

Livestock Manager



March/April 2009 Volume 4 Issue 2

CREATE A WEBSITE IN A FEW HOURS

March 11th @ 7 p.m.

April 4th @ 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.

Explore a quick and easy way to build a web site in a few hours yourself. This two-hour learning demonstration and workshop helps you identify your action steps to create your online marketing presence and allows you to explore all-in-one 1&1 packages starting at \$4.99/month for a web site address, hosting and simple steps and templated selections through an online account you can access from anywhere. If you know how to use basic word document software, this course is great for you — entrepreneurs and small businesses — who want to launch and maintain a very cost-effective, professional-looking web site yourself. If you already have a web site address and but nothing else, you can take advantage of this class, too! No html, asp or other web site coding programming knowledge or experience is needed. Come with some of your initial thoughts and ideas. Come to a workshop on Wednesday March 11th @ 7 p.m., or Saturday April 4th, 2009 at 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. at Cornell Cooperative Extension-Broome County, to get these and more questions answered. The instructor for this workshop will be Cheryl Fabrizi, owner of FabIdea.

The cost will be \$15/business and pre-registration is requested. Please call Carol at (607) 584-9966 if you have any questions or would like to register.

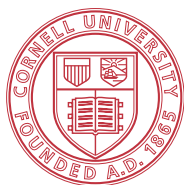
Shearing School

March 7 and 8, 2009

The shearing school will be held at the Cornell Teaching & Research Center Sheep Farm near Harford, NY south of Dryden, NY off of Route 38 on Slaterville Road.

Instruction will include the shearing pattern, blade sharpening techniques, physical fitness, handpiece maintenance and more. The instructor is Doug Rathke from Minnesota. Rathke is one of the top shearers in the United States and has had extensive training from the New Zealand Wools. Rathke is skilled at both machine and blade shearing.

Class size is limited to 20 students. The registration cost is \$150 per person. Deadline for registration is February 20, 2009.



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If you are unable to attend the shearing school, but are still interested in learning more about sheep shearing an instructional video tape or DVD is available. This 90-minute “how-to” video is filled with useful tips and information on shearing. The cost of the video or DVD is \$44.95 and may be obtained at the address below. To register for either shearing school or to purchase the video or DVD send your name, mailing address, phone number and a check or money order in US funds made payable to Doug Rathke and mail to Doug Rathke, 61231 MN Hwy 7, Hutchinson, MN 55350. Call 320-587-6094 if you have any questions.

FARM DAYS AT THE MALL 2009 APPROACHES!

Farm Days at the Oakdale Mall is right around the corner – March 13-15th, 2009. Don’t miss this opportunity to market your farm and agricultural products to the thousands who visit this event each year. If you would like free display space at the event, or would like to volunteer at the event as a helper or running an activity for the families, please contact Laura Biasillo at (607) 584-5007 or lw257@cornell.edu.

BROOME COUNTY 4-H TACK SALE APRIL 4, 2009

The Broome County Annual 4-H Horse Program Tack Sale will take place on Saturday, April 4, 2009 at the West Windsor department. Consignment items are needed, and may be dropped off at the fire station between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. On Friday April 3rd or between 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. On Saturday, April 4th. For more information please contact Linda Nixon, Tack Sale Chair at 607-693-5560.

CCE-BROOME TRANSITIONS TO E-MAILING NEWSLETTERS

Starting in January 2009, CCE-Broome will start emailing newsletters and information on workshops received from other agricultural agencies. Due to rising postage costs and reduction in support staff hours, all newsletters and workshop notices that can be emailed will be. Please contact Carol at (607) 584-9966 or clf62@cornell.edu with your email address. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

BEGINNING FARMER ONLINE COURSE

New for 2009: take the 10-week full course or a half (5-6 week) course. The first short course begins February 18, 2009 and will focus on goal-setting, evaluating physical resources of your farm, and choosing an enterprise. Second short course begins March 18, 2009 and will hone your marketing skills and examine pricing and profitability. Registration is \$100 for either short course or \$150 for the full 10 weeks. For more details, please see the full course description on the NY Beginning Farmer Project website. To register, call Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chenango County at 607-334-5841. Sponsored by the NY Beginning Farmer Project.

2009 NEW YORK LAMB AND KID TELE-AUCTION

One marketing opportunity for Easter 2009 is the Lamb and Kid Tele-Auction. The auction operates in the following manner:

1. During the 2nd to 3rd week of March, you estimate what the weight and quality grade of your animals will be as of March 27th.
2. You consign suckling kids and lambs to the tele-auction by March 23rd at 5 pm.
3. If you have at least 20 kids or lambs in the same weight/grade class, you indicate on the consignment form the lowest price per pound of live weight that you are willing to accept for them. This is called the “reserve price.” If you do not have 20 animals in one class, try to combine your animals with those of a neighbor or friend so that you can state a reserve price together. Otherwise, the managers of the sale will decide on a fair reserve price for animals in the weight and grade class of your animals.

