

# 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
DM	dry matter
EPD	expected progeny difference
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*

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.
- 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 pasteurized 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.

(Continued on page 2)

## Southeastern Region

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

### General recommendations

Stock pastures according to current and projected available forage amounts. Implement management-intensive grazing systems for efficient forage use. Provide proper mineral supplementation and fresh water at all times. Water requirements increase by 2.5 times as the temperature rises from 50° to 90° F.

Clip excess forage or harvest for hay. Control summer weeds. Watch Dallis grass pastures for ergot contamination, clipping seedheads as needed. Avoid grazing heavily nitrogen-fertilized, warm-season annual pastures during drought to prevent nitrate poisoning.

Harvest Bermuda grass hay at four- to five-week intervals for optimum forage quality. Use soil test results to optimize fertilizer investments. Record hay yields, forage-test each cutting, and store hay to minimize losses. Maintain forage harvesting equipment.

Take precautions to prevent losses related to heat stress. Provide adequate shade for cattle. Handle cattle early in the morning before the temperature rises. Limit the time cattle spend confined with limited air movement. Reduce cattle stress during hot weather.

Keep a close eye on fly numbers. Remove insecticidal fly tags as they become ineffective, and implement additional fly control methods. Rotate fly control chemical classes. Employ internal parasite, pinkeye and anaplasmosis control measures.

Implement BQA-consistent practices. Ask a veterinarian about state animal health monitoring and certification programs. Develop a ranch-level disease and disaster preparedness plan including premises ID.

Form alliances for group marketing and bulk purchasing. Continue good production and financial recordkeeping. Use enterprise budgets and cash flow analyses to make knowledgeable production and marketing decisions.

### Spring-calving herds

Remove bulls from breeding pastures. Market bulls that will not be used again. Review breeding records, including heat detection records, AI dates, dates bulls are turned in and out, herd female and breeding group ID, dates bred, returns to heat, and expected calving dates. Pregnancy-check herd females about 60 days after the breeding season ends. Market open and late-calving females.

Supplement the forage program if cows are thin or forage quantity or quality is limiting. Place cattle with the highest

nutritional needs on the highest-quality forages. Creep-feed calves if marketing plans and pasture conditions justify.

### Fall-calving herds

After weaning, cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness, health and performance. Select replacement heifers and permanently identify them. Plan a heifer development program based on nutritional resources and gains needed to reach target breeding weights. Make sure bulls are in good condition to begin the next breeding season. Provide additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls.

Wean calves in areas with good fences at least 45 days before shipment off the ranch and based on market and pasture conditions. Minimize calf stress at weaning. Wean cattle within accepted age windows. Use weaning performance results in marketing decisions.

Vaccinate and booster calves based upon veterinary advice. Train calves to eat from a bunk and drink from a water trough. Continue a high level of nutritional management for early-weaned calves.

Consider optimum calf marketing times and methods. Run breakevens on stockering and finishing. Consider risk management strategies. Help bull customers market their calves.

## Western Region

by **Randy Perry**, *California State University, Fresno*,  
randyp@csufresno.edu

For this month's column, the focus is strategic planning and goal setting. The purebred beef business and agriculture in general have always been very cyclical in nature. Feed, fuel and fertilizer costs drastically affected production costs last year. Although these costs have softened slightly, dealing with the aftermath of the genetic defect situation is going to affect many operations significantly this year.

When you combine these factors with what our nation's leaders are doing and proposing to do to our economy, I believe we are going to be challenged to survive in agriculture like never before. Who knows how it is going to play out? Whatever happens, I think it is important for purebred beef producers to evaluate their production and marketing plans and try to position themselves to survive, but also to be successful in the future.

In my opinion, the number of commercial cow-calf producers in this country is going to continue to decline. The average age of this group of producers just keeps climbing, and very few young people are getting involved in this segment of the business. Somebody is going to have to manage these cows, and I hope it will continue to be — for the most part —

independent, family-owned operations.

We continue to see more beef producers transitioning into recreation and tourism in order to improve the profitability of their operations. In addition, in our state we are also seeing more cow-calf producers adding or switching to stocker or grass operations. I am concerned about the potential effect of these changes on the main source of income for most purebred operations in the West — which is the sale of bulls to commercial producers.

Some regions of the country are experiencing drought, which further reduces the demand for commercial bulls. Other regions of the country are rebuilding after periods of drought, which creates opportunities for increased bull sales. Regardless of whether or not you are experiencing good pasture conditions in your area of the country, feed costs have driven development costs on bulls to extremely high levels, and these costs have a major influence on the profitability of selling commercial bulls.

Are there still going to be opportunities for profit when selling commercial bulls? Yes — I think those opportunities still exist. However, I think those opportunities will be less plentiful and fruitful. In addition, I believe a larger portion of commercial bull sales will continue to be captured by larger producers who can offer other benefits as part of their marketing programs.

Therefore, it is important for smaller purebred breeders to critically evaluate their goals in terms of production and marketing plans. Some producers may decide to switch the focus of their operation to the production of show cattle, like many producers have done in the eastern United States for years. In those operations, the majority of the bull calves are castrated and the top end of the heifer and steer calves are marketed and sold as show prospects.

I have no idea which type of operation will be most profitable in the future. However, I think it is important for each producer to sit down and critically evaluate their goals and business plan. If changes need to be made, now is the time to make them. If you decide to change the focus of your operation from selling commercial bulls to show cattle, then many aspects of your operation — such as sire selection, advertising, and the focus of your marketing plan — need to change.

Although the answers are difficult, the questions are important. Strategic planning and setting long-term and short-term goals have always been important for any type of business or operation. Because of the challenges that lie ahead for this industry, any time that we can spend focusing on these aspects of our operations will serve us well.

(Continued on page 3)

## Southern Great Plains

by David Lalman, Oklahoma State University,  
dlalman@okstate.edu

### 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,<sup>®</sup> Rumensin<sup>®</sup> or chlortetracycline are important features in this program.

### General recommendations

As of this writing, soil moisture conditions were extremely variable throughout the Southern Great Plains, with flooding in southern Kansas and northern Oklahoma and sustained drought in southern Texas. A lot of wheat hay will be and has been harvested due to frost damage. However, wet weather has delayed hay harvest or damaged the cut crop in the field. Producers would be well-advised to test wheat hay for nutritive value this year. A list of forage-testing laboratories certified through the National Forage Testing Association is available at [www.foragetesting.org](http://www.foragetesting.org).

Similarly, many producers in Oklahoma and southern Kansas have an abundance of low-quality hay left over from last year. Plan to feed this hay as early as possible in the coming year, and/or to cattle with low nutrient requirements (such as dry cows during the middle trimester of pregnancy).

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.

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.

