REDBOOKS ARE IN
The popular Redbooks are in most of the field specialist – livestock offices. The price is still only $6. If they are mailed to you then add $2 for postage. If you’ve been looking for a shirt-pocket sized record system you might find the Redbook will fill your needs. In addition to having space for nearly 450 births you will find the international birth years codes up to 2026. Looking at 2020 that letter code is H. Other items you can use include: gestation table, calf death loss code, calving ease score, calf vigor, body condition scoring system. Beef Quality Assurance practices, bull inventory and breeding soundness exams.

These books were developed in Idaho in 1985. Our first year of use was 1987 in Missouri. I have one or two cattle producers who started their use the first 2 or 3 years. Several began about 20 years ago and now use them for gathering field data and when time allows they transfer the field data to their computerized record system, which is the ideal way to use them.

FEEDOUT REPORT
On November 5 we processed 81 steers at Joplin Regional Stockyards for the 2019-20 Feedout. This year’s 81 steers from this part of the state weighed in at 655 lbs. Nine consignors made entries and those 81 head will join 45 head from the northeast part of the state in Iowa as part of their Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity.

In addition to ear tagging and weighing, Jodie Pitcock, USDA grader put a value on each calf based on what they would have sold for the previous day at JRS. Since they are in a retained ownership program Jodie subtracted $2 per hundred to account for no sale expense. The average price per cwt on the 81 head was $140.20 with a range from $100 to $156. The weight range for individual steers was 404 to 807 lbs.

This year’s steers were an excellent mix to show grade and price differences. You may not have realized it but beef-dairy crosses are gaining a lot of attention. We had a set of that blend in our group. The 9 head were AI sired by a Polled Hereford bull and were out of Holstein-Jersey cows. They were the ones that were set-in at $100 per cwt and they averaged 438 lbs.

Many of the steers were entered by long-time participants in the feedout. The live marketing panel made some of the usual comments about why they would discount them if bidding on them. Those comments included: a little too full, too fleshy, off-color, lacked uniformity, bad eyes, ears were frozen and they show too much ear.

We’re working on putting together a powerpoint on the web and have the panel’s comments and the pictures of the groups. That proved to be popular to acquaint interested persons with what the different segments of the market values or dislikes. The panel this time consisted of Jodie along with Chip Kemp, American Simmental Association/International Genetic Solutions and Jackie Moore, JRS.

If you’re a serious-minded cow-calf producer who intends to be in the business of raising feeder cattle in the future, you need to enter at least a representative sample of your calf crop in a feedout sometime and the sooner the better. Producers ask frequently how can I get feedback on how my cattle do post weaning. Well, you’re going to have to retain ownership on them or enter some type of program that guarantees you’ll get feedlot and carcass data back.

If you have a pot load of steers and some heifers you don’t keep for replacement work directly with a feedlot of your choice that will give you closeout data. If the data indicates you have above average cattle you’ll be able to build a resume” the auctioneer or market rep can help you market your next set of herdmates.

BULL CLINIC RESULTS
We held bull breeding soundness clinics on 5 days in October. The veterinarians checked 202 bulls and 190 passed 94%. Over the years the pass rate runs about 90%. Here are some averages and ranges.
Age of bulls: 2.7 years - 10 months to 8 years
Weight: 1475 lbs. - 752 to 2278 lbs.
Body Condition: 5.7 - 4 to 7
Soundness: 5.4 - 2 to 7
Scrotal: 37.7 – 29 to 46 cm
% Normal Sperm: 84.5 – 20 to 96%

A BSE also involves an exam of the accessory sex glands, inspection of the penis and prepuce. Some of the oddities noted on these bulls were: 37 bulls had pinkeye scars. In most cases except two vision was not affected. The main reason for failing the BSE was less than 70% of the sperm was normal.

I checked hoof problems and 29 head or 14% had long or curved toes that could impact their ability to get around the pasture. Three bulls had corns developing between their toes. Attention to hooves is a big deal in the beef industry now. You may have seen the Angus Association’s visual on hoof and pastern scoring. Angus breeders have been submitting scores on the animals they register for a few years and that data is being developed into expected progeny differences (EPDs). It is a subjective score but is a start to being able to improve soundness in the Angus breed.

Since Angus has been infused into many other breeds or composites they may be having an affect. Genomic evaluation will be helping speed up progress on soundness.

OTHER BSE OBSERVATIONS
Only 34 bulls were tested for trichomoniasis. All tests came back negative. Four bulls had knots on their jaw from previous abscesses.

The breed makeup was interesting. Angus, of course led the way with 56 purebreds or 28% of the group. This was the lowest percentage since we started these clinics in 2005. Coming in second was the Red Angus breed with 47 (23%). Next was SimAngus with 17 (8%).

We had some other interesting breeds and crosses like: Murray Grey, Ultra Red, Longhorn x Beef Master and purebred Longhorn. On the latter bull, his horns were too long to get down the chute so he was collected in the tub by a brave woman veterinarian along with some assistance from two good cowboys.

WATCH FOR FESCUE FOOT
The cold weather, 10 to 15 degrees, earlier this month could spell trouble for cattle grazing old Kentucky 31 fescue. If cattle have been grazing rank, fall growth that had a good bit (over 40-50 lbs.) of nitrogen applied in August or early September watch them closely early in the morning as they wake and start moving around. That’s when early symptoms such as limping on their rear legs is seen. They may have swelling around the top of the rear hooves usually the left one is worse. As they start to move around they look like they’re walking on eggs. They might stop and shake their rear leg like it’s asleep or even lick their rear leg.

If you see any of these symptoms, remove the affected animals to another pasture or a dry lot. All cattle on a pasture won’t come down with problems. Usually it’s only 15 to 20%, at the very most. Non-affected cattle are probably ok remaining on that pasture.

The limpers, if caught early, can recover but if you are busy and can’t move them they could lose a hoof eventually. The worst deal is when you find one with a break in the skin around the hoof-dew claw area. At first glance it appears there is a wire twisted around the area. The tail switch may also be affected and drop off later.

Keep a close eye on all cattle grazing fescue in the next month or so. I’d appreciate hearing from you if you see signs of fescue foot.

HEIFER DEVELOPMENT TIPS
State specialists in nutrition and reproduction, Eric Bailey and Jordan Thomas gave a nice review of heifer management back on October 29 at the SW Research Center. Here are a few tips you might wish to follow.

- From weaning to breeding feed them to gain about 1.5 lbs. per day.
- Don’t feed them too hard. Heifers fed too hard then are backed-off are more likely to lose pregnancies early in gestation, that results in rebreeds and calving later in the calving season.
- Test your forage to determine supplement needs.
- A widely accepted blend for feeding developing heifers when needed for energy and protein is one-third each, soyhulls, dried distillers grain and corn.
- Supplement heifers at 0.5% of their body weight if your forage is between 55-65% TDN. If forage quality is lower, under 55% TDN, supplement at 1.0%.
- Sort age & body condition groups as much as possible.
- Eric emphasized, “you can get heifers too fat!”
- Keep records! The best time to start was 20 years ago. The next best time is today.

The last comment, I believe came from Jordan so there’s a plug for buying a Redbook and transferring data to a computer records program.