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4. The sale takes place on March 27th at 9 a.m. Please note that you do not deliver your animals to the sale! Instead the sale takes place by phone. If the top price for your lot of animals is equal to or better than your reserve price, you are committed to deliver your animals to a centralized assembly point on April 1st. If your reserve price is not met, then your animals are not sold and you can instead sell them to a private buyer or take them to one of the many sale barns that hold Easter sales after March 27th.
5. Animals will be delivered to one of the following Empire Livestock sale barns:
 - Dryden on Tuesday 31 March 2009
 - Central Bridge on Wednesday 1 April 2009

Some advantages of the tele-auction are that it is the first auction held during the Easter season, more buyers participate than usually are available at a local sale, and if the reserve price is not bid, your animals have not left the farm and co-mingled with animals of unknown health history..

Tom Gallagher, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County, is one of the organizers of the sale. Tom can be reached at 518-765-3500 or tjg3@cornell.edu.

NEW RESOURCES FOR GOAT OWNERS KIDDING WITH CONFIDENCE

A new guide for “Kidding with Confidence” is a great resource for goat owners on proper kidding procedures. The “Kidding with Confidence” guide comes in a loose leaf notebook for added protection from goats and included color pictures, etc. It can be ordered for \$12 including shipping through the Cornell Sheep and Goat Extension Program’s administrative assistant, Victoria Badalamenti, at vb65@cornell.edu or 607-255-7712. Or you can print them yourselves. An electronic copy is available on the web at <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/goats/Resources/GoatArticles/GoatHealth/KidCare/KiddingHandbook.pdf>.

USDA ISSUES NATURALLY RAISED MARKETING CLAIM STANDARD

By Tom Johnston for MEATing Place on 1/16/2009

USDA on Friday issued a voluntary standard for naturally raised livestock and meat marketing claims.

The naturally raised marketing claim standard states livestock used for meat production have been raised entirely without growth promotants and without antibiotics (except for ionophores used as coccidiostats for parasite control) and have never been fed animal by-products. The standard sets the minimum requirements for producers who opt to run a USDA-verified program involving a naturally raised claim.

USDA said it reviewed more than 44,000 comments from producers, processors, consumers, and other interested parties in the development of this standard. It will be published as a notice in the Jan.16 Federal Register and titled “United States Standards for Livestock and Meat Marketing Claims, Naturally Raised Claim for Livestock and the Meat and Meat Products Derived from such Livestock.”

COMMISSIONER ALERTS HORSE OWNERS OF CONTAGIOUS HORSE DISEASE

Nine New York Horses Potentially Exposed to Contagious Equine Metritis

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker today alerted horse owners and breeders to the potential exposure of their horses to Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM), a contagious venereal disease of horses. Currently, there are nine known stallions outside of New York State that have tested positive for CEM and that have potentially exposed hundreds of other horses, including nine mares in New York State.

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Contagious Equine Metritis can be spread when horses are bred, or congenitally from mares to their foals. While natural breeding is more likely to spread the infection, horses involved in artificial breeding can also be exposed to CEM. Infected stallions seldom, if ever, show outward signs of infection, but may act as carriers of the disease.

To date, there are nine mares in New York and approximately 300 other potentially exposed horses in 37 other states. As potentially exposed horses are identified, they are placed under strict restrictions by state and federal animal health authorities, pending three consecutive negative test results. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and USDA veterinarians have quarantined the nine exposed mares in New York State and have begun testing. None of the potentially exposed mares in New York State or other states have tested positive for CEM at this time.

There are nine stallions that have tested positive for CEM. Used for breeding purposes, these stallions are suspect for possibly exposing mares to CEM. Following are the names of the known stallions that have tested positive for CEM:

- Gentlemen Send Roses, a Paint Horse from Indiana
- Hot Lopin Sensation, a Quarter Horse from Kentucky
- Indian Artifacts, a Quarter Horse from Kentucky
- Invited Back, a Paint Horse from Indiana
- Nanning 374, a Friesian from Wisconsin
- Potential Asset, a Quarter Horse from Texas
- Potential Investment, a Quarter Horse from Kentucky
- Repeated in Red, a Quarter Horse from Kentucky
- Zips Heaven Sent, a Paint Horse from Indiana

CEM may render mares infertile or may cause horses to spontaneously abort, however the disease can be treated with antibiotics and disinfectants. There is no evidence that CEM affects people.

New York farms owning mares, which have been bred to or have come into contact with any of the positive stallions, and who has not yet been contacted by state or federal animal health officials should contact the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Division of Animal Industry at 518-457-3502.

For more information and regular updates on Contagious Equine Metritis, visit http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/cem/index.shtml.

CENSUS OF AG SHOWS GROWING DIVERSITY IN U.S. FARMING

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The number of farms in the United States has grown 4 percent and the operators of those farms have become more diverse in the past five years, according to results of the 2007 Census of Agriculture released today by the USDA's National Agriculture Statistics Service.

