

For Immediate Release

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Fall Activities for the Beef Herd

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Fall is a busy time for many beef producers. Weaning time for spring calving herds is fast approaching. Winter feeding programs also need to be developed. A few last minute management suggestions may help weaning and winter feeding go easier for both producers and livestock.

Make sure the health program is properly carried out for both breeding animals and weaned calves. Vaccines have instructions on proper storage, handling, and administration methods. Be sure to read and follow those directions carefully.

The equipment used to handle vaccines should be thoroughly cleaned before and after use. Improper cleaning of syringes and needles could render vaccines ineffective. Again, directions for this process are included on the label or vaccine insert. Be sure needles are of the correct size for the job at hand, straight, sharp, and free of burrs. Appropriately discard damaged needles. Be sure syringes administer the correct dose and repair or replace as needed.

Take a final walk-through the pens and working facilities. Repair or replace broken boards, bent panels or gates, rotted posts, etc. Working facilities need to be solid and safe for both cattle and people. Properly designed and maintained working facilities greatly reduce handling stress for both cattle and people. Remember, though, that the design should be geared toward animal needs, not people.

Be sure to examine feeding areas. Repair or replace feed bunks, hay rings, gravel lanes, etc. Adequate bunk space should be available for all cattle in a group to eat at the same time. Bunk space requirements differ based on size of the animal and the type of diet being fed, but excess bunk space is more desirable than limited bunk space.

Test feedstuffs for nutrient content. Diets can be formulated for rate of gain and cost based on these test results. Feeding programs can vary widely in cost for the same animal performance. Shop around for supplemental feed ingredients based on the limitations of your forages.

Sort cattle into feeding groups by size, desired production, or body condition score. Using hay test results from 2013, supplement needs range from 6 to 14 pounds for mature cows, depending on how much body condition they need to gain before calving. Current costs for these supplements range from \$0.68 to \$1.46 per head per day.

Being efficient is vital to the economic success of a beef herd. Hopefully these ideas will help increase the efficiency of beef operations. If you have additional questions on any of these topics, contact me at the Extension Center in Warsaw at (660) 438-5012 or by e-mail at [schmitze@missouri.edu](mailto:schmitze@missouri.edu). University of Missouri Extension is an equal opportunity / ADA institution.