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Friday, November 8th
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11:00am - 16th Annual Bull Sale
1:00pm - 16th Annual Commercial Female Sale
4:00pm - 300+ Head - Commercial Replacement Bred Heifers & 2nd Calf Cows
6:00pm - BBQ dinner

Saturday, November 9th
8:00am - Breakfast & viewing
10:00am - 16th Annual Bull Sale
11:00am - 42nd Annual Fall Stock Sale

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Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course marks 65 years of education, networking and helping ranchers improve their herds. Three days of education, demonstrations and discussion highlight this annual event that assists beef producers.

By Martha Hollida Garrett

Internships open doors to careers. A look at how important internships are for young people seeking career help and how they can provide a path for a first job/career.

By Merriedee Wells

Taking care of them all. A visit with Dr. Amy Jo Pilmer and how she has built a veterinarian practice for large and small animals in the Texas Hill Country.

By Caitlin Richards

Taking control of prickly pear. Tips and information to assist landowners in the battle against prickly pear.

By Caitlin Richards

The elephant in the room. A candid look at the information needed for a meeting with your ag lender and why it’s critical to have records for reviewing.

By Kindra Gordon

Use your eyes and records to cull. Deciding which cows to cull is an important part of a ranch’s bottom line and why the decision needs to be made on visual appraisal and production records.

By Michelle Arnold

Getting cows to breed back quickly. A discussion on how to get those cows bred, even against the elements.

By Travis Meteer

Remember your BQA Ps and Qs. A review of top Beef Quality Assurance practices.

By Glenn Selk

Feedyard Technician Program for high schoolers earns TEA certification. Texas Education Agency has added the Feedyard Technician Program for high school students to its certified Career and Technical Education list.

By Kay Ledbetter

Early continues to be the best time to castrate bull calves. A look at why castrating bull calves very early in their lives is best for calf and producer.

By Mark Hilton

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Special Edition 2019-2020 | Page 13
Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course marks 65 years of education, networking and helping ranchers improve their beef herds

By Martha Hollida Garrett

It’s been an annual event for 65 years, and the tradition continues Aug. 5-7 in College Station, Texas. The Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course (TAM BCSC) will once again deliver information on a wide range of topics related to beef cattle production and challenges, while the general session will address the trending political topic of the Green New Deal.

Held in the center of the Texas A&M University campus, the event is the largest of its kind in the nation and draws over 2,000 beef producers from several states and abroad. It is hosted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas A&M Department of Animal Science.

The general session, held the afternoon of the first day, will definitely be national in scope, as Frank Mitloehner, professor with the University of California-Davis department of animal science, will discuss proposals of the Green New Deal and how, as beef producers, we should visit with consumers about the proposed legislation. He will provide an overview of the actual effects of the beef industry on the environment and dispel the myths associated with our industry concerning carbon footprint. Mitloehner recently addressed the Senate Committee Hearing on Climate Change and Agriculture and he is at the forefront of providing factual information to defend the beef industry.

Mike Jarzombek, vice-president of meat sales for H-E-B Grocery will talk about marketing of meat to consumers and discuss consumer trends.

The general session will also include a presentation from Nolan Ryan Beef. They will walk through how the company evolved to their current branded beef program and discuss how the company has established their product with consumers.

Brian Bledsoe, an agricultural weather expert and columnist for Southern Livestock Standard will provide insight into upcoming weather trends.

The short course also features 22 sessions covering basic practices, new technologies and other important
industry information. Session topics will address pasture management, how much to feed cows, advanced cattle health, forage management, marketing of commercial calves, reproductive management and landowner rights to name a few.

Back by popular demand will be the two part session geared for the new rancher or someone considering purchasing land and cattle. Now in their fourth year, these sessions continue to be some of the most popular and allow for attendees to text their questions, making it very informative and real life.

“Our program lineup provides participants an opportunity to choose workshops based on their level of production experience and the needs of their ranch,” said Dr. Jason Cleere, director and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist in College Station, adding that the short course is designed so that ranchers can customize sessions to fit their size of operation, their focus and level of experience in the beef industry.

In addition, nine Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide continuing education units (CEUs) and 14 veterinarians CEC’s will be offered.

While all the sessions on Aug. 5th and 6th are in classroom style, the short course concludes with a number of interactive demonstrations and hands-on experiences in the areas of cattle handling, chute side working, a business management workshop, carcass quality and value determinations, as well as the popular Brush Busters demonstration and the StaTite fence building demonstrations on the final day.

Another key component of the short course is the trade show. Over 150 vendors display their products and services in and around Rudder Tower which attendees can visit at length throughout the event.

Another highlight includes a special breakfast for veterans in attendance. “This will be the fifth year for the breakfast and attendance continues to grow. It is a way for us to show our appreciation for their service and to provide a network for them to discuss their ranching struggles and successes,” explained Cleere.

There are also three other events related to the TAM BCSC. A youth program is held during the short course in which producers are encouraged to enroll their children between the ages of 13-18 years.

An added educational session to the front of this year’s short course is the Ranch Horse Workshop on Aug. 4th for TAM BCSC registrants. Cost is $50 at the door for those not registered for the short course. The day-long program will feature AgriLife Extension experts and topics that include equine nutrition, hay and pasture management and routine health maintenance. Call 979/862-5980 for additional information.

On Sunday evening, Aug. 4, the Texas Aggie Cattlewomen will once again host a social kickoff dinner at the Texas A&M Hotel & Conference Center. The cocktail hour will start at 5 p.m., followed by a steak dinner at 6 p.m. and then dancing. Tickets are $40 and are separate from the TAM BCSC
registration. Tickets can be purchased by calling or emailing Casey Matzke with the cattlewomen’s organization at 713/578-0863 or texasaggiecattlewomen@gmail.com.

“The famous Texas Aggie Prime Rib Dinner on Monday evening is always a highlight of the short course,” Cleere said, adding this showcases the culinary skills of the Texas A&M Meats Department and Nolan Ryan Beef.

The TAM BCSC has been drawing ranchers and beef industry leaders for over six decades. In addition to the educational aspects, it sets a background for networking, sharing problems and solutions and finding avenues for additional help once back at the ranch.

“We are looking forward to our annual TAM BCSC and are confident our program lineup offers multiple sessions of interest for all beef producers,” concluded Cleere. Registration is $210 before July 29th and $250 after that date and covers all meals, including the prime rib dinner, breaks and printed materials, which includes a 600+ page proceeding book. For complete details, schedule and to register, go to https://beefcattleshortcourse.com or contact the staff at 979/845-6931.

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**2019 BCSC Tentative Conference Schedule**

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 4 Rudder/MSC Complex**
10:00 a.m. On-site registration and registered participants may pick up registration material
10:30 a.m. Annual BCSC Scholarship Golf Tournament at Pebble Creek

**MONDAY, AUGUST 5 Rudder/MSC Complex**
6:30 a.m. Coffee and Breakfast, compliments of trade show exhibitors
7:00 a.m. Registration desk open, TRADE SHOW OPEN in Rudder
8:00 a.m. General Assembly for instructions and orientation
8:30 a.m. to Noon - Cattlemen’s College Sessions - CONCURRENT TRAINING

**Introduction to Cattle Production I**
Producers with entry-level basic information needs in beef production management practices will receive detailed training in nutrition, health, reproduction and beef cattle genetics. This session will feature a Q&A discussion with the experts.

**Forage Management I – Pasture Management Strategies**
- NRCS Programs
- Basic Soil Fertility
- Grazing Management Strategies
- Control of Weeds in Pastures and Hay Meadows

**Nutritional Management – “How much should I feed my cows?” (Repeatteds on Tuesday)**
Participants are engaged in a lively discussion of cow size, digestive anatomy, nutrient requirements, forage quality and feeds and feeding. The audience will leave understanding the fundamentals involved in determining... “How much should I feed my cows?”