The 2007 Census counted 2,204,792 farms in the United States, a net increase of 75,810 farms. Nearly 300,000 new farms have begun operation since the last census in 2002. Compared to all farms nationwide, these new farms tend to have more diversified production, fewer acres, lower sales and younger operators who also work off-farm.

Other findings:

- Women as principal operators up 30 percent

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- Hispanic operators up 10 percent
- American Indian, Asian and Black farm operators increased as well.
- The number of farms with sales of less than \$2,500 increased by 74,000
- The number of farms with sales of more than \$500,000 grew by 46,000
- The majority of U.S. farms are smaller operations
- More than 36 percent are classified as residential/lifestyle farms, with sales of less than \$250,000 and operators with off farm job.
- Another 21 percent are retirement farms, which have sales of less than \$250,000 and operators who reported they are retired.

Source: *CattleNetwork.com*

CORNELL SWINE SCHOOL FOR THE SMALL FARM FARMER TO FARMER EDUCATION

Saturday, March 28, 2009 – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Morrison Hall, Cornell University and Cornell Swine Farm

PURSUING PROFIT IN SMALL SCALE PRODUCTION

For those of us who want to operate more than just a hobby farm, profit is an important goal. The trick is accomplishing that goal without sacrificing personal values. In an era of commercialized agricultural production, the challenge of realizing this goal and maintaining our values is compounded when there is a void of information and suitable models. The purpose of this workshop is to provide some of that missing information.

Morning Session: Dr. Tro Bui - Moderator

8:30 Registration – 146 Morrison Hall, Cornell

8:50 Welcome - Dr. Ron Butler, Chairman, Department of Animal Science, Cornell

9:00 Bill Henning and his wife, Kathleen, homesteaded a diversified 80 acre farm over 30 years ago. Today they have a growing natural swine enterprise utilizing heritage breeds. Bill will discuss: farm scale, high welfare production, cost-saving considerations, marketing, and simplified financial evaluation.

10:00 Craig Haney is the Livestock Manager for the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture. One of Craig's responsibilities is the management of the swine herd in the wood lot – the environment pigs are best adapted to. Craig will address "Nature as a Model" with an emphasis on stable group farrowing in the woods.

11:00 Alan Hoefling is a farmer and co-founder of natural Farrowing Systems with his brother, Bob, in Marcus, Iowa. They operate a 200-sow hoop house farrow-to-finish operation. They have also developed the patented Nesting Box® that allows sows to successfully demonstrate their natural instincts in unheated buildings. You will see a video of a sow's own management of her nesting box, including the birth process. Hoop house production from farrow-to-finish will be discussed. This system can be implemented on any size farm.

12:00 Lunch (provided as part of registration fee)

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Afternoon Session

You choose:

Visit the Cornell Swine Farm

Karl Roneker, Manager, Cornell Swine Farm
and Dr. Tro Bui, Swine Specialist

- Tour Farrow-to-Finish farm, conventional facility
- Demonstrations and hands-on practices
- Artificial insemination
- Sow and baby pig management
- Feeds and feeding
- Herd health

Or

Open discussion – Morrison Hall

Topics;

- A hog marketing coop for the northeast
- Nesting box applications
- Hoop house production
- Cost cutting ideas
- Processing challenges
- What are your challenges -
Anything you want to openly discuss?
- This forum will be moderated so that everyone
will be in on all the topics

MEET AND SHARE questions and discussions with other swine farmers having similar interests. We can all learn from one another.

Space is limited – first come, first served. Return this tear slip with your \$5.00 fee (checks addressed out to Cornell University) no later than March 13, 2009, to Cornell University, 128 Morrison Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853. At-door fee is \$15.00.

Name _____

No. attending _____

Address _____

Phone/e-mail _____

The Debut of FarmingForumSite.com

Introducing FarmingForumSite.com, your new, free, online community, brought to you by the folks who bring you Farming: The Journal of Northeast Agriculture.

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Question or comment about a story or column from a recent issue of Farming magazine? Visit FarmingForumSite.com and post it there. Suggestions for story ideas, topics you'd like to hear more about and ideas for columns are all welcome.

This is your community; talk with pros and peers about whatever interests you. When you're wondering which new tractor to buy, who's had good luck with a particular control product or where to find the best hay, swing by FarmingForumSite.com and ask the members. There are sections for nearly every topic in agriculture, and as the community grows, we'll add new topic areas that are important to you.

Some of you may be familiar with our other online community, www.LawnSite.com, the Internet's largest and most successful community for green industry professionals, now with over 80,000 registered members. Our goal is to bring the same energy and sense of community to the agricultural world as we have to the green industry.

See you at FarmingForumSite.com!

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Legumes Can Boost Calves' Gains on Grass

Adding legumes to grass pastures can add gain for less cost than nitrogen-based fertilizer, says Bruce Anderson, University of Nebraska Extension forage specialist.

