

# BEEF TIPS



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Department of Animal Sciences and Industry

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## Upcoming Events

### November 20

NW Kansas Cattlemen's  
College  
VFW Hall  
Osborne, Kansas  
for more information,  
contact Brian Creager,  
785-346-2521  
see page 3 for more  
events

## NOW IS THE TIME FOR SPRING-CALVING COW/CALF PRODUCERS TO . . .

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

### Breeding Season

If heifers/cows are still showing signs of heat, look for problems such as:

- Inadequate bull power.
- Nutritional stress.
- Inadequate body condition.
- Reproductive disorders including: IBR, Vibrio, Lepto, cystic ovaries, uterine infections, etc.
- Cull cows that are not conceiving after three or four services by a fertile bull.
- Remove bulls after 90 days of service (preferably 60 days with cows, 45 days with heifers).

### Cowherd Nutrition

- Provide ample amounts of clean, fresh drinking water.
- Consider limited-intake creep feeding if:
  - Drought conditions develop and persist.
  - Range conditions limit milk production.
  - Creep feed/grain prices are relatively low.
  - Value of gain allows for economic benefits.

Tips for successful limited-intake creep feeding:

- Limit duration to last 30 to 75 days before weaning.
- Limit intake to less than 2 pounds/head/day.
- Use an ionophore or other feed additive to maximize efficiency.
- Protein level should be equal to or greater than 16%.

- High salt levels may help limit intake, but can be tough on feeders.
- Prepurchase bulk rate winter supplementation needs prior to seasonal price increases.

### Herd Health

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

#### Preventive:

- Make sure herd is receiving adequate vitamins and trace mineral in their diet.
- Consider using a medicated trace mineral package.
- Consider vaccination for pinkeye and IBR.
- Control face flies.
- Clip pastures that have tall, coarse grasses that may irritate eyes.
- Provide ample shade.

#### Therapy:

- Administer an intramuscular injection of long-acting oxytetracycline when symptoms are first noticed.
- Shut out irritating sunlight by patching eyes, shade, etc.
- Control flies.
- Consult your veterinarian.
- Consider revaccinating for the respiratory diseases any animals that will be taken to livestock shows.
- Vaccinate suckling calves for IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV, and possibly pasteurella at least 3 weeks prior to weaning.

- Revaccinate all calves for blackleg.
- Vaccinate replacement heifers for brucellosis (4 to 10 months of age).
- Monitor and treat footrot.

### Forage/Pasture Management

- Enhance grazing distribution with mineral mixture placement away from water sources.
- Observe pasture weed problems to aid in planning control methods needed next spring.
- Monitor grazing conditions and rotate pastures if possible and/or practical.
- If pastures will run out in late summer, get ready to provide emergency feeds. Start supplemental feeding before pastures are gone to extend grazing.
- Harvest and store forages properly. Minimize waste by reducing spoilage.
- Sample harvested forages and have them analyzed for nitrate and nutrient composition.
- Plan winter nutritional program through pasture and forage management.
- For stocker cattle and replacement heifers, supplement maturing grasses with an acceptable degradable intake protein/ionophore (feed additive) type supplement.

### Reproductive Management

- Remove bulls to consolidate calving season.
- Pregnancy check and age pregnancies 60 days after the end of the breeding season. Cull cows that are short-bred.

*By Twig Marston,  
Extension Cow/Calf  
Management Specialist*

These methods contribute to a more uniform calf crop, make winter nutritional management easier and increases the success rate of next year's breeding season.

### General Management

- Avoid unnecessary heat stress—Don't handle and (or) truck 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 are losing body condition.
- 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.
- Document cost of production by participating in Standardized Performance Analysis (SPA) programs.
- Plan your marketing program, including private treaty, consignment sales, test stations, production sales, etc.

