

Production and Management Tips for Beef Producers

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ANNIE'S PROJECT

This is a seven week course that's been a most popular one for women involved in farming. It empowers farm women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information.

The class will be held at the Community Center in Butterfield beginning October 7 until November 18. The session's begin at 6 pm and end at 9 pm.

For more details call the Barry County Extension Center 417-847-3161.

BULL CLINICS

As has been the custom for 15 years we remind or encourage beef cow-calf folks to be sure and have some or maybe all of their bulls examined for breeding soundness. Bulls could have performed just fine in the spring breeding season but things can cause them to lose their breeding ability. View the cost as an investment in a closely-bunched, uniform calf crop one year from now.

Even if you plan to use AI on your heifers or cows, your cleanup bulls also need a checkup. Here's the schedule for me and co-worker, Patrick Davis at Stockton. We realize with all the bulls in the area that these clinics will only catch a small percentage of the bulls but we hope you'll work with your own veterinarian to help you take out an insurance policy on your calf crop in the fall of 2020.

Southwest Region

October 8 & 15	Dake Veterinary Clinic, Miller	452-3301
October 9	Barry County Vet Service, Cassville	847-2677
October 17	Animal Clinic of Diamond, Diamond	325-4136
October 30	Countryside Animal Clinic, Aurora	678-4011

West Central Region

October 8 & 10	Cramer Veterinary Clinic, Stockton	276-3597
October 9 & 29	54 Veterinary Clinic, Nevada	667-8381
November 5	El Dorado Springs Veterinary Clinic	876-5805
Oct. & Nov.	Stockton Animal Clinic, Stockton	276-4210

Patrick and I will be at the clinics to body condition score the bulls, give them a soundness score and some Angus bull users may have questions about the Angus' new EPDs on angle and claw set.

OCTOBER 28 – BULL SALE

The Southwest Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement Association will hold their bull sale at the Springfield Livestock Marketing Center on October 28 at 7 pm. We have two Red Angus and thirty-seven Angus bulls. There are several really good bulls, based on their EPD values. Historically, I feel buyers can purchase at this sale knowing each bull has some EPD strengths. Our sale requirements state that to qualify for the sale, bulls must have EPDs that are above average for their breed in three of six EPDs. Those six are: calving ease direct, weaning weight, yearling weight, milk, marbling and ribeye area.

I understand some of you may feel other EPD's or indexes are more valuable in your bull search but those six traits are a good starting point. Over the years the SW MO BCIA sales have had some real bargains and there probably will be some at the sale on the 28th. Catalogs will be available at Farmfest in Springfield October 4, 5 and 6. You also may go on-line and locate the catalog at <http://swmobcia.com/bullsale.html> after October 1.

FEEDOUT DEADLINE

Remember, if you're planning to enter the 2019-20 Missouri Steer Feedout the entry deadline is October 10. Actual delivery will be November 5. I was asked the other day if participants would make any money in the feedout. I can confidently say you'll have a 50/50 chance. At least over the years that's the record.

Yes, I wish I could guarantee a profit, but I can guarantee you'll learn something about your cattle's genetics. From that you can better make decisions on bulls to seek out for AI or natural service. If you want rapid payback for your feeder calves I encourage you to do more AI. Select bulls with high accuracies, at least .80. Better yet, select bulls with .90 + accuracy. Those latter bulls have enough progeny data that if the offspring from them doesn't work you probably could blame it on the cow or just one of those unusual occurrences.

SW CENTER BEEF COW HERD

The Southwest Center beef cowherd is in the beginning stages of making changes. Based on input from producers and stakeholders in this part of the state the primary focus will be on maternal traits that result in functional, fertile cows that excel in this region.

The 125 cow herd will remain a commercial herd of crossbred, Red Angus females. Replacement females will come from artificial insemination. At this point, the use of sexed semen will enable the program to speed up the effort to make the conversion from a SimAngus, predominantly black herd that some feel are a little on the large size.