In fact, Anderson explains that average daily gain was about 0.40 lbs. higher for calves grazing bromegrass/legume pastures when compared to calves grazing bromegrass fertilized with 50 lbs. of nitrogen. That comes from a five-year study in eastern Nebraska.

“That much faster gain for the full season produced an extra 51 lbs. of beef/acre; with no nitrogen fertilizer. Adding the value of heavier yearlings plus reduced fertilizer expenses resulted in more than an extra \$50/acre profit,” Anderson says.

Anderson says February and March are good months to start adding legumes. “Red clover is the easiest to establish because seed can be broadcast on pastures even if covered with several inches of snow,” he explains. “As snow melts and temperatures fluctuate in early spring, the seeds will get worked into the soil, germinate and start to grow. With a little attention to controlling competition from the existing grass, new red clover plants can start increasing your pasture production by summer.”

Bottom line, Anderson says, “Don’t become trapped by the never-ending cost of nitrogen fertilizer. Use legumes to reduce costs and increase production.”

BEEF CATTLE COMMENTS, March 2009

Prepared by: Mike Baker, Beef Cattle Extension Specialist, Cornell University

1. BULLS GROWING AND GAINING ON THE NY BULL TEST

Each year, beef producers analyze their bull calf crop, picking out their best male calves to be competing in the New York Genetic Improvement Bull Test Program. Producers from New York and surrounding states are eligible to consign one or more bulls to this program. After weaning and a preconditioning health program, they are delivered to Erwindale Farms, in Waterloo, early November.

Upon arrival, the bulls are weighed, tagged, health checked and co-mingled with their contemporaries. They are fed as a group with a “start-up” period prior to the official start of the test. The test runs for 112 days, with the bulls being weighed every 28 days.

The 2nd weigh period was on 1-17-09. There are 39 bulls on test: 16 Angus, 2 Hereford, 12 Red Angus, and 9 Simmentals consigned by 18 different producers.

Breed ¹	AN	AR	HP	SM
N	16	12	2	9
Initial wt, lb	750	748	730	788
Dec. 20 wt. (28 DOF), lb	845	844	800	898
Jan. 17 wt (56 DOF), lb	970	956	876	1003
Period ADG, lb	4.5	4.0	2.7	3.8
Cumulative ADG, lb	3.9	3.7	2.6	3.8
WPDA	2.9	3.1	2.7	3.1

¹Breed AN=Angus; AR=Red Angus; HP=Polled Hereford; SM=Simmental

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Boasting the highest rate of gain so far is an Angus bull by Rito 112 of 2536 Rito 616, consigned by Equity Angus with a total Average Daily Gain (ADG) of 5.50 lb. The second high ADG was also an Angus sired by AAF Complete Design 131D consigned by JJK Angus, with a 4.79 lb. ADG. Highest in each breed were Red Angus at 4.73 lb. ADG sired by Perks Chateau 309R consigned by Shepard Settlement Farm; Simmental at 4.70 lb. ADG, sired by LECC Dice P3 (Perfect Timing) consigned by Ladybug Farm; and JKW Polled Hereford Farm's Dr World Class 517 10H son with a 3.29 lb. ADG.

Another "measurement" of production is their Weight Per Day of Age (WPDA). All bulls averaged an impressive 3.01 lb. WPDA. Highest WPDA was the Ladybug Farm's LECC Dice P3 son with a 3.71 lb. WPDA. Coming in second was a Red Angus consigned by Erwindale Farm and sired by Foster's Wind Ridge 564, with a 3.58 lb. WPDA. High performing Angus was tied with 3.27 lb. attained by Excelsior Farms' SS Objective T510 OT26 son; and a McCracken Vu's Southern Panhandle 3432 son. The high WPDA bull in the Hereford's was JKW Polled Hereford's Dr World Class 517 10H with a 2.91 lb. WPDA.

There will be a sale on April 25, 2009 at the Empire Farm Days facilities offering "The Cream of The Crop". Be sure to watch for more results as they get closer to graduating from this test. For more information, you can contact Jason TenEyck, 315-246-1359 or James Brown 315-549-8318, Test Managers. And you can view the individual animal's results at the New York Beef Producers' web site: www.nybpa.org.

2. NEW YORK FEEDLOT AND CARCASS VALUE DISCOVERY PROGRAM-56 DAY REPORT

Information taken from the 56 day weigh date is included in the table below. Conventional steers continue to out gain the natural steers. This is due to the lower energy diet required in the natural program which disallows the use of Rumensin. Rumensin reduces the incidence of acidosis on high energy diets.

In January, conventional steers which were determined to have at least 100 days until harvest and/or were projected to have a final body weight of less than 1400 lbs were implanted with Revalor XS™ or Revalor IH™, depending on gender. Implants are formulated and labeled to increase rate of gain and improve feed efficiency. Revalor XS™ is a new product this year which is formulated to provide performance enhancement over the entire feeding period. Intervet Schering/Plough Animal Health donates these products every year.