## WEANING CALVES

Producers faced with lower than expected prices for this year's calf crop may be exploring options to marketing at weaning. Low grain prices may make retained ownership more attractive, enabling cattlemen to take advantage of low cost gains and/or more attractive future markets. However, cattlemen should consider whether adequate facilities and expertise are available to handle weaned calves. A good preweaning or "preconditioning" program can go a long way toward easing fears about retaining calves in a growing program.

It is estimated that respiratory disease at weaning costs the cattle industry from 250 million to 1 billion dollars annually. University data indicates that each animal treated for respiratory disease represents a loss of approximately \$90 in medicine, death loss, and reduced performance. Reduction of those losses is an important goal for every cow-calf producer that weans his or her own calves in any retained ownership program. Preparation prior to weaning calves by having a health management program in place is the most important factor in minimizing those losses. A health management program should be focused on three areas: the facilities, the cattle, and the producer.

The facilities for weaning calves need not be elaborate, but they should be clean, of adequate size, and have adequate bunk and drinking space. All old manure should be removed to help reduce exposure to diseases spread through the manure. Weaned calves should have from 100 to 200 square feet of pen space per head, with at least 18 inches of bunk space. The bunks should be cleaned before new calves arrive and should be maintained so that old feed or moisture does not build up and cause feed refusal. The waterers are one of the most important management items and yet are often overlooked. Weaned calves may not be accustomed to drinking from an automatic waterer or even from a tank. Waterers may need to be placed along the perimeter of the corral or have an overflow hose continually running so that the sound of water will attract calves to the source. Waterers should be cleaned regularly, the automatic waterers as often as once per week and larger tanks from once every two weeks to a month. In addition, the squeeze chute and alleyways should be checked for needed repair and maintenance. Producers should ensure that pen maintenance is done before weaning so mud will not become a problem during the growing period.

Once the facilities have been prepared the attention can be shifted to the calves. All weaned calves should be considered as being at risk of developing respiratory disease ("shipping fever"), even those calves that are "home raised." Weaning-age calves have lost practically all the immunity they received through colostrum at birth, and are being moved from an environment of relatively low exposure to disease causing agents to one of high exposure potential. During this period, they also experience a change in diet, from one of milk and grass to one of harvested forages and grain. The stress imposed by weaning, management, and dietary change increases susceptibility to disease. By recognizing those factors that contribute to disease risk, the astute producer plans ahead to reduce the likelihood of disease problems at weaning.

All health programs must begin with a sound nutritional program. The calf will usually be dependent on the producer to provide the proper diet. Calves will often not consume enough of any feed to meet basic requirements during the period right after weaning, especially if they have not been accustomed to feed prior to weaning. The rations offered to calves must be nutrient dense, palatable and include adequate vitamins and minerals for proper immune function. Many times rations will be formulated to include ionophores or antibiotics to reduce the incidence of specific diseases during the weaning period.

The health program should also include a vaccination schedule. The schedule should indicate when to vaccinate, what products to use, and the route of administration. Vaccinating calves while they are still nursing the cow is desirable as this gives the calf sufficient time to build immunity to disease causing agents prior to the exposure and stress associated with weaning. Our recommendations for preweaning vaccination include a 4-way viral respiratory vaccine containing IBR (red nose), BVD (bovine virus diarrhea), PI3 (parainfluenza virus), and BRSV (bovine respiratory syncytial virus). Most modified live vaccines are not labeled for nursing calves and you should consult your veterinarian for his or her specific recommendations. Including a 7-way Clostridial vaccine at this time is also recommended to control blackleg and related diseases. Calves are usually revaccinated for the viral diseases at weaning if a killed product is used or if BRSV is a problem. Initial vaccination at weaning is a less desirable and effective alternative. In this situation, calves may be revaccinated 7 to 14 days later. The 7-way Clostridial product can be given either at weaning or at revaccination.

Most weaned calves will have a level of internal parasites that can economically impact their performance and add to disease-causing stress. It is economically justified to treat calves with an effective parasiticide preweaning or at weaning processing. Dewormer selection should be based on efficacy, ease of administration, cost, and lack of

adverse side effects. Some products are also effective against external parasites. Coccidiosis is an intestinal infection that can cause bloody diarrhea and severe economic losses if not controlled. Calves seem particularly susceptible during the early part of the weaning period. Effective products for prevention are available as either feed or water additives.