**Cattle Breeds and Breeding**
- Genomic Selection
- Inheritance of Coat Color and Polledness in Cattle • Results of A&M Genomics Research
- Epigenetic Effects

**Pesticide Applicator Re-certification**
- Pasture weed control
- Pesticide safety
- Pesticide laws and regulations update

(Continued on Page 34)
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Getting a college education is just one step in the process of becoming a wage earning member of society. What happens off-campus is becoming a big part of the educational process as well, since many college degree-plans today require internships. Industries involved have embraced the practice by hiring and utilizing the intern workforce.

Savvy students will seek out these work opportunities, many of which are paid, in order to add impressive credentials to their resumes. These internships can offer so much, including the opportunity to live and work in another part of the country as well as offer valuable future contacts which could be parlayed into job opportunities later.

The agricultural community has embraced the idea of internships within the industry and for almost every drug, chemical, seed, breed association, advertising firm, ag lender, equipment dealer, and service business there is an internship available. The intern experiences first-hand what it’s like to walk in the shoes of their mentor and gain valuable experience, as well as the right to list that experience on a resume that may be heavy on accomplishments, but light on relatable work experience.

Shelby Rogers, a Hamilton, Texas native grew up working on her family’s Hereford cattle operation. Along with exhibiting Hereford cattle nationwide, Rogers became involved with her state junior association and later was a member of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) Board.

An Oklahoma State University (OSU) grad, Rogers completed three different internships during college; one each summer. A double-major in agricultural communications and animal science, she was required to have an internship for each degree.

Her first summer for her animal science major, she interned at Pederson’s Farms, in her hometown, which is a future processor of pork products. She helped with product research and development, recipe development, HAACP and quality control. Her second internship was with The Moxie Room, Comanche, Texas, which handled the marketing for Pederson’s Farms. Her responsibilities included assisting with social media, articles, photography, solicitation of sponsors for, and coordination of, a large event called Bacon Bash.

Her final internship was as the marketing and communications intern for Accelerated Genetics in Wisconsin. She created ads, planned social media, wrote press releases, took photos and more. The internship was interesting because it was largely dairy focused, which was a new aspect of the industry for her.

Rogers said, “While these work experiences were all different, they all had the common thread of being ag-industry related. Those experiences helped me confirm that I would
always want to work in the agricultural industry.”

Today, Rogers, as the American Shorthorn Association (AHA) Director of Marketing, Communications and Youth Activities, pilots her own internship program, helping to guide future ag industry professionals. “Shorthorn started their internship program around 1994 because they needed the extra help in preparation for the National Junior Shorthorn Show and Youth Conference,” stated Rogers. “Since starting with the association in May of 2016, I have taken full advantage of this program. We offer three different positions: marketing, youth activity and registrations. The marketing intern is responsible for social media, photography, graphic design and more. We look for an agricultural communications major for this position. The youth activity intern is responsible for helping get everything ready for all the contests at junior national. They act as my “right-hand”. The registrations intern is responsible for sorting through entries, sending confirmation, and helping prepare the show program,” Rogers explained.

“I couldn’t do my job effectively if it weren’t for these interns. They are integral to the success of our youth program,” she stressed.

Elanco Animal Health Southwest Territory Manager, Terri Barber, has spent a lifetime in the animal ag industry. A well-know livestock judge, she is past president of the American Hereford Association, so she is constantly in contact with many accomplished youth who might, during their college tenure, need or want to work for a company as large as Elanco, which touches so many aspects of the ag sector.

“Elanco has one of the best and most extensive internship programs in the industry. Our focused internships are all paid and offered in five different categories including sales, marketing, manufacturing, finance, research and development (R&D) and human resources (HR). This year we have close to 80 working across the U.S. in these divisions,” Barber stated. “As far as hiring successful interns, Elanco hires an extremely high amount due to the fact that these are top notch young professionals who go through an intensive two-day interview process just like more seasoned employees did when we were hired. It’s a fast-growing sector of our overall company and one that is as sought after as any in the industry.”

“These interns are utilized in many sectors of our company and are placed nationwide, giving many the experience of living in a different part of the country. In addition to a salary, we provide living expenses and many have a vehicle at their disposal and credit card for travel. It’s a true job experience. Once interns complete the program, evaluations are done and those who rise to the top are potential future employees,” Barber said.

“I want to encourage college students who are given the opportunity to intern, to do so. Internships can teach you a great deal about what you want in a job and conversely, they can also help you decide if it is something you don’t want to do. You never know ‘til you try, and that is why these opportunities are so special,” Barber concluded.

Graham Foster, a 2013 Texas A&M University (TAMU) graduate in agri-business did as Barber suggested. In the spring of 2012, Foster attended a TAMU Ag Sponsored Job Fair. Having just completed his sophomore year, he was looking for a potential summer position that would allow him to gain needed work experience and to see what was out in the workplace.

MHC Kenworth (North America’s largest Kenworth dealer) had a booth at the job fair and after a short visit with Foster and perusal of his

(Continued on page 40)
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A childhood goal is now an everyday reality for Dr. Amy Jo Pilmer. As far back as she can remember, Pilmer knew she wanted to be a veterinarian. She has always enjoyed being around animals and taking care of them. As owner and practicing veterinarian at Hill Country Veterinary Clinic in Fredericksburg, Texas, Pilmer does just that every day.

Since 2009, Pilmer has been serving the Fredericksburg community through her work caring for both large and small animals. Pilmer always knew she not only wanted to be a veterinarian, but also a small-town veterinarian.

“My uncle was a small-town vet,” Pilmer said, “and I always knew, when I became a veterinarian, I wanted to be in a small town, too.”

Fredericksburg is never where she imagined she would build her practice, but it ended up being a good fit and business opportunity. She wanted to be in a place where she could do a little of everything – small animal and large animal.

A cowgirl at heart, Pilmer rode horses with her family and friends as young girl growing up in San Angelo. As a teenager, she started helping some family friends on their ranches around San Angelo, where she helped care for cattle, sheep and goats.

“Large animal work is a labor of love, and my love for horses and cattle started during my childhood,” Pilmer said. “I always knew I would work on them someday.”

Having an uncle who was a veterinarian with his own practice certainly influenced Pilmer’s career choice. From a young age until she was a teenager, she helped her uncle, Dr. Jimmy Smith, at his small and large animal practice in Winters, Texas.

“I just knew it is what I wanted to do,” Pilmer said. “Obviously, I was super passionate about animals, but I was also passionate about the education part of it, too. I liked educating people how to properly take care of their animals.”

While working at her uncle’s clinic, Pilmer quickly learned the highs and lows of being a veterinarian. She also learned valuable skills, such as customer service, quick-thinking and work ethic. Being able to help animals and people is ultimately what drew her to the profession.

“It brings me a lot of heartache, but it brings a lot of joy, too,” Pilmer said. “I just feel like somehow I was chosen to do this. I couldn’t see myself doing anything else. It is like I was born to be a veterinarian, somehow.”

However, Pilmer’s path to become a veterinarian was met with tribulation. When she was 17 years-old, Pilmer and her father were in a car accident, which sadly, took her father’s life. Pilmer’s own recovery took her out of school for a period of time.

“It slowed me down a little bit,” Pilmer said. “But I just kept plugging along, and finally made it. Even though it was a little later in life than most people, I did it.”

After graduating high school, Pilmer graduated from Angelo State University and then attended veterinarian school in the West Indies at Ross University. She then did her clinicals at Oklahoma State University.

As a veterinarian, Pilmer looks at the bigger picture of what she does. It isn’t about just examining an animal at an office visit or house call, and caring for the immediate need. She believes in helping owners take the best possible care of their animals through education.

From overweight dogs, to underfed herds of horses and cattle herd parasite control, Pilmer is passionate about helping owners better care for their animals. No matter the situation Pilmer is there to offer assistance and guidance to ultimately help the animals she is passionate about caring for.
“I used to have educational meetings where I would invite the public, but as the practice has grown, I haven’t been able to do that as much,” Pilmer said. “Now, I enjoy talking one-on-one with owners about their animal’s needs as the situation arises.”

An area of veterinary medicine Pilmer particularly enjoys is reproduction in ruminant animals. Pilmer admits it is an area she has not been able to do as much work in as she would like. She loves delivering and pulling calves, and when the situation arises, being able to perform a cesarean-section delivery.