The weight at which the cattle are projected to reach low Choice, known as Adjusted Final Body Weight (AFBW) was determined by visual appraisal by Debbie Ketchen and me. We base this projection on our appraisal of their mature size (frame score), expected growth rate and degree of fatness.

A Temperament Score was also assigned to each animal using the Beef Improvement Federation Guidelines (see below).

Temperament reflects the ease with which animals respond to handling, treatment, and routine management. Animals with disposition problems are a safety risk to handlers, themselves, and other animals in the herd. Disposition affects handling equipment requirements, operation liability exposure, beef quality assurance, and performance. The scoring system provided below is designed to subjectively evaluate differences in disposition when animals are processed through a squeeze chute.

The first cattle will be marketed during the first part of March, with the majority reaching market in April and May.

If you have any questions or would like to view the cattle, contact Mike Baker, 607-255-5923, mjb28@cornell.edu.

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New York Feedlot and Carcass Value Discovery Program, 2008/2009 – 56 day report.

Item	Steers		Heifers	
	Conventional	Natural ¹	Conventional	Natural ¹
N	90	42	28	28
Initial wt, lb	680	494	663	671
Dec. 18 wt (28 DOF ²), lb	778	569	762	750
Jan 15 wt (56 DOF ²), lb	894	653	864	837
Period ADG, lb	4.1	3	3.7	3.1
Cumulative ADG, lb	3.8	2.8	3.6	3
Temperament score	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.2
AFBW ³ , lb	1242	1067	1149	1203

¹Cattle in the natural program are not fed an ionophore nor treated with growth promoting implants.

²Days on feed.

³Adjusted final body weight; weight expected to grade USDA low Choice

3. EMPIRE HEIFER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – 70 DAY REPORT

Heifers from 12 New York farms are participating in the 10th annual Empire Heifer Development Program (EHDP). The goal of the program is to feed and manage these heifers so that the majority is at the optimal weight for breeding on June 1. Research has demonstrated that heifers which are 65% of their mature weight at breeding will have optimal conception rates. The heifers were delivered on December 7 with an average weight of 545 lb. The average frame score was 5, which equates to a mature cow size of 1175 lb. On average, to reach 764 lb (65% of 1175), they must gain 1.1 lb/day through June 1. Based on the results of the 70 day weight most of the heifers are well on their way to reaching their target breeding weight.

While the number of heifers in each group limits any statistically significant conclusion, it is included for interest sake. Simmental cross and Angus heifers have the highest ADG. Comparing the purebred and crossbred heifers, the advantage goes to the purebred heifers (2.4 lb vs 2.2 lb for purebred and crossbred heifers, respectively).

On April 25 at the site of Empire Farm Days in Waterloo, a selection of these heifers will be offered for sale. Following breeding, another group of these heifers will be offered for sale October 25 in the Cornell Replacement Heifer sale.

For more information contact Mike Baker, Beef Extension Specialist, mjb28@cornell.edu, 607-255-5923.

Empire Heifer Development Program – 70 Day Report

Breed ¹	AN	AR	HP	SM	ANX	LMX	SMX	All
n	57	2	5	6	1	3	4	78
Initial wt., lb	529	586	490	630	662	550	659	545
Jan. 17 wt (70 DOF), lb	700	751	627	777	764	653	858	710
Cumulative ADG	2.5	2.4	2.0	2.1	1.5	1.5	2.8	2.4
Age, mo.	7.4	7.1	6.9	7.8	6.8	7.0	8.1	7.4
Frame score	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.9	5.8	5.7	5.9	5.0

¹Breed AN=Angus; AR=Red Angus; HP=Polled Hereford; SM=Simmental; X=cross

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4. TEMPERAMENT SCORING OF BEEF CATTLE

1. TEMPERAMENT SCORING OF BEEF CATTLE

Evaluation of the temperament of beef cattle	
Score	Description
1 - Docile	Mild disposition. Gentle and easily handled. Stands and moves slowly during processing. Undisturbed, settled, somewhat dull. Does not pull on headgate when in chute. Exits chute calmly.
2 - Restless	Quieter than average, but may be stubborn during processing. May try to back out of chute or pull back on headgate. Some flicking of tail. Exits chute promptly.
3 - Nervous	Typical temperament is manageable, but nervous and impatient. A moderate amount of struggling, movement and tail flicking. Repeated pushing and pulling on headgate. Exits chute briskly.
4 - Flighty (Wild)	Jumpy and out of control, quivers and struggles violently. May bellow and froth at the mouth. Continuous tail flicking. Defecates and urinates during processing. Frantically runs fence line and may jump when penned individually. Exhibits long flight distance and exits chute wildly.
5 - Aggressive	May be similar to Score 4, but with added aggressive behavior, fearfulness, extreme agitation, and continuous movement which may include jumping and bellowing while in chute. Exits chute frantically and may exhibit attack behavior when handled alone.
6 - Very Aggressive	Extremely aggressive temperament. Thrashes about or attacks wildly when confined in small, tight places. Pronounced attack behavior.

