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February 11, 2020

*****MARK YOUR CALENDARS! WE WILL BE HAVING OUR BANG'S
VACCINATION CLINIC ON MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021.**
PLEASE CHECK YOUR MAIL FOR MORE INFO TO COME!!

General Cattle Tips:

Some days in February may be better spent indoors than out!

- Start repairing haying equipment for spring harvest.
- Tax season is approaching so start gathering those sales and purchase receipts for your accountant.

Don't let your tax form be the only financial information for your operation. Completing a cow-calf enterprise budget each year can help benchmark where money is being spent and how much. Visit with your county Extension agent to determine where costs of production may be out-of-line and how changes in management can improve your bottom line.

Tips for Spring Calving Herds:

- Be sure to collect calving records. Records include body condition of the cow at calving, calving difficulty score, calf gender, and calf birth weight.
- Remember to tag calves - records are more valuable when they can be linked back to cow and calf pairs.
- Make sure adjustments to winter feeding are made for nursing cows. Lactating cows require a 10-11% crude protein and 58-60% TDN diet. See [MP391](#).
- Switch to a high magnesium mineral to help prevent grass tetany when calving cows are grazing spring pastures. See [Fact Sheet 3035](#).

- Grass tetany occurs most commonly in the months of February, March, and April.
 - Normally occurs when cool season forages begin to regrow.
 - Grass tetany is due to an abnormally low level of magnesium in the cow's body.
 - Older lactating cows are more susceptible.
 - See [Fact Sheet 3084](#)
- Watch closely for calf scours
 - Calf scours can be a very costly problem.
 - Calves suffering from scours can become critically ill in a short period of time.
 - See [Fact Sheet 3083](#)

Tips for Fall Calving Herds:

- Castrate male calves at birth or at 3 months processing.
- Bull calves are usually discounted \$5 per hundred weight at sales.
- Bull calves castrated by stocker producers following salebarn purchase are 2.5 times more likely to become sick than a steer calf purchased through a salebarn market.
- Castration early in life is easier on the calf.
- Research with calves castrated at birth shows they have grown at similar rates of weight gain compared to their intact male pasture mates.

Forage/Grazing Management Tips:

Grazing Management

- Reduce hay waste by feeding in rings, strip feeding under temporary electric wire, or only unrolling enough for a day or less.
- Strip graze any remaining stockpiled forage to extend grazing days.
- Limit-grazing of winter annuals will improve animal nutrition, extend hay supplies, and allow use of limited high-quality forage.

- Start rotationally grazing at greenup. Don't let cows chase green grass over the entire farm since that will delay significant growth and sustained grazing even longer.

Forage Management

- Implement a winter annual weed control program.
- Apply burn-down herbicide to dormant bermudagrass.

-This is very important for keeping bermudagrass pastures clean of broadleaf weeds. Herbicide of choice is glyphosate.

-Use rates according to the label; do not skimp with rates, the bermudagrass will not be affected if it is still dormant but weeds will be killed reliably.

- Reapply herbicide if needed. Bermudagrass should not be mowed/grazed for 60 days after application, so time herbicide application accordingly.

- Soil sampling of pastures.
 - If you were not able to test soil fertility in fall, do so now to avoid fertility shortfalls once temperatures rise and forage begins to grow at a faster rate. Soil samples can be obtained easily and testing them is free of charge.
- To promote earlier greenup and grazing of fescue and winter annuals, fertilize specific pastures in February for grazing in March. Other pastures can be fertilized in March for spring. But don't apply N fertilizer where clovers are overseeded or where good clover stands exist.

If you have any questions give me a call.

Allison Howell

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