“I also work with a doctor and travel with him to do artificial insemination of deer,” Pilmer said. “I really want to bring that work here to the clinic with sheep, goats, and cattle.”

Pilmer said she looks forward to pursuing that next venture, and working with local producers to improve their herds through reproductive technology. Being a woman with small hands has been a helpful tool for Pilmer through her reproduction work.

“Having small hands because I am a woman comes in handy when delivering lambs and kids when the mom is struggling,” Pilmer said. “My hands are just small enough to be able to turn the baby to the correct position to be delivered.”

As a lover of the outdoors, Pilmer enjoys being able to change up the pace of her work by working with cattle and horses. She also believes in the valuable role both cattle and horses play in agriculture and is proud to be a part of it.

“Cattle are important to providing food for people and being a veterinarian plays an important part in keeping them healthy,” Pilmer said. “Horses are also important to people because some make their living with them, or even if they are just for recreation, they have a special bond with their horse.”

Working with cattle and horses can be challenging, though. Pilmer says not all of them are gentle and with their size and strength, they can be difficult to care for. But nothing is more satisfying for Pilmer than being a woman who can handle the job, from castrating calves and pregnancy checking, to delivering calves and working with a colicky horse.

“There are many ways a woman has to prove themselves in large animal medicine since it has traditionally been dominated by men,” Pilmer said.

A favorite part of Pilmer’s job involves the relationships she builds with her clients. She loves that some of her clients who are ranchers have been caring for livestock for generations and kept the ranch going for so many years. The stories they tell are something she enjoys, but most importantly she enjoys being the one they can call for their herd health needs.

“It has become increasingly rare for vets to take on the challenges of treating cattle, horses and other farm animals,” Pilmer said. “Saving a newborn calf from pneumonia or another debilitating disease is just as important to me because it makes a difference for the rancher, they count on us to keep their herds healthy.”

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2019 BCSC Tentative Conference Schedule
(Continued from Page 14)

Advanced Beef Cattle Health
• Animal Traceability: What is the latest?
• Bovine Viral Diarrhea: This disease may become regulated, what producers need to understand about BVD
• Cattle Trace Minerals – related to cattle health and well being

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Lunch served, trade show activities
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Program

General Session – Opportunities and Challenges in the Cattle Business
• Beef Cattle Production and The Green New Deal
• Beef Consumer Trends at the Grocery Store
• Branded Beef Programs: Challenges and Opportunities • Extended Weather Outlook
6:00 p.m. Famous Texas Aggie Prime Rib Dinner, MSC Ballroom

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6 Rudder/MSC Complex
7:00 a.m. Trade Show opens, coffee and breakfast, on-site registration opens. 8:30 a.m. to Noon - Cattleman's College Sessions - CONCURRENT TRAINING

Introduction to Cattle Production II – 365 Days on a Ranch
What is the yearly production cycle on a ranch? When do I put the bull with the cows? When do I vaccinate? When should I start feeding hay in the winter? When do I fertilize my pasture? These questions and many more will be addressed in this introductory ranch management session.

Wildlife, Livestock, and Private Land Stewardship
• Diversifying your beef cattle options through agritourism – beef and birds
• Using prescribed fire to benefit cattle and wildlife
• Managing damage on calves from migratory birds
• Responsible grazing as a wildlife habitat management strategy

Bull Fertility and Management
• Basic records needed on the ranch
• Risk management options for pastures and forages

Bovine Viral Diarrhea
• How to build a herd health plan for your heard, focus on vaccination, deworming, and animal purchase

Ranching Around the World
Ever wonder how ranchers in other countries raise cattle and produce beef? Now's your chance to listen to speakers from Vietnam, Mexico, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and other countries describe their production conditions and systems!

Nutritional Management (Repeated from Monday)
Forage Management II-Wintering the Cow Herd
• Small Grain Variety Selection and Production
• Cool Season Annual Legumes and Annual Ryegrass • Stockpiled forage, Hay, and Baleage Production
• Utilization and Grazing Options
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Lunch served, trade show activities
1:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. - Cattleman's College Sessions - CONCURRENT TRAINING

Landowner Rights

• Landowner Liability
• Eminent Domain
• Pipeline/Transmission Line Negotiation

Cattle Marketing – Market Commercial Calves
• What are the traditional marketing opportunities?
• Improving the value of your market
• Marketing grass fed beef and organic beef

Rangeland Management- Balancing Rangeland Opportunities and Challenges
• Matching Production Cycles to Forage Quantity and Quality
• Rainfall Forage Insurance
• Wildlife and Grazing Management Together
• Sendero Wildlife Data
• Dusting off Your Drought Plan

Reproductive Management
• Bull Fertility and Management
• The Breeding Soundness Exam
• The Economics of Breeding Soundness Exams
• The Paternal Influence on Pregnancy Loss in the Female

Flies, Gnats, Ticks
• Research Report
• Fever tick issues on the Mexican Border
• Flies

Purebred Cattle Marketing
Purebred cattle breeds are the basis for genetic improvement in the U.S. beef industry and are the early adopters for new genetic and other production technologies that promise success for their breeds and their customers.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7
7:30 a.m. Coffee and breakfast at each location. 8:30 a.m. to Noon - Cattleman's College Sessions - CONCURRENT TRAINING

Fence Building Demonstration
This session will cover the different types of fencing materials and designs. Learn how to build pipe and wood stretch sections and string multiple types of wire during this demonstration.

Brush Busters Demonstration
Three-hour workshop with do-it-yourself equipment and specific methods for controlling specific brush species including mesquite, huisache, prickly pear, Chinese tallow tree, Macarney Rose, Cedar, Greenbriar. Cut stump and mixed brush options

Beef Cattle Business Management Workshop
• Basic records needed on the ranch
• Risk management options for pastures and forages
• Tax management and estate planning update - 2019

Beef Carcass Value Determination Workshop
• Beef grading and live market steer evaluation
• Video of market steers, grade the carcasses, and price the cattle
• Where is the value: Carcasses to Cuts

Tractor Safety, Hay Production and Sprayer Calibration
This session will cover tractor purchasing decisions, implement safety and a sprayer calibration demonstration.

Live Cattle Handling and Chute Side Working Demonstrations
From pasture to the processing chute, this session will focus on low stress cattle penning, working facility design, movement through the system and proper calf processing techniques. Basic cow herd management practices with emphasis on proper vaccination procedures, castration, dehorning, parasite control and BQA recommendations.
12:00 Noon Beef Cattle Short Course 2019 - Adjourned

Page 36 | Special Edition 2019-2020
Blooming prickly pear along highways and country roads paint a pretty picture. But when they are within your fence line and scattered throughout your property, specially if it is a grazing pasture, prickly pear is not a sight producers want to see.

“The problem with prickly pear is it takes up space on your landscape and the more prickly pear you have, the more space it takes up,” Charles Hart, Ph.D., a rangeland ecologist and market development specialist for Corveta Agriscience said. “It’s that simple.”

When it comes to having available forage for livestock, prickly pear quickly becomes a problem. While prickly pear doesn’t necessarily prevent forage production in the pasture, Hart explained, it does keep livestock from getting to the forage.

By reducing access to forage, prickly pear discourages grazing and can cause potential health problems for livestock. Some livestock will choose to eat the grass around the prickly pear or even the prickly pear itself, despite the risk of getting a nose full of needles.

“Once you develop a pear-eating animal, they are probably going to be a pear-eating animal,” Hart said. “And they are likely always going to have a ton of problems, with their nose and things like that. They’ve learned to just deal with it and they go ahead and eat it anyway.”

It is important to remember prickly pear takes up an area of land, which essentially becomes un-grazeable. For example, if a 180-acre pasture is 50% covered in prickly pear the available grazing is not 180 acres, it is actually more like 90 acres. Thus, the stocking rate should be for 90 acres.

“We can get into an overstocking situation pretty quickly,” Hart said. “We can easily get twice as many animals out there as we should with not enough grazeable acres. Where the prickly pear are located cannot be considered grazeable acres.”