Guidelines For Uniform Beef Improvement Programs. Beef Improvement Federation. 2002-Eighth Edition. www.beefimprovement.org

5. PREPARING FOR CALVING ASSISTANCE

Recognizing normal calving is just as important as knowing when calving is abnormal. If delivery is prolonged, the calf may be born dead or in a weakened condition. Since timing is vital to providing proper assistance, frequent observations are a must.

The most common mistake made is intervening too soon. After studying the natural process, one can see how easy it is to damage a cow and/or calf by interfering in labor too soon. Many people wrongly attempt to pull the calf as soon as feet appear outside the vulva. When the feet first appear, the cervix may still not be fully dilated, and the vagina and vulva have not had a chance to relax to their full extent. Forceful traction or excessive pulling at this point, especially with a large calf, may cause a ruptured cervix or produce a lacerated or torn vagina and vulva, risking the danger of prolapse, fatal bleeding and/or infection.

So the question then is “How do I know when to assist delivery?” Because the length of labor can vary, the best general recommendation is to intervene when no demonstrable progress is seen within 30 minutes. This is not to say that the calf should be delivered but rather to examine the cow and calf to determine if a problem is present. If, after examination, no problem can be identified, then the cow should be allowed to continue labor unassisted for another 30 minutes.

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Appropriate examination technique must be used to reduce the possibility of injury to the vagina and uterus and introducing contamination into the uterus. The cow should be properly restrained to prevent injury to the examiner as well as the cow and/or calf. Restrain the cow with head catch or halter. Tie the tail with light twine to the neck of the cow. A clean, well lighted that is area protected from inclement weather is desirable. Equipment needs are a clean bucket, several gallons of hot water, soap (for cleaning the cow), disinfectant, obstetrical lubricant, paper towels, obstetrical (OB) chains and handles and plastic sleeves. Add hot water and disinfectant the bucket and place the calving chains and handles in the disinfectant solution.

Cleanliness cannot be overemphasized. Introduction of bacteria by equipment or arms of the person assisting with the calving may reduce fertility of the cow by delaying return to estrus and lowering conception. Scrub the perineal area (around the anus and vulva) and the tail with soapy water. Pour disinfectant water from the bucket to rinse the area. Do not dip dirty hands or towels back into the bucket. When the area is clean, dry with paper towels. Use the remainder of the water in the bucket to wash your hands and arms, then refill bucket with fresh water and disinfectant. If possible use plastic sleeves on examination. This may prevent contact with abortion causing organisms which can infect humans. Apply liberal amounts of an obstetrical lubricant to the sleeves.

The Examination Process

A clear mental picture of the steps in examination is needed. The examination should be performed the same way every time to reduce the possibility of overlooking a potential problem. The examination should be made with specific questions or goals in mind. These include:

- *Is the vagina unrestricted and the cervix dilated?*

The examiner should insert a hand into the vagina, palm flat against the vaginal wall and slowly slide forward. When fully dilated, the cervix is barely noticeable as a thickened band at the front end of the vagina. If this band or ridge is definitely felt, it is probably the cervix which is not fully dilated.

- *Is the water sac broken?*

If the sac is not broken and the calf is not well into the pelvic canal, it should not be broken as this can actually retard progress and cause danger to the calf. If the sac is broken, determine the amount of fluid and natural lubrication present. The less fluid present and the drier the calf feels, the bigger the potential problem.

- *Is the calf in the normal presentation and position?*

The normal anterior presentation and position is the back of the calf facing the back of the cow, head first, both front legs extended with the head lying extended between and resting on them (anterior dorsal sacral). This position is determined by noting 3 things: 1) identify the head, 2) the hooves face down, and 3) the first two joints of the legs (the fetlock and the knee) bend in the same direction.

The normal posterior presentation and position (backward calf) is the back of the calf facing the back of the cow, tail first, both rear legs extended backward (posterior dorsal sacral). This position is determined by noting 3 things: 1) identify the tail, 2) the hooves face up, and 3) the first two joints of the legs (the fetlock and the stifle) bend in the opposite direction.

- *Can the calf pass through the pelvic canal?*

This is often the most difficult question to answer, but is one of the most critical. To help answer this question, some simple “test for delivery” can be utilized.

Livestock Manager

There are 3 tests for delivery that can be utilized for a calf in the normal, head-first presentation. The first test is based on the assumptions that the cow is in Stage II of labor, the calf's head has not entered the pelvis, and the calf's fore limbs are extended.

- First test for delivery

A separate OB chain is placed on each fore limb. Pull on both OB chains simultaneously with approximately 200 pounds of force (the strength of 1 adult). The fore limbs are pulled through the maternal pelvis and the calf's head should fully engage the pelvis. This is denoted by the poll of the calf's head fully entering the bony pelvis. If the head does not fully engage the pelvis, the first test has failed.

