd nutrition

- Provide ample amounts of clean, fresh drinking water.
- If drought conditions set in or persist, July can be a major decision month. Creep-feeding will provide the least amount of drought relief; early weaning and culling cows will have more dramatic effects on stretching forage supplies. *Remember:* Forage supplementation programs are aimed at increasing animal performance and utilizing existing forage supplies; forage substitution programs are aimed at reducing forage consumption and maintaining or increasing animal performance.
- Prepurchase bulk-rate winter supplements prior to seasonal price increases.

### Herd health

- If pinkeye is likely to be a problem, consider the following preventive and therapeutic measures:
  - **Prevention:** Make sure the herd is receiving adequate dietary vitamins and trace minerals. Consider using a medicated trace-mineral package and vaccinating for pinkeye and IBR. Control face flies. Clip pastures that have tall, coarse grasses that may irritate eyes, and provide ample shade.

**Therapy:** Administer an IM injection of long-acting oxytetracycline when symptoms are first noticed. Shut out irritating sunlight by patching eyes, providing shade, etc. Control flies. Consult your veterinarian.

- Consider revaccinating show animals for respiratory diseases. Vaccinate suckling calves for IBR, BVD, PI<sub>3</sub>, BRSV and possibly pasteurella at least three weeks prior to weaning. Revaccinate all calves for blackleg. Vaccinate replacement heifers (4-10 months of age) for brucellosis.
- Monitor and treat foot rot.

### Forage/pasture management

- Observe pasture weed problems to aid in planning the control methods needed next spring.
- Monitor grazing conditions and rotate pastures if possible and practical. Enhance grazing distribution by placing the minerals away from water sources. If pastures won't last all summer, get ready to provide emergency feeds. Start supplemental feeding before pastures are gone to extend grazing.
- For stocker cattle and replacement heifers, consider supplementing mature grasses with an acceptable level of degradable intake protein and ionophore (feed additive).
- Harvest and store forages properly. Minimize waste by reducing spoilage. Sample harvested forages, and have them analyzed for nitrate and nutrient composition.
- Plan your winter nutritional program through pasture and forage management. This can be the start of stockpiling forage supplies for fall and winter grazing.

### General management

- Avoid unnecessary heat stress. Don't handle or transport cattle during the heat of the day.
- Repair, replace and improve facilities needed for fall processing.
- Order supplies, vaccines, tags and other products needed at weaning time.
- Consider earlier-than-normal weaning if drought conditions develop and persist, range conditions limit milk production, cows lose body condition, or facilities and management are available to handle lightweight calves. First-calf heifers have the most to gain. Resist the temptation to feed the cows without weaning; feeding early-weaned calves is more efficient.
- Look for unsound cows that need to be culled from the herd.
- Prepare to have your calf crop weighed and analyzed through your state, regional or breed performance-testing program.

## Southern Great Plains

by **David Lalman**, Oklahoma State University,  
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### Spring-calving herds

Breeding bulls should be removed from the cow herd after 60-90 days.

If you are in a region where May and June precipitation was abundant, you may need to consult your veterinarian regarding the potential value of deworming nursing calves during mid- to late summer.

Response to the anthelmintic generally increases in wet years, although response will vary substantially depending on other factors, such as grazing intensity and previous parasite management.

### Fall-calving herds

Wean fall-born calves before the middle of July to allow cows time to regain body condition before calving again.

At weaning, vaccinate calves according to your veterinarian's recommendations, deworm calves, preg-check cows and heifers, weigh and estimate condition scores of cows, and weigh calves. Transfer records for your whole herd to the American Angus Association.

A small package of high-protein supplement, such as recommended in the Oklahoma Gold program, can facilitate around a 2-lb. ADG on weaned heifers and bull calves grazing abundant native pastures during July, August and September. A strategic deworming program and the inclusion of a feed additive such as Bovatec®, Rumensin® or chlortetracycline are important features in this program.