Luckily, prickly pear can be controlled and managed with the proper tools and insight. According to Hart, there are three primary methods to manage prickly pear – fire, mechanical
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Internships...
(Continued from page 21)

resume, he was targeted as a potential intern.

“After three weeks at the job fair, the company had asked if I was still available. They set up an interview with me, which led to a 90-day summer internship in their Ft. Worth dealership. That was a whirlwind of learning. I worked in the warehouse, delivered parts, inventory management, counter sales, went on calls with outside salesmen and helped with year-end inventory,” Foster explained.

While the transportation industry was never on Foster’s job list, he realized that a company with the scope of MHC could offer many opportunities for advancement. Following his first summer internship, he was recruited for a full-time position after graduation.

“They offered me a job following the summer of my junior year, so I finished my senior year with a job waiting for me,” Foster said. “I was given intensive training in all departments of the company including the body shop, service and HR, finance, accounting and leasing and rental, in addition to the other departments I had already worked in. My first position, after training in Kansas City, was back in Ft. Worth as an assistant service manager. I trained under a service manager for four months and then he was promoted, leaving me in charge. At that point, I had 30-35 people I was in charge of, and at 23, that was a lot of responsibility,” he said.

After two other moves including Atlanta, Foster is now managing a large dealership in Nashville, Tennessee, which employs nearly 100 people and has new truck sales, leasing, parts, service and a body shop.

At 29, Foster attributes his success to his agricultural upbringing and his willingness to relocate.

“I grew up working on our family ranch and we learned early-on how to work hard and stay with it. That, and the fact that I have been willing to move when the company has asked me, has kept me moving forward in this large company,” he said. “I have graduated with that are already on their fourth job in six years. I feel fortunate that MHC recognized something in me and has invested the necessary time and training to put me on a path to success.”

Land O’Lakes/Purina Animal Nutrition National Farm Production Consultant Leader, Joe Fuller, is very involved in the company’s annual internship program and sees it as a win-win situation for both the company and student.

“For us, internships are critical tools to find the very best talent that fits our culture and the roles we have to fill. It gives the student actual work experience, which is so needed, and it allows them to discover if this is the type of career they want,” he described, adding, “We find things out and so do they. We have a high percentage of interns that do go on to have careers with us,” he explained.

This summer, Purina has 59 interns working in 20 states. These will be junior and senior college ag students this fall. They are embedded with the local cooperatives and dealerships and their responsibilities include market surveys, feeding trials, audits on animal operations, attending 4-H/FFA events, handling social media duties and becoming part of the local community for the summer.

“The goal is for them to get their feet wet on calling on customers in the farming and ag sector and to introduce them to a career in field sales,” he said.

The internship starts with a three-day orientation at the Purina Research Farm in Gray Summit, Missouri and concludes with each intern making a 15-minute professional presentation to the company’s executive and field staff about their work and what they learned over the summer.

Fuller advises prospective interns to attend career fairs at their university in the fall and meet the representatives face-to-face. He says it’s very important to provide a resume to the reps and have that well thought-out 30-second elevator speech ready about why you want this internship. He stresses that it’s important to start in the fall for the next summer’s internship.

“You’re not just getting an internship—you’re positioning yourself for a career,” he concludes.

Rylee Barber, Channing, Texas, is a senior at Texas A&M, majoring in agricultural communications and journalism. She is currently completing her third internship in as many summers, with a couple of week-long ones, also.

Barber’s first internship, served following her freshman year at A&M, was for Ranch House Designs, Inc. She, along with another intern, were tasked with creating and posting content for different social media pages and helped with projects for other accounts. Her interest in social media and graphic design pushed her toward this internship.

The next employer she interned for was Superior Livestock Productions, Ft. Worth, Texas, where she became familiar with many aspects of cattle marketing including video sales.

“This internship was heavy on training. I had no prior experience with video editing software and the programs they used in the office, so from that standpoint I had to have lots of help. However, it was fairly easy to pick up and once I was competent, I took on editing as needed, along with performing several roles during their auctions,” she said.

Currently, Barber is interning with the American Maine-Anjou Association in Kansas City, working with Lindsey Broek, director of youth activities and The Voice editor.

“This internship aligns more with my career objectives,” said Barber. “Having grown up showing purebred cattle and being so involved in the junior Hereford activities myself, I understand what goes on behind the scenes when planning junior national activities, so assisting with the Maine Junior National has been a great experience. I am learning to work with other personalities, how to prioritize tasks and to manage my time. However, I think that each and every intern experience has added to my marketability as an employee and I continue to learn skills that will help me find future employment,” she concluded.
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With agricultural bankruptcies on the rise, the importance of financial recordkeeping can no longer be ignored.

By Kindra Gordon

It’s a difficult time in agriculture right now. Challenging weather, uncertain trade policies and low commodity prices have created a perfect storm across the ag sector. Banks are seeing more farm borrowers fail behind on their payments, and reports of bankruptcies are rising.

While many may want to ignore this downward trend and simply keep working hard at production, financial experts advise the best tactic is for producers to get their financial houses in order, which ultimately allows for making better decisions toward a profitable, successful, and sustainable operation.

Candid Conversation

What specific advice do lenders have for ag producers, particularly those whose farm balance sheet is stressed? I recently had the opportunity to listen in on a closed-door session among lenders and financial experts talking candidly about the escalating financial situation facing the ag sector. There were several common themes they suggested to producers in order to ensure financial stability or recovery, depending on the situation.

1. Make record keeping a priority. One lender noted, “Producers need to work as hard at this component of their operation as they do the production side.” Another said, “Those producers who have financial records are often within the top one-third of profitable producers.”

Thus, financial records offer the producer power – in black and white – to evaluate, assess and make changes to effectively avert financial distress. These lenders agreed that investing in a financial software program or a person to provide bookkeeping services and analysis is well worth the money.

2. Become a numbers nerd. Imagine for a moment that a salesman is at your door, but every time you ask him a question about the product he is selling, he says “I don’t know” or “I’ll have to get back to you about that.” These lenders liken that scenario to many of the producers who come into their offices and don’t know their numbers. As a result, lenders say they begin to lose confidence in that producer’s ability to make their loan payments and stay in business long term. “We want a producer to know everything possible about their operation and the product or service they provide – and that goes way beyond bushels per acre, weighing weights and average daily gain at the feedlot,” expressed one lender. Rather, they want producers to know debt per cow, debt per acre, what it costs to feed a cow for a year, how much feed you need available, how much of that will be raised, how much will be purchased, etc. Tough questions, but these lenders say once a producer knows those numbers, he becomes a much better, more efficient – and more profitable – producer.

3. Start with these six documents. There are a bevy of spreadsheets and documents that can be created to track financial records, but there are six that most lenders prefer to start with: a balance sheet, cash flow statement, income statement, a budget with breakeven prices for each enterprise in the business (i.e. market cattle, breeding cattle, crops, hay production), a corresponding marketing plan for each of those enterprises, and a family living budget.

Of the cash flow statement, one lender called this “an underutilized tool,” noting it provides a visual look at the whole financial year – when money is coming in and when funds are needed. This individual suggested producers really must look at cash flow to gain insight into operational changes that may be necessary to insure income is timed with when expenses are due.

4. Invest in your marketing skills. This group of experts felt that marketing is an area many producers are overwhelmed by – and do not have adequate training in. Rather, they see many producers making marketing decisions because of fear, hope or greed. One financial expert expressed that a marketing plan should provide a road map for the sales of producers’ products. It should include how much you expect to produce, the breakeven price for that enterprise, and “need, want and hope target price levels.”

(Continued on page 44)
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Another marketing strategy suggested was incremental selling dates in order to gain a higher average return for the items being sold (crops or cattle). That said, these experts agreed that if marketing is an area in which a producer does not feel confident in their abilities or does not have time to devote to, a marketing advisor should be sought to provide assistance to the operation.

5. Utilize benchmarks. By definition a benchmark is “a point of reference against which things may be compared.” Sports fans use benchmarks a lot as they compare the stats of one player to others, or to historical averages. The same can be done with cattle, crops and farm financials.