There is a variation on this test. If the head fails to enter the pelvis, traction can be placed on the head via eye hooks or a head snare. Consideration should be given to the experience and skill of the operator.

- Second test for delivery

Recognize that in many dystocias encountered, the head and limbs will have entered the pelvis, thus passing the first test for delivery. If this is the case, proceed with the second test.

With OB chains on each limb, pull on one limb with approximately 200 pounds of force (the strength of 1 adult). Continue to pull until the limb is extended as far as possible. The first joint of the limb (fetlock) should extend at least one hand's width beyond the vulva. If the cow is lying down, the down limb is extended first. If the limb cannot be extended one hand's width beyond the vulva, the second test for delivery has failed.

- Third test for delivery

Once the first limb is extended, its position is held and the other limb is pulled with the force of up to 2 people (approximately 400 pounds). The first joint of this limb (fetlock) should extend at least one hand's width beyond the vulva. If this second limb cannot be extended one hand's width beyond the vulva, the third test for delivery has failed.

If any one of the three tests for delivery fails, the delivery may be difficult and veterinary expertise is probably needed. If all three tests for delivery are accomplished successfully, attempts to deliver the calf can continue.

Outcome of the Examination

After completing the examination, the following outcome assessments should be made:

1. I have made the necessary corrections and the calving is progressing
2. I don't know the problem I am facing.
3. I know the problem and the solution, but I am unable to handle it.
4. I know the problem and the solution, but I have been unsuccessful in correcting it within 15 minutes.

At this point, it is easy to determine if veterinary assistance is needed and if it is needed, do not delay as it could place the calf and/or cow in jeopardy.

Source: Dr. Bob Larson, DVM Kansas State University

6. FEEDER'S CORNER

a) Lung Adhesions: The Invisible Cost

When cattle get sick, it hurts performance and quality. But it's not always easy to tell those cattle from the healthy ones. Cattle with chronic pneumonia can cost producers nearly \$80 per head, without showing signs of illness.

Livestock Manager

The loss of gain would be the biggest cost, and then loss in quality grade would come in second, said Darrell Busby, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension beef specialist. The third loss would be in treatment cost.

ISU and Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) analyzed six years of health data from the university's feed-out program. Of nearly 27,000 head in the Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity (TCSCF), 4% had lung adhesions. It's showing us chronic pneumonia with that lung adhering to the rib cage, Busby said. At the packing plant, they have to literally take a knife and cut the lung away from the rib cage.

Since it is not routinely part of carcass data collection, many feeders may have no idea when their cattle have lung adhesions.

We had a load of cattle in the plant and the kill floor supervisor came over and said, I want to show you this lot of cattle that have really bad lungs, Busby said. It was taking them more labor to harvest those cattle and they had increased trim loss, so Busby decided to start collecting the data to see what difference it made to producers.

As it turns out, the effect is huge. Average daily gain (ADG) decreased from 3.3 pounds (lb.) per day on the healthy cattle to 3.1 lb. per day on the cattle with lung problems.

Quality also suffered. The majority graded 68.8% Choice and above, but that dropped by more than 8 points in cattle with lung adhesions. On cattle eligible for the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) brand, average acceptance rate was 20.9%, compared to only 14.9% in those with lung adhesions.

It also increases your discount cattle, your Standards, Corah said. Those are huge discount cattle with \$15 to \$20 per hundredweight (cwt.) in carcass costs.

More than 73% of cattle with lung adhesions went untreated in the feedyard.

That can relate to two things, he said. Either their sickness was missed during the feedlot phase or health problems occurred prior to the feedlot.

All cattle with lung problems lost performance and quality grade, but the treated cattle fared worse than non-treated. Percent Choice or better was 10 points lower, and CAB acceptance was cut in half among the treated cattle, compared to non-treated with lung adhesions. This much more dramatic impact on those that were treated suggests they were very seriously sick cattle, Corah said. Or the non-treated cattle got sick earlier in their lifetime.

That tells me those cattle had likely been challenged before and probably weren't challenged in the feedlot, Busby said. That's why they gained better and had better quality grades than the treated calves with lung adhesions.

The TCSCF has strict vaccination and preconditioning protocols.

In principle, these should be lower-risk cattle than industry averages, Corah said. Even so, we see the tremendous economic consequences of health problems when they occur.

Busby explains that the programs setup makes it somewhat unique.

These people are retaining ownership, so it's in their financial interest to get the cattle properly vaccinated, weaned and preconditioned. Ultimately, they're the ones that pay the bill, he said. If were at 4.1% lung adhesions, my guess is that the industry would be higher than that.

Other research in the project showed cattle treated twice for disease had 14% mortality rate and had a treatment cost of \$54.07. That compared to a death loss of nearly zero on non-treated cattle and 5.49% on those treated just once.