### General recommendations

As of this writing, soil moisture conditions were variable in the region, with moderate drought to recent flooding. Thus far, hay harvesting conditions have been near ideal and a considerable amount of cool-season perennial and wheat, rye and ryegrass hay has been harvested with average to high quality. Producers should test lots (fields or meadows) of hay for nutritive value. This information leads to informed decisions regarding the organization and planning for a cost-effective winter-feeding program and hay marketing. A list of forage-testing laboratories certified through the National Forage Testing Association is available at [www.foragetesting.org](http://www.foragetesting.org).

With higher feed and fertilizer costs, it is imperative producers be diligent about putting up high-quality hay. Harvest hay in earlier stages of maturity to reduce or eliminate the need for supplementation. Later-harvested hay and rain-damaged hay should be fed to cattle with low nutrient

requirements (such as dry cows during the middle trimester of pregnancy).

Another simple principle that will help keep production costs down is to use moderate to low stocking rates. This minimizes the need for supplementation as cattle can selectively graze a higher-quality diet, and it minimizes the need to feed hay during winter.

Remove intensive early stocking cattle from native grass pastures by July 10.

Continue fly and tick control programs for all cattle. The incidence of pinkeye is particularly high during late summer. Fly control is one key management factor in minimizing the spread of this disease.

Harvest Sudan grass and Sudan hybrids for hay in the boot stage, which generally corresponds to 3 ft. to 4 ft. in height. A routine nitrate test on forage before harvesting may be advisable, particularly if soil moisture has been scarce prior to harvest.

Treat cattle for grubs after heel fly activity ceases and before larvae reach the back, generally between July 1 and Oct. 1.

## Western Region

by **Randy Perry**, California State University,  
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### General management

**Pasture irrigation and thistle control.** If irrigated pastures are part of your forage resources, timely irrigation during hot summer months is critical in terms of impacting forage production. Mid-summer is also an excellent time to try to control thistle or other invasive weeds in pastures.

**Pinkeye prevention.** Mid-summer is the time of the year when problems with pinkeye can become quite prevalent, and treatments can become time-consuming. The incidence of pinkeye can be reduced by clipping tall, mature grasses; controlling flies with dust bags, pour-ons and/or fly tags; and treating problems quickly and aggressively.

Antibiotics such as the long-acting oxytetracyclines are very effective in treating pinkeye. A more inexpensive treatment option, but one that is more difficult to administer, is to treat the infected eye with an injection of 2 cc under the membrane that covers the upper portion of the eyeball with a mixture of 90% penicillin and 10% dexamethasone. Many times, a grass seed or sticker is the reason that the eye became infected. If that is the case, the white spot that develops on the eye will not be in the center of the eye. Most people prefer to apply patches to infected eyes, and those can be made very easily from old, worn-out jeans. Leave the bottom portion of the patch unglued so the eye can drain.

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**Fall-calving herds**

Cows are on cruise control.

**Reproductive management**

**Vaccinations.** If any precalving vaccinations, such as a scour vaccine, are going to be used, now is the time to decide on the specific product and get products on hand.

**Nutritional management**

**Mineral supplementation.** Be sure that cows are receiving adequate levels of calcium, phosphorus and trace minerals that are deficient in your area.

**Body condition.** The target level of body condition at calving is a minimum BCS of 5.0 for mature cows and 6.0 for 2-year-old heifers on a scale of 1 to 9 (see more information online at [www.cowbcs.info](http://www.cowbcs.info)).

**Protein and energy supplementation.** Mid-summer is typically a time of the year when fall-calving cows will maintain themselves adequately with no need for either energy or protein supplementation.

**Heifer development.** The developmental period from weaning until breeding time is

critical in terms of influencing the future productivity of females. Females should be developed to reach approximately 65% of their projected mature weight at the start of the breeding period.

**Spring-calving herds**

Focus on breeding season and suckling calf health.

**Reproductive management**

**Breeding season.** Depending on desired calving dates, the AI breeding period should be concluded. Monitor return heats and clean-up bull performance for any problems that may arise.

**Nutritional management**

**Mineral supplementation.** Be sure that cows are receiving adequate levels of calcium, phosphorus and trace minerals that are deficient in your area.

**Energy balance.** Energy balance has a major impact on fertility and thus it is critical that cows are in a state of positive energy balance or gaining weight during the breeding season.