For example, a producer might have a benchmark in their head of what average calf weaning weights are, and each year compare if their calves wean off heavier, lighter or about average. But the power of benchmarks comes in writing those numbers down year after year and then truly tracking and comparing them. With that production data, producers have the ability to make changes to their operation to improve production levels, or they may observe that a change that was implemented isn’t creating the increased production that was expected, advised one lender.

With regard to financial data, working capital, debt to asset ratio, net farm income, operating expense ratio and repayment capacity measures are all examples of data these lenders say they like to track in order to assess how a farm is trending. Specifically, there are four areas of ratios: Liquidity, Solvency, Profitability and Repayment Capacity. These lenders explain that from different ratios calculated they can assess positive or negative finance trends for the operation and how those ratios compare against industry based standards. (The industry has standards for each ratio, rated as red, yellow or green. Red indicates danger, yellow a concern and green ideal.)

As one lender pointed out, this process is similar to comparing EPDs to evaluate livestock or crop performance information for corn and soybean hybrids. Because there are some two dozen ratios that could be tracked, one suggestion is to ask lenders which ratios they prefer to benchmark on, which will help pinpoint what information your specific lender will want you to track on your operation.

The bottom line, said one lender, is that knowing various ratios allows a producer to be aware of changes in their financial stability, it allows them to make proactive changes, and it gives their lender more confidence in what they are doing on the operation.

6. Track family living expense. These lenders noted that those producers who “get upside down” with debt most often are not tracking or curbing – their family living expense. They shared numbers showing that family living expense on an average farm in the Midwest over the past five to six years has been as high as $87,000, when more realistically it should be between $50,000 and $70,000. Their advice: “Create a family living budget...” (Continued from page 42)

(Continued on page 48)
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Additional Advice

• Evaluate what a shock to your operation would do to your income, expenses or production. Utilize scenario planning to “what if” questions, then brainstorm solutions to those scenarios.

• Don’t guess. “We understand that record-keeping and tracking financials isn’t what brought most producers to production agriculture, but it is a task that is becoming much more important,” stated one individual. Another made the point, “If a producer doesn’t know what their numbers are, any change they make is simply a guess. And when you are dealing with hundreds of thousands of dollars, especially during times of tight margins, guesses don’t cut it.”

• Keep communicating with your lender. Regular conversations, asking questions and sharing your documents with your lender is welcomed, said these professionals. “We want to know what your goals are and how your business is doing,” stated one lender of his producer clients. He added, “When a producer’s loan goes up for review, if we know their answers, we can be on their side when it is time to vote on a renewal or not.”

• Enlist the aid of professionals to improve your bookkeeping and marketing if it is not within your abilities or time constraints. One individual stated, “Recognizing the areas of the operation that need assistance and finding a way to get that assistance is the sign of a good manager.”

Six important documents your lender wants to see

1. Balance sheet
2. Cash flow statement
3. Income statement
4. A budget with breakeven prices for each enterprise in the business (i.e. market cattle, breeding cattle, crops, hay production)
5. A corresponding marketing plan for each of those enterprises
6. Family living budget.
and chemical.

“Nine times out of ten you are probably better off to use multiple methods for control, instead of just relying on one method,” Hart said. “There’s no silver bullet out there. There is nothing that is going to solve your problem in one application, whether that is chemical, fire or mechanical. There is always maintenance or follow-up that needs to be done.”

An important fact about prickly pear to remember is the way the plant reproduces. When the pad of the prickly pear falls to the ground, it roots and makes a clone of the plant it fell off of. So, if a producer chooses to manage prickly pear mechanically or with fire, the pads need to be destroyed entirely to prevent regeneration.

For this reason, chemical application can initially lead to greater success in controlling prickly pear. Aerial and ground applications of a chemical are both great options to consider. The terrain and area size will determine whether an aerial or ground application would work best for your operation.

In most cases, if it is a small area with a high-density of prickly pear a ground application is best. If it is a large area with rough terrain, an aerial application would work better. Coverage is critical to the success of managing prickly pear. Therefore, choosing the right application to ensure the best coverage is key.

“Coverage, coverage, coverage,” Hart emphasized, “is an important factor, and in my opinion, probably the most important factor. If we don’t get the herbicide to the prickly pear, we don’t do a good job killing it.”

When thinking about coverage, producers need to consider natural obstacles that inhibit coverage, such as grass and tree canopies. Hart explained that if there is enough grass surrounding the prickly pear, where it is taller than the prickly pear, the grass will intercept the spray.

“My rule of thumb is, if I stand and look at a pasture from a side or horizontal point of view at ground level and I can’t see very much prickly pear, that’s telling me there’s too much grass out there to be spraying it,” Hart said.

It is important to either graze the grass down, burn it down, or wait out the season before applying a herbicide. Spraying with a significant amount of grass, Hart stated, can result in only killing the inside crown or

(Continued from page 35)
exposed areas of the prickly pear, while the outside crown hidden in the grass will remain alive because it was protected.

In the same sense, if using an aerial application, a mesquite or other tree canopy can intercept the spray resulting in a similar situation where portions of the prickly pear remain alive. Therefore, it is recommended to spray when most trees are dormant.

While coverage is important, so is timing to ensure the spray is absorbed into the prickly pear. Late summer or fall application is the best time to spray prickly pear, if you don’t have grass or canopy coverage to consider. However, a winter or early spring application can be successful to prevent damage to other plant species.

“If we have other brush species that we want to limit the damage to, that’s when we switch to an early spring or winter application,” Hart said. “This is also before we have leaves on the mesquite trees, which again goes back to the coverage.”

The condition of the prickly pear is also important to consider. A damaged prickly pear is easier to kill, but there are a few exceptions Hart shared. When prickly pear has a fungus with mold and spores often either having a rust look or gray color, application is not ideal. The uptake of the herbicide, Hart explained, is inhibited because the herbicide can’t get through.

“If you have a situation where you have a lot of prickly pear that don’t look healthy because of these natural rusts and fungus, we need to consider that and let the plant get over that before we do any applications,” Hart said. “When the plant is in that condition, you’re not going to get as much herbicide into it as you would if it was greener and healthy.”

Currently, there are three herbicide options for controlling prickly pear - Tordon 22K, Surmount and MezaVue. Based on research from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, MezaVue has shown to be the most cost effective for getting a consistent level of long-term control based on studies by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Range Management Specialists James Jackson and Morgan Russell Treadway, Ph.D.

Hart recommends looking up Texas A&M AgriLife Extension publication ERM-1466, Chemical Weed and Brush Control Suggestions for Rangeland, which he considers the bible for chemical control on rangeland, to find more information on specific products and herbicide options, as each herbicide has its own rates and guidelines. While prickly pear may be pretty to some, they aren’t for a producer. But controlling them can be simple keeping this insight in mind.
Use your eyes and records to cull cows

By Michelle Arnold, DVM Ohio State Extension

Which cows in your herd are consistently making you money? Every year, the cow-calf producer needs to critically evaluate each animal in the herd and decide if she is paying her upkeep. Open cows (those that are not pregnant) at the end of breeding season obviously are high on the cull list. With variable costs running $400-$500 per year per head and an additional $100-$300 in fixed costs, keeping open cows is difficult to justify financially. Beyond pregnancy status, what other variables are important to evaluate? Structural soundness, body condition score, age, annual performance and disposition are significant factors to consider when developing a culling order specifically for your farm. This culling order is essentially a ranking of the cow traits you consider most important for a cow to be productive on your farming operation. Culling is exceptionally important during times of drought or a year with marginal hay production as you may be forced to cull deeper to manage through a challenging season. However, there may be times to