Pre-Weaning	At-Weaning
1. 4-way viral respiratory (killed).	1. 4-way viral respiratory (modified live).
Revaccinate at weaning	Revaccinate in 7 days
4-way viral respiratory (modified live)	4-way viral respiratory (modified live)
2. 7-way Clostridial	2. 4-way Clostridial
3. Dewormer	3. Dewormer
4. Implant (optional)	
5. Coccidiosis prevention	

Even with the best programs and preparation, some disease is likely to occur in the postweaning period. The producer should be prepared to recognize and treat sick calves promptly. A specific treatment schedule prepared with your veterinarian's assistance should be used to treat the common illnesses that occur. This schedule should include the drug of choice for the disease, the dosage, route of administration and adequate drug withdrawal times. Remember that prompt diagnosis and treatment helps ensure animals respond quickly with the least amount of permanent performance-robbing damage occurring.

The most important part of any health management program is the producer who is responsible for its implementation. Other activities such as grain harvest and fall field work can divert attention from the calves during this critical period. It is important that individual(s) be responsible for the health and daily care of the calves. The people given these responsibilities should be trained in all aspects of the health management program and records should be kept so the program can be continually evaluated and developing problems discovered. A simple system that records the specific products used for vaccination, identifies treated cattle, why they were treated and what product was used for treatment will provide important information. The specifics of the program may be evaluated daily, monthly, or from year to year.

Retaining calves at weaning may offer the producer opportunities to increase profitability. However, the weaning period can be associated with increased economic losses from disease. Commitment to a good health management program and preparation should reduce the potential for losses to occur. The health management program should encompass adequate attention to nutrition, facilities, animal health, and those individuals responsible for implementing the program.

*G.L. Stokka DVM, MS  
T.R. Falkner D.V.M.*

### Upcoming Events *Continued*

#### **November 21**

Emporia Receiving Cattle Seminar  
American Legion Hall  
Emporia, Kansas  
for more information,  
contact David Pace,  
316-341-3220

#### **November 21**

NE Kansas  
Cattlemen's Seminar  
Onaga High School  
Onaga, Kansas  
for more information,  
contact Doug Musick,  
785-457-3319

## Kansas Feedlot Performance and Feed Cost Summary\*

Gerry Kuhl, Extension Feedlot Specialist, Kansas State University

### August 1998 Closeout Information\*\*

Sex/No.	Final Weight	Avg. Days on Feed	Avg. Daily Gain	Feed/Gain (Dry Basis)	% Death Loss	Avg. Cost of Gain/Cwt.	Projected Cost of Sept.-Placed Cattle
Steers: 24,459	1,247	135 (116-156)	3.40 (3.15-3.69)	6.09 (5.70-6.34)	.95	\$53.19 (49.58-55.45)	\$45.54 (43.00-50.25)
Heifers: 22,531	1,115	144 (115-174)	3.01 (2.66-3.41)	6.36 (5.84-6.85)	1.26	\$55.78 (51.69-59.06)	\$47.33 (45.00-52.50)

Current Feed Inventory Costs: Sept. 15 Avg. Prices	Range	No. Yards
Corn	\$ 2.16/bu	7
Ground Alfalfa Hay	\$70.56/ton	7

\*Appreciation is expressed to these Kansas Feed-yards: Brookover Feed Yard, Brookover Ranch Feed Yards, Decatur County Feed Yard, Fairleigh Feed Yards, Kearny County Feeders, Pawnee Valley Feeders, and Supreme Cattle Feeders.

\*\*Closeout figures are the means of individual feedyard monthly averages and include feed, yardage, processing, medication, death loss and usually sold FOB the feedlot with a 4% pencil shrink. Interest charges are not normally included.



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