

## Production and Management Tips for Beef Producers

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### **600 BEEF NEWSLETTERS**

This May, 2018 Beef Newsletter is number 600! I moved to Mt. Vernon May 29, 1968. I wrote the first of 600 letters in June. I'm enclosing a copy it. If you recall receiving that first letter, let me know. Sorry, I don't have any prizes if you show me a copy. I am just curious.

### **NOVEL FESCUE OPENS EYES**

On numerous occasions, I've written in this letter or in news releases to the media about the improvement in beef cattle performance when they are put on the novel fescues. Whether you call them novel, friendly, cool or whatever the real payoff is when you see how animal gain and reproduction are improved.

Last week at the Mt. Vernon grazing school, we took the 40 attendees to three different places that have some type of grazing management system in place. Their systems involve backgrounding 700 lb. steers, running a beef cowherd and a combination of cows and yearlong stocker program starting with 300 lb. calves.

Each of these operations do many management practices to dilute the negatives of Kentucky 31 "hot" fescue. Dilution is helpful no doubt, but the question is, does the dilution cost less than the conversion of "hot" fescue to the "novels"? Conversion runs in the \$200 per acre cost range. A host on the tour said conversion cost could run in the \$250 range.

A big cost in the conversion is the year or so time you won't get much production for your cattle in grazing or hay. We've accepted long ago after the novels were developed that not everyone would jump on the novel bandwagon. Quite a few have converted and report very positive outcomes. On the tour last week, one farm was cutting the novel brand, Texoma. It was established last fall and they couldn't have been happier with the results. Estimates were the yield would probably be 5 to 6, 1100-pound bales of dry

hay. That hay will go under roof and be very dry when baled. The target of moisture will be 15-16%.

If you plan to stay in the cattle business, long-term, and have a next generation coming into your business, think about the potential benefits of conversion. Weaned calf weights typically jump as much as 75 lbs. at 205 days. Cow pregnancy rates can approach the 90%+ compared to 75 to 80% on Ky 31. Stocker gains will advance from 0.25 to 0.5 lb. per day compared to plain, old Ky31.

Use your converted acreages to the novels on your most needful classes of cattle whether it's lightweight stockers or cows/heifers you may be trying to breed in hot weather.

### **TIMING OF AI**

This item should have been in the March or April letter. Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State, Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist wrote in a recent article about heat stress and artificial insemination in hot weather. We know "hot" fescue can wreak havoc with breeding cows in hot humid weather. The core body temperature of beef cows peaks at 2 to 5 hours after the highest daytime temperature. That being said, the peak body temperature of cattle will occur at 6 pm to 11 pm.

He concludes that inseminating all cattle in the morning hours will avoid the heat stress of evening breeding. Follow the fixed-time AI protocols so you're scheduled to breed in the morning.

### **MORE FROM GLENN**

Another item from Glenn Selk pertaining mostly to how to get more cows bred early in the breeding season. A Kansas State study showed that for each increase in body condition score there was an 18% increase in the number of cows cycling. Our target is to have cows at least in a BCS of 5.

Cow age is another factor. The % of first-calf heifers

cycling was 10% less than mature cows that were having at least their second calf. A problem with the two-year-olds is the shedding of their baby teeth. Their ability to consume forage may be likened to older, broken-mouth cows.

Cycling activity is also influenced by the number of days since calving. For every 10-day interval since calving (from less than 50 days to 70 days) the % of cow cycling increased by 7.5%.

### **ANAPLASMOSIS**

Kansas State did a statewide study last year on 925 herds (9250 difference animals) all across the state. Blood samples were collected and tested to determine the positive anaplasmosis herds. The state was divided into 9 districts. The percentage of anaplasmosis positive herds ranged from 18% in the northwest district to 33.9% in the southwest district. Eastern Kansas has a greater prevalence of anaplasmosis. Down in the southeast corner right next to us the percentage was 87.2%.

Some of their observations made me scratch my head. Herds using insecticide ear tags or the anaplasmosis vaccine were more likely to be positive. Herds that burned a greater portion of their pastures, as a practice management technique, each year were more likely to be anaplasmosis positive compared to those who did not practice pasture burning or burned less than 20% of their total pasture coverage.

I've heard veterinarians say we probably have more anaplasmosis problems in Missouri than we think. Check with your veterinarian regarding problems with it in your neighborhood.

### **PASTURE CLIPPING**

Going back to the earlier fescue article, I'd remind you that clipping fescue seed heads in May could be an aid in keeping fescue toxicosis problems from Kentucky 31. Clipping late in June may make the pasture look better but has little effect on toxin consumption. If you have lots of seed heads on your fescue, clip them as soon as possible.

### **A LOOK BACK**

Pat Guinan, MU Extension climatologist spoke at our Monett Beef Conference in early February. A comment he made was, "a hot" dry May is the best predictor of a dry summer." At the time, I'm writing this, May feels hot and dry. Hopefully, the early May weather may switch by the time you read this.

### **GROWTH IMPLANTS**

Growth implants arrived on the scene in the mid-1950's. The first were diethylstilbesterol or DES. They were used by feedlots plus DES could be fed in mixed concentrate feeds. The implant was not used in nursing calves initially.

The implants gave very good improvements in daily gains both on pastures and in the feedlot. The DES implants did have a side effect that a sharp-eyed cattle person might detect. It was an elevated tail head that was found objectionable by some. A few steers would also show some udder development.

Synovex and Ralgro implants arrived and again were used more by feedlots than by stocker folks. Cow-calf owners were not too excited about a product that could boost daily gains by 0.15 to 0.25 per day.

During our recent grazing school, several attendees asked about growth promoting implants for nursing calves. Several different implants are now available and usually are implanted in the ear of a calf at around 2 to 3 months of age. We normally only implant steers. Some products are cleared for feeder heifers but if you know the heifer will be kept as a herd replacement don't use the implant on them.

If you target a niche market that prohibits the use of growth proponents of course stay away from them. Implants cost around \$1.50 per head and the anticipated gains make them a good investment. You may be disappointed in the extra weight gain if pasture conditions and the cows' milk production are poor. For example, if your cattle run only on "hot" fescue and stocker gains on the fescue only are around 0.5 lb. per day, the implant won't give you much of a boost.

### **SHOW-ME-SELECT CHANGE**

The meeting of Show-Me-Select board members on April 26 via telephone and computer resulted in a significant change. Here is the change that both participants and seed stock marketers need to be aware of.

**Bulls purchased after February 1, 2019 must have genomic-enhanced EPDs. Previously purchased bulls will be accepted in the program until February 1, 2020, at which time all natural service bulls must have genomic-enhanced EPDs.**