Livestock Manager

Health problems are huge challenges for feedlots because these are costs that go above and beyond the daily operation of feeding cattle, Corah said. In addition to veterinary expenses, sick cattle require extra labor inputs, he explains.

Those treated twice for disease also suffered an 18 percentage-point drop in cattle grading Choice and above. CAB decreased from 21.4% to 14.8%.

Release provided by CAB.

b) Effects of Direct-Fed Microbial Products on Yearling Steer Performance

There are a number of direct-fed microbial products available for use in feedlot diets. In this West Texas A & M Univ. study, 200 crossbred yearling steers (795 lb) were allotted to either one of two different dietary treatments: 1) Diet top-dressed with tap water only (Control); or 2) Diet top-dressed with Micro-Cell LA for 28 days followed by Micro-Cell PB from day 29 to harvest at day 140 (LA/PB). Micro-Cell LA contains *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, while Micro-Cell PB contains *Propionibacterium freudenreichii*.

There were no differences between treatments in performance traits during the first 28 days. Furthermore, overall performance from day 1 to day 140 was not affected by treatment. Carcasses from Control steers had slightly greater external fat thickness than LA/PB steers (0.51 vs. 0.47 in.). However, there were no differences in other yield grade or quality grade attributes (Brown et al. 2006. Beef Cattle Research in Texas. The Texas A & M. Univ. System).

7. EXPECTED PROGENY DIFFERENCES ARE COMPARABLE TO REALIZED PROGENY DIFFERENCES

University of Kentucky and University of Florida researchers conducted a summary of many previous studies that compared expected progeny differences (EPDs) with actual realized progeny differences for various beef cattle traits. The summary involved data from six breeds: Angus, Brangus, Charolais, Limousin, Polled Hereford, and Simmental. Traits were: birth wt. (BWT), weaning wt. (WWT), yearling wt. (YWT), marbling (MAB), carcass wt. (CWT), fat thickness (FAT), loin eye area (LEA), percent lean yield (% LY), milk (MLK), maternal (MAT), and scrotal circumference (SC). Following is a summary:

- Realized progeny differences agreed well with EPDs for BW and WW, but for YW, realized tended to be greater than EPD, especially when YW was the primary sire selection criterion.
- Relative to sires with low EPDs for MAB, CWT, FAT, LEA, and % LY, sires with high EPDs sired progeny with higher MAB scores and greater CWT, FAT, LEA, and % LY.
- Sires with high EPDs for MLK and MAT sired daughters that produced more milk and weaned heavier calves than sires with low EPDs.
- Sires with high EPDs for SC sired daughters that reached puberty earlier.

The authors noted that the similarity between expected and realized progeny differences should be greater when high EPD accuracy sires are used, but when a small number of low accuracy yearling bulls are used, expected results may not be realized (F.A. Thrift and T.A. Thrift. 2006. Prof. Anim. Sci. 22:413).

Livestock Manager

8. TO DO MARCH/APRIL

A. Calving season is here or fast approaching. Do you have the following items:

1. Frozen colostrum
2. Calf pulling equipment
3. Stomach tube, thermometer, dry towels
4. Ear tags, navel dip (7% iodine)
5. Selenium, Vitamin A&D injections
6. Castration and dehorning equipment
7. Therapy for scours and respiratory problems
8. VETERINARIAN'S PHONE NUMBER

B. Practice good calving management:

1. Provide clean dry area for calving. Clean, frozen or snow covered pasture protected from the wind works well.
2. If calving in a barn, keep area well cleaned and bedded. Barns, while comfortable for the manager, are a great place to harbor disease organisms that increase throughout the calving season.
3. Make sure calf consumes 1.5-2.0% of its body weight (1-2 quarts) of colostrum within 4-6 hours.
4. Be prepared to provide fluids to scouring calves that become dehydrated. Consult veterinarian for advice.

C. Plan spring fertilizer needs. Mid to late April is an excellent time to apply nitrogen to grass. Consult Field Crop agent at your local Extension office.

D. Prepare for pasture season. How will you control flies this year: tags, pour-ons, back rubbers? It is not recommended to use insecticides furnished in feed or minerals.

E. Get ready for breeding season;

- If you use A.I. order semen and check your equipment. Be sure breeding corral is in working order
- If breeding naturally, make sure you have enough bulls: 10-15 cows per yearling bull; 20-25 cows per 2-year old bull; 30-35 cows per mature bull.
- Have phosphorous source in form of free-choice mineral mix; phosphorous is important for maximum fertility.
- Yearling British heifers should weigh a minimum of 700 lbs. and continental heifers a minimum of 750 lbs. before being bred.
- If lactating cows are thin and not cycling, feed more energy.
- Consult your veterinarian for a vaccination program that meets your needs. At a minimum consider vaccinating for IBR, BVD, BRSV, PI3 and Leptospirosis.



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