(Continued on page 52)
Where the convergence of Select Northern bred sires and Southern Cow Power...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bulls</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LT Dakota Rush 5500 P</td>
<td>LT Rushman x LT Star 369 PLD</td>
<td>Co-Owners: Lindskov-Thiel Ranch, Seneca: $20/Straw - $35/Signing Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC Milestone 5223 P</td>
<td>WC Brook x WC Lady 6506 P</td>
<td>Co-Owners: Wright Charolais, Ledbetter, Milestone Investors, Seneca: $30/Straw - $35/Signing Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JGS Duramax C623 P ET</td>
<td>LT Long Shot x JGS Sires</td>
<td>Co-Owners: Sturgessa Double S, Seneca: $20/Straw - $35/Signing Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT Long Shot 1045 PLD</td>
<td>LT Long Distance x LT Breeda's Brom 9345 PLD</td>
<td>Co-Owners: Sturgessa Double S, Lindskov-Thiel Ranch, Seneca: $20/Straw - $35/Signing Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT Blue Moon 3053 PLD</td>
<td>LT Blue Vales x LT Krent 3057 PLD</td>
<td>Co-Owners: Sturgessa Double S, Seneca: $20/Straw - $35/Signing Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT Patriot 4004 PLD</td>
<td>LT Long x JGS Sires</td>
<td>Co-Owners: LT Ranch, Sturgessa Double S, Seneca: $20/Straw - $35/Signing Fee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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LT Lodge 0332 Ex LT Moly’s Trend 8220 ET
Co-Owners: Michael & Lauren Sturgess
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WC-LT Sculptor 5155 ET
LT Rio Bravo 3188 Ex LT Brenda’s Ease 3035 PLD
Co-Owners: Wright Charolais, Upholster-Thiel Ranch
Sire: $200/Straw - $35/Signee Fee

MLS Painted Warrior C722
LT Sundance 2251 PLD x J66 Ms Cigar Equator W916
Co-Owners: Sturgess Double S
Sire: $200/Straw - $35/Signee Fee

MLS Rocket Man E149 - Polled
LT Blue Moon 3053 PLD x J66 Ms Equator H229 ET
BW: R3; AW: R6; AW: T3; SC: 45.2; AIMP: 15.1; AIMP: 4.30
Tested Heterozygous Polled; Sire: Call for Price.

MLS Statesman E144 - Polled
LT Polset 4004 PLD x J66 Ms Cigar Equator W916
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consider keeping more replacement heifers and letting older cows go, such as when many in the herd are getting older and the heifers have good genetic potential to perform. To begin, it is best to think about which animals in the herd have the least chance of being productive over the long term or are farthest away from being productive. Equally important are factors such as disposition and phenotype (color, size) that affect the marketability of offspring. The following is a list of factors to carefully consider when deciding who to cull this year.

• Disposition – A cow’s attitude is an important consideration in any cattle operation. Bad behavior has both a genetic component and is also learned behavior by calves at an early age. Mean, nervous, “high strung” cattle are dangerous to people, damage facilities, tear up fences and make gathering and working cattle difficult, at best. Remember, a good cow can be protective of her calf without being dangerous and destructive.

• Pregnancy status – A cow should produce a calf at least once a year and the sale of that calf needs to pay her way. Diagnosing a cow as “open” (not pregnant) is as simple as having a veterinarian palpate for pregnancy at least 40 days either after breeding or after the bull is removed. A simple, inexpensive blood test can also be used 28 days (Continued from page 49)

Eyes...

(Continued on page 56)
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post-breeding to determine pregnancy status. If many cows are found open at pregnancy check, work with your veterinarian to determine if reproductive disease, poor nutrition, bull infertility or inability to conceive was the cause. Remember cows that calve late in the season have fewer opportunities to breed back in a controlled (for example, 90 day) breeding season. Summer heat and fescue toxicosis can be important contributors to low conception rates.

• Structural soundness – Bad hooves or claws, lameness due to hip/knee injury, eye problems, and poor udder conformation are all examples of structural problems that adversely affect performance. Good feet and legs are essential for weight maintenance, breeding, calving, self-defense, and raising a calf. The udder should be firmly attached with a level floor and high enough that newborn calves can easily find and latch onto teats. Cows with blind or light quarters, funnel or balloon shaped teats, or any history of mastitis are strong candidates for culling.

• Cows with chronic conditions that will not improve such as progressive weight loss, early cases of cancer eye, repeated episodes of vaginal prolapse during pregnancy, and extreme sensitivity to the effects of fescue toxicosis should be removed from the herd as soon as the calf is weaned. Cows with confirmed disease conditions such as Johne’s disease, bovine lymphoma, or advanced cancer eye should not be sold to a commercial market. The most common reasons for carcass condemnation at slaughter include emaciation, lymphoma, peritonitis, cancer eye, blood poisoning, bruising, and other types of cancers.

• Age – Cows are considered most productive between 4-9 years of age. The size and shape of the teeth can be used to assess age but always evaluate them in light of the diet. Cows that eat gritty or sandy feeds and forages have increased tooth wear beyond their years. Regardless, cows with badly worn or missing teeth will have a hard time maintaining body condition. Remember, older cattle die of natural causes, too.

• Poor Performance – Record keeping is an invaluable tool for evaluating performance. Readable visual tags on both the cow and calf allow you to match calf sale weights to the dams and identify cows that did not produce a calf. Inferior genetics and poor milk production produce lightweight calves that do not grow well. An overweight cow or large framed cow with a small calf that doesn’t gain weight usually means the cow is not producing much milk. Sick baby calves may be an indication of poor quality colostrum and poor mothering ability.

• Phenotype – Cows that do not “fit” the herd because of external features such as unusual breed, size, muscling and color are candidates for culling. These challenges may be overcome to some degree by choice of sire to balance out the unwanted traits. Remember that buyers of commercial calves look for uniformity in color,

(Continued from page 52)

Eyes...

(Continued on page 57)
weight, and frame in a set of calves and will pay a premium price for it.

- The last ones to go – Hopefully culling will never have to go this deep in your herd. Bred cows over 9-years-old, replacement heifers (especially those that did not breed in the first 30 days), and bred cows 3-9 years old should be the last sold. Thin cows that conceive late in the breeding season should go first.

Since 20% of gross receipts in a typical cow-calf operation come from the sale of cull animals, pay attention to price seasonality and body condition score before sending these animals to market. Prices are historically highest in spring and lowest in late fall/early winter when spring born calves are weaned and many culls are sent to market. Adding weight and body condition to culls is an opportunity to increase profitability but can be expensive. Work with a nutritionist to come up with realistic cost projections before feeding cull cattle for a long period of time.

When it comes to making decisions on who to cull, remember to consider functionality in your environment. Is she an “easy keeper”? Does she keep flesh and condition and raise a good calf, even when feed and forage is limited? On the opposite side, does she give too much milk or is her frame size so large that you can’t keep weight on her, even when pasture is plentiful? Is her pelvis so small and tight that calving is a problem and will be a problem in her offspring? Functionality leads to longevity and improved efficiency. By retaining more young cows in the herd, you can decrease the number of replacement heifers needed each year and cull cows that are only marginally profitable. Young cows also increase in value as they mature because the body weight of the cow and her calf’s weaning weight will continue to increase until approximately 5 years of age. Longevity will also be improved through crossbreeding because hybrid vigor adds essentially 1.3 years of productivity or one more calf per cow. If considering buying heifers, University of Kentucky has a decision support tool available at http://www.uky.edu/Ag/AgEcon/pubs/BredHeifer.xlsx to help understand how to evaluate the price in your specific circumstances.

In summary, a herd of easy-keeping, efficient cows is possible through rigorous culling and careful selection of replacements. Match your genetics to your management and environment for maximum efficiency, longevity, and ultimately, maximum enjoyment of cattle production.

**Cull cow language**

- Breakers (75-80% lean)- Highest conditioned cull cows (BCS ≥ 7), excellent dressing percentages
- Boners or “boning utility” (80-85% lean)- Moderately conditioned (BCS 5-7), well-nourished commercial beef cows (usually highest price cull)
- Leans (85-90%)- Lower BCS (1-4), lower dressing percentages, susceptible to bruising during transport and expect more trim loss. Moving cows from lean to boner status can usually be done efficiently.

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Getting cows to breed back quickly

By Travis Meteer, University of Illinois Extension

Weather events, poor conditions and hay shortages will result in some cows that will need extra attention prior to and during breeding season. After a weather event, it would be salt in the wound to have cows breed late and fall out of your calving season. Monitoring and intervening with some timely supplementation is important and a valuable component to a profitable cow herd through good and bad environmental times.