**Health management**

**Treatment protocols.** Treatment protocols and products should be on hand for scours and pneumonia in suckling calves.

**Southeastern Region**

by **Lawton Stewart**, University of Georgia, [lawtons@uga.edu](mailto:lawtons@uga.edu)

**Dealing with the drought: Strategies to reduce feed cost**

Hopefully, by the time you read this, drought isn't an issue. Unfortunately, as of May 15, many of the Southeastern states are facing moderate to extreme drought. Drought has not been a stranger during the past few years, but there are still some management plans to consider to minimize the effects of drought on the farm's finances. It is important to maintain the nutrient requirements of the herd through a drought so that animal performance is not compromised in the current and upcoming seasons. This can be accomplished by (1) supplementing to meet requirements and/or (2) adjusting management to decrease requirements (i.e., early weaning and culling).

**Culling**

The most often-used method for reducing feed needs during a drought is to sell a portion of the herd. Consider pregnancy-testing and culling cows that are open, old and low producers, and those that calve late in the calving period. This will provide more feed for younger, more productive cows.

**Weaning early calves**

Most cattle producers in Georgia market calves at weaning time. Weaning weights are almost always negatively affected during a drought situation. Producers can either (1) sell calves at younger ages; (2) wean and feed calves separately from cows; or (3) supplement the cow herd with stored or purchased feeds. Dry cows in early to mid-pregnancy are at their lowest in terms of nutritional requirements. These cows can be maintained on poor-quality forages with little or no supplemental feed.

**Rations for early-weaned calves**

Pasture or hay without any supplemental feed will not work for early-weaned calves. Calves will not gain enough weight to justify early weaning. Calves that are early weaned can be fed a typical high-grain feedlot ration; however, with current feed prices, this is likely not an option. Rations for calves that are early-weaned should contain 70% or greater TDN and 16%-18% protein. The protein level can be lowered to 13%-14% when calves weigh 450 pounds (lb.). Also include minerals, a vitamin pack, and possibly an ionophore (such as Rumensin® or Bovatec®) to reduce digestive disorders and improve feed efficiency.

## **Creep-feeding**

If early weaning is not an option, then creep-feeding is an excellent alternative. The most profitable time to creep-feed is during a drought. A mixture of 75:25 grain and cottonseed meal can improve gains by 0.5 to 1.0 lb. per day. Another widely used creep-feeding option is 100% soybean hulls or a mixture of 50:50 soybean hulls and corn gluten feed.

## **Supplements for cows**

If pasture is depleted after the cow herd is culled, then supplemental feeding will be necessary. Hay is the most often-used option, but certainly not the only option. Grains and byproduct feeds are often cheaper per unit of energy than hay. This is especially true during a drought situation when there is a lot of competition for any available hay. Several research studies have shown that limit-feeding high-grain rations based on grains or byproducts will successfully maintain a dry cow. The grain mix (14% protein) is usually fed at 1.0%-1.5% body weight with at least 4 lb. of hay or a roughage such as cottonseed hulls to maintain normal rumen function. A lactating cow will require about 30% more feed than a dry cow.

Another option is to feed a grain/roughage mix free-choice. The rations generally contain 50% roughage, such as peanut hulls, cottonseed hulls or hay. The grain portion (50% of diet) should contain at least 15% protein for lactating cows and 12% for dry cows. A few examples for the grain mix are 85:15 corn and soybean meal, 50:50 corn gluten feed and soybean hulls, or 60:40 corn and whole cottonseed. Many byproduct feeds and grains can yield acceptable performance.

## **Grouping cows**

It is important to group cows by nutrient needs, such as production status (dry vs. lactating), age and body condition. Grouping cows can avoid over- or underfeeding a particular group, which will reduce supplemental feed costs. Pregnant cows may lose body condition when grazing drought-stressed pasture. Therefore, body condition score cows at least 60 days prior to calving and adjust ration to ensure cows are at least a BCS of 5 at calving time.

Utilizing these strategies may help maintain performance through drought conditions. Although all practices may not be applicable to a specific operation, any have potential to help. For further information, contact your local extension office.