Bull selection will place a lot of emphasis on the Red Angus Herdbuilder index, Stayability EPD and Heifer Pregnancy EPD. Carcass and Marketability will be a secondary focus. The secondary emphasis for natural sires will be terminal growth from different breeds to insert maximum heterosis in a defined crossbreeding program.

In addition to serving as an example in the region of effective use of technologies in converting a herd in a practical way, the herd will continue to be used as a leader in managing cattle on toxic endophyte-infected, Ky31 fescue which is a dominant species on most acres in the region. Other uses of the herd, long-term, is the search for genomic marker assisted selection, development and application of region-specific EPDs and reduce rates of early embryonic loss.

These are lofty plans but knowing the MU faculty and the Southwest Center staff, the next 10 years will be interesting to follow. The faculty plans to hold mini-tours of the beef/forage research periodically. Follow along by attending those tours and the first one was held following field day earlier this month. The cows looked great and there's 82 calves on the ground this week with 63 heifers and 20 bulls. Twenty-seven calves are red. The Center will utilize the Missouri Show-Me-Select Beef Heifer Development program to market heifers once an adequate number are produced. The steers will be sampled for post-weaning gain and carcass merit via the Missouri Steer Feedout.

DAIRY TO BEEF?

For a number of years we've witnessed an exodus of dairy producers to other farm ventures. Also, many decided to sell the farm especially if they were older with no younger generation waiting in the wings to take over.

A meeting was held at Mt. Vernon earlier in the month to look at considerations if a dairy anticipates making an enterprise change. I'll share with you my planned comments I was asked to address. Later in letters I'll review some of the other speakers' presentations. My topic was, "The Top 5 Questions I'm Asked."

- What's the best forage for pasture and hay?
- What breed or breeds should I run?
- I need help understanding expected progeny difference (EPD)? Should I worry about them if I only run a few cows?
- Why do my cattle not shed their hair and always seem to be hot and want to stand in the pond or make a mud hole?
- What mineral supplement do my cattle need?

Keep in mind I've written down many questions, mainly livestock and forage related. I started this in June, 1982 and now have 3,981 pages of yellow, legal-size paper with the question, the date asked and the county, state or country it came from. No, I have not written the answers I gave at the time the question was asked. As you might expect, research and time might change over the 37 years I've kept the log.

For example, my response to the first of my "5 most asked questions" is today:

What's the best forage for pasture and hay?

The main forage is Kentucky 31 fescue, but it's not as prevalent as it once was. It often contains a fungus (endophyte) that produces a toxin (ergovaline). The toxin causes poor gain and reproductive performance in cattle eating the forage. Researchers can replace the toxin-producing endophyte with a novel or friendly endophyte that gives the fescue plant the ability to withstand diseases, insects and dry weather. Animal performance is much better than with toxin-producing Ky31.

Legumes are still recommended in both types of fescue but do not include them in the novels for a year or two. If the field is primarily for pasture, we recommend using ladino clover. If for hay, red clover is favored. Alfalfa is still a very good addition to beef cattle diets as hay, creep feed or pasture. Don't forget Korean lespedeza as it can enhance mid-late summer grazing.

A variety of warm season grasses, such as bermuda, may be considered for summer. Be sure to visit with your Extension agronomy specialist.

I usually quickly add, please contact our agronomist for their ideas. In that span of years the agronomists have been Richard Prewitt, Tom Hansen and currently Tim Schnakenberg. The top forages of the time have gone all over the board. Here are some proclaimed to be a "can't miss forage". Alycia bermuda, World Feeder bermuda, matua brome, bison ryegrass, perennial ryegrass, annual ryegrass, fungus-free fescue, eastern gamagrass, bluestems, switchgrass, turnips, creeping alfalfa, radishes, comfrey, novel fescue, a variety of lespedezas and this list barely scratches the surface.