First, a rough season can help identify the cows that can’t hang. Marking cows that are too high maintenance for cull can be a good thing for the future of your cow herd. Weather events likely have identified some members of the herd that need to see the gate. However, if the majority of cows are behind merely due to a hard winter and below average feed supplies… then timely supplementation can help keep these cows from falling back in the season.

The biggest focus should be getting thin cows gaining weight. Cows that are gaining weight breed up at a higher percentage. This is easier said than done considering spring calving cows will be lactating and hay supplies are likely exhausted.

For those producers that will still be feeding harvested feeds during the breeding season, utilizing co-product feeds like corn gluten feed, dried distillers grains, and even just corn can help offer additional energy to forages.

For those producers that will be turned out on pasture at the time of breeding, a dry, low protein supplement should be used to help balance your pasture ration. New pasture growth has challenges. It is washy, high in protein, and low in fiber. To transition cattle successfully to pastures with these hurdles from winter diets, we need to offer a supplement that adds dry matter, energy, and fiber. Adding energy is likely the priority. I advise cattlemen to feed cows a 50:50 mixture of corn grain and soybean hulls when starting cattle on pasture. Feeding 4 to 5 pounds of this mixture can help add energy to the pasture ration. Offering a bale of hay or any palatable dry forage can help but stay away from high protein forages like alfalfa. Getting more dry matter, energy, and fiber in the cow will help her better utilize the lush grass pasture for weight gain.

(Continued on page 60)
29th Annual
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All Breeds Bull & Commercial Female Sale

February 11 & 12, 2020
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Schedule of Events

Tuesday, February 11
8:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon - Viewing of Sale Cattle
12:30 P.M. - All Breeds Bull Show
2:30 P.M. - Commercial Female Show
Sponsored by Capital Farm Credit

Wednesday, February 12
7:30 A.M. - Cattlemen's Breakfast
10:00 A.M. - All Breeds Bull Sale
The Commercial Female Sale is immediately following the All Breeds Bull Sale

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Now, here are a few reasons to focus on getting cows bred early. First, research has shown that getting a higher percentage of cows to calve within the first 21 days of the calving season results in heavier weaning weights and increased pregnancy rates compared to later calving cows. Heavier calves and more bred cows have been and will be a pretty good combination for making money. Later calving cows are more apt to fall out of your calving season and can ultimately cost you several dollars in replacement costs.

Just one missed cycle can add several dollars to the annual cost to keep a cow. It can also result in loss of weaning weight that could have been realized if the calf was older, on the ground and growing sooner. Table 1 shows figures of the cost per cow that fails to breed in the first 21 days of the breeding season.

Researchers from University of Nebraska-Lincoln investigated the effect of calving period on heifer progeny. Results show that heifers of cows calving in the first 21 days of the calving season have lower birth weights, heavier weaning weights, and higher pregnancy rates as bred heifers when compared to heifers born to cows calving later in the calving season. They also were more apt to calve in the first 21 days of the calving season as they entered production, had lighter calves at birth that weaned off heavier, and they bred-back with numerically higher pregnancy rates as first-calf cows.

There is no doubt in my mind that there is a positive snowball effect from focusing on front-loading your calving season and selecting replacements from cows that are calving early in your season. I would not encourage pulling bulls after a 60 day breeding season, because of the premium for bred cows. I would utilize a pregnancy check to identify late-bred cows and then market them before the calving season as bred cows. Just because they don’t fit for your operation doesn’t mean they don’t fit for someone else’s. The key is to identify the cows that annually are at the front of your calving season. Select and propagate those genetics to make cows.

Tips for getting cows to breed early in the season

- Select replacements from cows that calve early in the season
- Have cows in correct Body

(Continued on page 61)

| Table 1. Cost per cow failing to breed in the first 21 days of the breeding season |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Cost, Item                      | Drylot¹            | Pasture²           |
| Diet Cost, $/day                | $2.25              | $1.10              |
| Feed Cost¹, per missed cycle   | $47.25             | $23.10             |
| Lower weaning weight², $        | $78.75             | $78.75             |
| Total Cost                      | $126.00            | $101.85            |

¹ Free choice poor quality hay supplemented with CGF, $0.10/d mineral cost
² Pasture Rent=$90/acre, 6 mo. grazing, 2 acre/cow, $0.10/d mineral cost
³ Diet cost multiplied by 21 days
⁴ Assumed calf ADG of 2.5 and multiplied by 21 days, $150/cwt
Quickly…
(Continued from page 58)

Condition Score (ideally 6)
• Avoid decreasing plane of nutrition at breeding, cows losing weight do not breed up well
• Invest in a good mineral program, consider injectable mineral products 30 days prior to breeding if mineral status may be compromised
• Consider synchronization and timed-AI to front-load the calving season

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Calving seasons mean calf working time isn’t far behind. As the majority of the calves reach their second month of life, it is time to castrate the male calves if this has not already been done and immunize all of the calves to protect them against blackleg. In some situations, calves may be vaccinated for the respiratory diseases such as IBR and BVD. Check with your large animal veterinarian about these immunizations.

That’s where your Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) training comes into play. Correct administration of any injection is a critical control point in beef production and animal health.

There is a negative relationship between meat tenderness and injection sites, including injection sites that have no visible lesion. In fact, intramuscular (IM) injections, regardless of the product injected, may create permanent damage regardless of the age of the animal at the time of injection. Tenderness is reduced in a three-inch area surrounding the injection site.

Moving the injection-site area to the neck stops damage to expensive steak cuts. Therefore, cow-calf producers should make certain that family members and hired labor are sufficiently trained as to the proper location of the

(Continued on page 62)
Feedyard Technician Program for high schoolers earns TEA certification

By Kay Ledbetter, Texas AgriLife Extension

AMARILLO — The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has added the Feedyard Technician Program for high school students to its certified Career and Technical Education list. The program is jointly sponsored by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Cattle Feeders Association and West Texas A&M University.

The Career and Technical Education program ensures Texas students are prepared for in-demand, high-skill, high-wage careers, according to TEA. About 200 industry-based certifications for public school accountability were approved for 2019-2020.

Brady Miller, Texas Cattle Feeders Association director of market, membership and education in Amarillo, said now in addition to student participants receiving a certification, their high schools get credit for the program on the A-F accountability rating system mandated by law in Texas.

Criteria for industry-based certification requires businesses, industries, professional organizations, state agencies, government entities or state-based industry associations be familiar with the certification and value it.

The industry must signal the value of the occupation-specific certification by including the certification in job postings as required or highly recommended; using the certification as a factor in selecting candidates for an interview and/or hire; and/or offer higher pay for those who possess the certification, according to TEA rules.

TEA also requires a third party to provide assessment of the certification using predetermined standards for knowledge, skills and competencies.

Meeting the need

Robert Devin, AgriLife Extension Agricultural Workforce and Community Development program coordinator in Canyon, said the feedyard technician program was born out of a need identified by the livestock industry during a “futuring” conference about a decade ago.

The conference was aimed at determining the biggest issues facing the industry in the next 10 years, and labor was identified as a major factor, he said.

As a result, the three entities teamed up to develop a program to address that issue. The Feedyard Technician Program started in 2013 and is designed for high school juniors and seniors who may have an interest in the fed cattle industry, Miller said.

The program has two certified segments: cattle care and handling in the spring and machinery operations, repair and maintenance in the fall, he said. The cattle welfare and handling segment this year had about 90 students from 18 schools participate.

“We work through the agricultural sciences teachers in local schools to identify students, and they provide (Continued on page 65)

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injections before the spring calf-working begins.

Give injections according to label instructions. Subcutaneous (SQ) means under the skin, intramuscular (IM) means in the muscle. Some vaccines (according to the label instructions) allow the choice between intramuscular (IM) and subcutaneous (SQ).

Always use subcutaneous (SQ) as the method of administration when permitted by the product’s label. Remember to “tent” the skin for SQ injections unless instructed otherwise by the manufacturer. Proper injection technique is just one of many components of the Beef Quality Assurance effort that has had a positive impact on the entire United States beef industry.

