I’m enclosing a program for our 47th Monett Beef Conference. There should be some presentations that interest you. Some of these topics have been covered at other meetings but regardless how many times you hear a talk, you usually learn something new each time.

**OTHER CALENDAR ITEMS**


**POPULAR TOPIC**

I don’t recall having as many comments about one specific newsletter item as I had last month. The item was on castration. You’ll recall when our feedout steers were processed the first time in Iowa that 9 “steers” had to have one testicle surgically removed by the veterinarian. Those folks who remarked couldn’t believe there were that many “slips.” As we move into the calving season be careful that you do a 100% castration job and don’t make a feedlot cowboy or veterinarian correct your mistake.

**CALVING TIME TIPS**

These tips may be a bit late if you’re a January calver but here goes. We’ve known for a long time that feeding late gestation heifers and cows late in the day normally results in having more calves born in the daylight. Those females are easier to watch in case one needs help. The temperature should be a bit warmer in the daytime than at 3 am.

The most likely female this late-in-the-day feeding should benefit is the first-calf heifer. The use of an honest-to-goodness calving ease EPD bull helps but you can still have problems. For that reason, develop a schedule for someone to check in on the calving pasture regularly.

Back in the 1960’s, the Litton Charolais Ranch in north Missouri received much publicity by having a TV camera in their calving barn. Well, we have lots of video cameras around today to watch trails for deer, bears, big cats and trespassers. Why not place one in your calving area so you can follow what’s happening without going out each couple of hours?

Calves will still be profitable in 2016, just not as much as they were last year. They’re worth saving and one of the best ways to save them is be there and make sure they’re up promptly and that they received colostrum within 6 hours of birth. Glenn Selk, former Oklahoma State extension specialist states that calves need at least 2 quarts of fresh or thawed colostrum within 6 hours and another 2 quarts by 12 hours post-calving. If you don’t have the colostrum, commercial products should be used.

Glenn also reminds you if thawing colostrum to do so in warm water. If a microwave oven is used, set it on low power so the protein is not damaged. Colostrum in the calf’s first few hours has proven to be critical for top performance in an animal’s life.

Last summer on the tour to beef operations in South Dakota, one rancher said they used a lot of duct tape during the calving season. The purpose was to prevent frozen ears on newborns. They claimed if you got to the calf quickly and tape the ears back against their head and neck some ears can be saved. This might be helpful if you’re in the Show-Me-Select heifer program. The SMS program rejects heifers that have frost bitten ears.

For future reference, you might make notes in your calving records back about unusual calving/post-calving problems.

**OTHER NOTES FOR REDBOOK**

I imagine many of you already make comments in your record book about udder problems. The best time to do this is within the first day or two after calving. Udder and teat conformation is a moderately, heritable trait. That means you can make some progress by selecting against those problems like balloon teats and broken down udders.
There are scoring systems that breed associations recommend. But most of you probably just make note of the troublesome udders. Since it is heritable, you may need to be sure when you save daughters that their dams didn’t have poor teats and udders. Poor udders could result in calf health issues if the udder prevented the calf from nursing properly. Also, keep track of the sires of these females that have udder problems.

**MUD PROBLEMS**

Joel DeRouchey, Kansas State environmental management specialist wrote about the effects of mud on cattle performance. Granted most of it may not apply to the rocky hills of southern Missouri but I hear every now and then about how muddy your lots are.

- From a growth perspective muddy conditions have about a 30% higher net energy maintenance requirement.
- Feed intake is reduced by 5 to 15% in 4 to 8 inch mud.
- Feed intake decreases 15 to 39% in 12 to 24 inch mud.
- Daily gains are reduced 7% for dewclaw deep mud and 28% when in hock deep mud.

**SHOW-ME-SELECT SIGN UP TIME**

If you have an interest in participating in the development of Show-Me-Select heifers in 2016 I’d like to hear from you. That’s especially true if you’ll be breeding them this spring/early summer. Key items in the SMS early requirements are: calfhood vaccination for brucellosis before they’re 12 months old; have a BVD-PI negative test; have a veterinarian do the pre-breeding tract scoring and pelvic measurement and booster vaccinate about 30 days ahead of the AI data or bull turnout. Extension specialists become heavily involved when the vet comes to do the pre-breeding work.

**CALVING SURVEY FOR SMS**

Following each SMS sale we survey the buyers of the heifers and request they submit a short report on each heifer and how she and her calf got along. We’ve compiled the data from our May 2015 sale and I’ll share it with you.

- 283 heifers were sold by 20 consignors.
- 39 different buyers bought the heifers.
- 20 of the 39 buyers completed the survey.
- The reports received were 129 heifers or 46% of the sale.
- A 1 score on overall satisfaction was the best a heifer could receive. 112 of the 129 heifers were counted as 1’s. That’s almost 87%.
- A 3 rating was given to 6 head (< 5%) which meant the buyer was disappointed with those heifers.
- Reasons for displeasure were a little wild, very little milk, had big teats and one heifers pelvis wasn’t right.
- If the heifers actually calved within 18 days of the vet’s call I considered it a correct call – 84.5% of the heifers achieved that target – since this survey began in 2004 that’s right where our average falls.
- Some vets hit above 90%, thanks to AI use, ultrasound and lots of experience.

**GRASS OR WINTER TETANY**

I was interviewed recently about tetany prevention. I commented that we just don’t hear a lot about tetany today like we did in the 1970’s. It was almost an epidemic in 1973 as during January to early April hundreds of cows were diagnosed with tetany.

One University of Missouri veterinarian remarked that most of the super-sensitive cows died in that period and we shouldn’t see much of it for several years. His theory was there was likely a genetic connection to the metabolic condition that shows up as a magnesium deficiency.

Even though the vet’s idea had merit, you’ve probably helped yourself by providing more magnesium to your high risk cows during the January to mid-April; period. A mineral supplement with 10 to 15% magnesium can really help those 5 to 6 years and beyond cows in late gestation and early lactation.

Another aid is discovery that low soil phosphorus levels affects mag uptake by the forage. I’ll bet most of you have boosted your soil phosphorus levels thanks to poultry litter application or even buying more commercial phosphorus.

Tetany is a multi-factorial, metabolic condition that involves the animal, stressful weather, soil temperature and mineral makeup of the soil and feed supply. We didn’t know all of those relations in the early 70’s. Thanks to research and those who do it! Some of the soil work was done by University of Missouri researchers at the Southwest Research Center, Mt. Vernon.

**GENEOMIC TESTING & FESCUE**

Genomic testing is the hot ticket item currently. Some of you may have heard there’s a genomic test for cattle to assess their sensitivity to fescue toxins. Some of that work has also been conducted at the SW Center. To learn more go to [www.agbotanica.com](http://www.agbotanica.com)