

Production and Management Tips for Beef Producers

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BULL CLINIC SCHEDULE

March will be here before you know it so that's "take your bull or bulls to the veterinarian month" for their spring checkup. I'll list the special dates for some of the clinics but also check with other veterinary clinics if these are full or you have one closer. It just makes economic sense to protect your bull battery at least once a year in order to extend their life in your herd. It also helps you have a more closely bunched calf crop. The latter will pay off at marketing time.

March 6

Barry County Vet Service, Cassville 417-847-2677

March 11

Countryside Animal Clinic, Aurora 417-678-4011

March 12 & 13

Dake Veterinary Clinic, Miller 417-452-3301

March 14

Animal Clinic of Diamond 417-325-4136

Remember, about one in ten bulls will not pass their breeding soundness exam. One of your bulls just might be the one.

TESTED BULL SALE – MARCH 25

The 93rd Southwest Missouri All-Breed Performance Tested Bull Sale will be March 25, 7 pm at the Springfield Livestock Marketing Center. I wish I could say there was a good assortment of breeds but it's 41 Angus, 4 Charolais and 1 Gelbvieh.

Each of the 46 bulls has met the strict expected progeny difference (EPD) requirements for the sale. We require that bulls must rank in the top 50th percentile on 3 of the following 6 traits: calving ease (CED); weaning weight; yearling weight; milk; intramuscular fat (marbling); ribeye area (REA). These requirements assure that the bull has some, above average traits and should help some herds.

Some breeds have 20 or more EPD's or indexes to evaluate a bull on. Many of the bulls in our sale will have genomic data which improves the EPD accuracies. The genomic

data often is obtained after the bulls are catalogued but it's available sale day. Ask the consignors for it if you're interested in a bull.

I tell bull buyers that in order to be a sharp, knowledgeable buyer of bulls you must know something about your cows and heifers. Performance on your cows is just as important as buying a bull's performance genetics. The Missouri Steer Feedout provides an excellent means of finding out more about your herd's strengths and possibly its weaknesses.

Let me know if I can help you understand the bull's performance numbers. Oh, yes it's important to evaluate the appearance and structural correctness of a bull before you start bidding but make sure you admire his "numbers" first and not just his looks.

The bull sale catalog will be available about March 1. Get one and study the data. Most extension centers should have catalogs or you can go online and print it off at: <http://www.swmobcia.com>

AMMONIATED FESCUE HAY

On a rather cold, late-January day we had a little show, tell and smell afternoon at the University's Southwest Research Center, Mt. Vernon. They began feeding the anhydrous ammonia treated, low-quality fescue hay earlier in the month to 115 fall-calvers. We wanted those interested to see the cow's reaction when they were fed the treated hay.

The plan was to take an ammoniated bale and a non-treated bale to the feeding area. The "non"-bale was unrolled first and the cows and calves rushed in and began eating but kept following the truck as it finished unrolling the bale. The cows seemed discontented but continued nibbling on the "non" hay.

In a couple of minutes the workers took the treated bale about 50-75 feet away and started unrolling it. Every cow

charged over and started eating it. The calves very quickly took note and trotted over to the treated hay.

We watched from the bus for 20 to 30 minutes as the entire herd kept their heads down eating the treated fescue. The crew at the Center went after two more bales, one of each, and the same scenario played out in that pasture too.

We went back to the bale stack and took the plastic off and folks were able to see and smell the hay the cows craved. Several folks got a good whiff of the ammonia and said, “boy that will open up your sinuses.”

The Center had three stacks treated in early July. There were 327 bales total, 109 in each stack. They applied 2 ½% by bale weight of anhydrous to the hay and the total cost was \$10.61 per bale.

Here are the lab results, before and after treatment all on a dry matter basis. Samples were taken on the same bales.

	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>
Dry Matter %	90.96	80.83
Protein %	9.43	15.42
AD Fiber	43.90	43.82
ND Fiber	64.40	58.20
TDN	51.70	51.80
RFV	79	87

Yes, protein increases, neutral detergent fiber drops and intake increases. That adds up to better overall intake and the cattle clean it up. I usually tell folks to ammoniate their low quality hay that is straight grass with a neutral detergent fiber level of around 70% or higher.

Do not treat good hay. Years ago there were some incidences of crazy cow syndrome or bovine bonkers that showed up in a few places. The toxic compound seemed to also go into the milk and the nursing baby calves had a negative reaction. The cause was the hay was too good, applied due to the owner guessing bale weight wrong and/or the hay had wet sots in the stack.

Joining us at the Research Center was Curtis Schallert, Purdy. He outlined his experiences since Schallert Farms began treating their fescue after seed removal in 1981. Video of the feeding of the treated hay is available at: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthwestResearchcenter/>

THE FUTURE ???

Those attending the 50th Monett Beef Cattlemen’s Conference were given a look into the future by Justin Sexten. Justin was our Extension beef cattle nutrition specialist, then worked for Certified Angus Beef and in January joined Performance Analytics, a technology firm that monitors data for farmer cattle feeder all across the US. His topic at the conference was Consumers & Technology In Your Future. I’ll try to use some one-liners to bring out some of his key points.

- Many records are now kept “in the cloud” not in a shoe box, it’s going to increase and is cheap.
- Having a beef cow pay for a farm is a challenge today.
- Traceability of cattle is a big deal and is coming in the future for cattle from the point of origin to the consumer. Don’t fear it.
- “Blockchain” is a term heard more and more. It’s a method to trace animal information without releasing it to the wrong parties. If you’ve not heard the term, you will.
- You may not need to collect more data just use the data you’ve already collected over the years.
- The emphasis on Beef Quality Assurance BQA has come about because consumers told Tyson’s that they want it.
- Consumers are in favor of treating cattle that are sick but are not in favor of using antibiotics to prevent a problem.

OPEN COWS

Last fall veterinarians found more open cows at preg check than usual. Dr. Scott Poock, MU Extension veterinarian shared these possible reasons. A high percentage of opens occurred after mid-May breeding. Elevated temperatures earlier than normal probably was part of the reason.

Fescue endophyte toxins can add to a cow’s body temperature concerns after it reaches 103 degrees, especially the first week after conception. Also, when the weather gets hotter, cows don’t express signs of heat as much and have a shorter heat duration.

Finally, the weather can also impact the bull’s fertility and fat, young bulls especially may not be in shape for high conception rates.

CHRISTIAN COUNTY CONFERENCE

The Christian County Livestock-Forage Conference will be at the Clever High School on March 21, 6 pm. The Program will include: Beef Genomics 101 by Troy Rowan, University of Missouri graduate student, Columbia. The cost of Hay Production, Jim Spencer, Jr. MU Extension field specialist – ag business, Ozark and Beef Mineral Supplementation by Eldon Cole, MU Extension field specialist – livestock, Mt. Vernon.

For meal reservations call the Christian County Extension Center by March 18 at 417-581-3558.