Another important aspect of the BQA effort is keeping of accurate treatment records. Treatment records should include:

- Individual animal/group identification
- Date treated
- Product administered and manufacturer’s lot/serial number
- Dosage used
- Route and location of administration
- Earliest date animal(s) will have cleared withdrawal period
- Name of person administering the product

Treatment records for cattle should be stored and kept for a minimum of three years after the animal(s) have been sold from your operation.

Beef producers are encouraged to learn and practice BQA guidelines. You can learn more about the program by going to the website, www.bqa.org. The BQA Manual can be downloaded from that site. Examples of treatment records to be kept and stored are available from the manual in Section VIII.

Remember...
(Continued from page 60)
some of the training in their classroom setting,” Devin said. “We augment that with additional training through online videos and hands-on training.”

He said the cattle care and handling segment targets high school juniors and seniors who have taken four or more agricultural classes focused on Livestock Production, Principles of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, and Veterinary Medical Applications.

Classes taken outside the agricultural program and/or work experience may be substituted if approved by the agricultural science teacher, Devin said. Students should also participate in an extracurricular activity such as FFA or 4-H or have some type of supervised project experience.

This year’s segment just wrapped up onsite training on pharmaceuticals, proper injection and management of pharmaceuticals, sanitation and cattle care and handling, he said. The instruction on cattle care and handling was provided by Dr. Ron Gill, AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist, College Station, and the pharmaceutical training was conducted by Dr. Ted McCollum, retired AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist, Amarillo.

The students also receive training in interviews, Devin said, and are given written, skills and interview tests at West Texas A&M to determine their understanding and ability to read a label, perform proper injections and implant procedures.

The fall machinery operations, repair and maintenance segment targets students who have taken classes including Agricultural Mechanics, Metal Technology and Agricultural Power systems, he said.

It provides hands-on training in wheel loader and skid loader operation, and lockout-tagout safety procedures, Devin said. Students also visit a feed mill and feed yard to understand some of the job opportunities associated with the industry that are not directly related to cattle.

Testing is also provided at West Texas A&M on skills involving welding,
Early remains the best time to castrate bull calves

By W. Mark Hilton DVM, Clinical Professor Emeritus, Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine

A Kansas State University (KSU) study showed that bulls castrated and implanted at an average of three months of age weighed two pounds more at 7.5 months of age than did the intact bull calves in the same study. At 7.5 months, the bulls were castrated, and then both groups were weighed 28 days later to assess gain.

The steers castrated as calves gained 48 pounds, while the bulls that were cut at an average of 578 pounds only gained 33 pounds. That is a lost potential gain of 15 pounds, as these late-castrated bulls had to deal with the stress of healing from surgery.

The fallacy is that there is a positive “testosterone effect” that justifies not castrating until bulls weigh 500 pounds or more. This is a myth. When bull calves were blood-tested to measure testosterone levels, significantly high levels did not occur until 8 to 9 months of age. Studies show that bulls castrated at over 500 pounds will lose weight for two weeks after castration. How can that be beneficial?

While there are many reasons to be in the cattle business, two that generally lead the list are to provide the best care for the animals and to have a successful, profitable business. Castrating calves late accomplishes neither of these goals.

In five studies that examined weight at weaning, bulls averaged only seven pounds higher than steers that were cut early (< three months). Studies also show the average gain from implanting the suckling calf with a low-dose implant is 18 to 24 pounds. You can add the weight with none of the stress with a suckling calf implant.

These are the Beef Quality Assurance guidelines on castration: “All bulls that are not herd-sire prospects should be castrated as early in life as possible. Early castration is less stressful on bull calves. Preferably, castration should occur between birth and four months of age.”

American Veterinary Medical Association policy on castration and dehorning: “Both dehorning and castration should be done at the earliest age practicable.”

This is the science of when to castrate. Our leading advisers all recommend castrating early.

As a cow-calf producer, don’t we want the stocker-backgrounder and feedlot owners to make a very healthy profit on our calves? The more profit (Continued on page 67)
Castrate...
(Continued from page 64)
made up the supply chain, the more money they have to buy again next

Certification...
(Continued from page 63)
cutting, bending and lockout-tagout, Devin said. A written test and interview also are associated with this portion of the program.

Making a difference
“This program continues to grow,” Miller said. “We continue to improve it year after year. As an industry, we see a huge need for the program to try to catch these students early enough so they will know there is an industry out here that needs them and offers a vast range of opportunities.

“Over the last six years, our member feed yards have taken a liking to the program, because it shows them that not only are the students coming in with some much-needed background and skills, but they also took time to learn more about the industry.”

He said the industry considers the interview as an important piece of the program, because it mirrors that of a student interviewing for a job.

“We feel this is super important,” Miller said. “Our theory is it doesn’t matter how much you know if you don’t know how to interview and get your foot in the door to be hired for a job.”

Also, he said, each student after completing the testing and hands-on training is provided a certificate of completion. They can take this to feed yards to show where they are proficient.

“We have run 458 students from about 25 different schools through the program – both segments combined,” he said. “And some of those students are going out and getting internships and finding employment within the feed yards.”

Miller said they consider the program as a living program, “so as we see the need to add different pieces and segments, we have the ability to do that.”

For more information on the Feedyard Technician Program, go to https://amarillo.tamu.edu/feedyard-technician-program/.

year. Every business transaction needs to be win-win or that relationship won’t last.

What are additional reasons to castrate early? Improved health for the calf as he moves to the next segment of the industry, increased price per cwt for steers vs. bulls, improved gain and feed efficiency, increased carcass marbling and quality, and improved carcass tenderness. The reasons to castrate late are as follows: none.

On the health side, KSU has kept data on 2,762 head of high-risk steers and bulls that it has purchased for its stocker research trials. The steers have had a 0.72% death loss, while the bulls that were castrated at the yard had a 2.28% death loss. On a 1,000-head basis, that is a loss of seven steers and 23 bulls — over a 3x increase in death loss. If you are a cow-calf producer selling feeder bulls, this number should make you wince. I know it does me.

Dave Daley, administrator of the Ag Education and Research Center at California State University, Chico,

(Continued on page 69)
TCFA launches new website telling cattle feeding story

Amarillo, Texas – Texas Cattle Feeders Association (TCFA) is excited to announce the launch of www.tcfa.org, an updated website devoted to telling the cattle feeding story.

This new website is intended to be a resource for TCFA members, industry associates and the general public seeking to learn more about the cattle feeding community. The new design is responsive, making it more functional on mobile devices and desktop screens of all sizes.

“With a modernized website, we have greater opportunity to tell our story online," said Levi Berry, TCFA chairman. “Whether people are looking for answers about cattle production methods, beef nutrition or the role of cattle feeders in their communities, this new tool allows us to shed light on the hard-working men and women who dedicate their lives to raising the safest, most responsibly-raised beef on the planet.”

The website encompasses more information about animal care, environmental stewardship and employee safety in relation to cattle feeding. TCFA is focused on utilizing the website to place relevant content more effectively on social media outlets and other digital platforms.

Another important new feature of the website is “The Latest” section, found on the homepage. This section shares details about TCFA-related events and news. More photography and video were also incorporated to create an engaging online experience. On the homepage is a video featuring Levi Berry, TCFA chairman and cattle feeder. The video can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoFB7779Fkc&feature=youtu.be.

“We’ve updated the website with a fresh look that is more mobile friendly and easy to use, but our hope is to add much more than just aesthetics," said Ross Wilson, TCFA president and chief executive officer. “We want to meet people where they are so they can better understand the role cattle feeders play in producing safe and nutritious beef here in our region.”

To view the new TCFA website, visit www.tcfa.org.

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Castrate...
(Continued from page 65)
spoke at a National Cattlemen’s Beef Association meeting a few years ago and said we need to stop saying things like, “I take great care of my animals because it is profitable.” That doesn’t resonate with the public.

He suggested a more heartfelt answer: “I take great care of my animals because it’s the right thing to do. I love working with livestock and caring for them regardless of the conditions — season, weather or time of day.” Many times, we do profit from “doing the right thing,” and castrating early is one of those “right things” that also raises our profit.
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