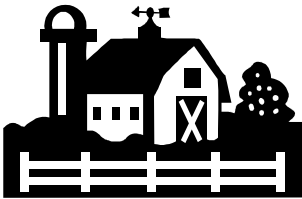


GREEN COUNTY AGRICULTURE NEWS

July
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K.A.R.E.

The Green County Cattlemen's Association is the sponsor of the Kentucky Agriculture Relief Effort program that is now underway. Green County agriculture producers can now apply for cost share funding towards certified seed, fertilizer, watering systems, fencing, and a whole host of other areas in the amount of \$1,500. This is a 50% cost share match program. Applications are now available from the Green County Cooperative Extension Service and are due into the office by July 9, 2008.

For more information, contact the Green County Cooperative Extension Service at 270-932-5311.

The UK Beef Bash 2008:

A Different Kind of Field Day

Mark your calendars now for a different kind of field day! The first ever Beef Bash will be held at the Research & Education Center in Princeton on September 23, 2008. More information about exhibits and other educational opportunities coming soon! This is an excellent opportunity to visit with UK research, extension and administrative personnel as well as the leadership of the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association. Visit <http://ces.ca.uky.edu/beefirm/bash/> for updated information. Sponsored by the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture and the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association.

Use Pregnancy Diagnosis to Cull Replacement Heifers Early

Many ranchers choose to breed the replacement heifers about a month ahead of the mature cows in the herd. In addition, they like to use a shortened 45 to 60-day breeding season for the replacement heifers. The next logical step is to determine which of these heifers failed to conceive in their first breeding season. This is more important today than ever before.

As the bulls are being removed from the replacement heifers, this would be an ideal time to call and make arrangements with your local veterinarian to have those heifers evaluated for pregnancy in about 60 days. In two months, experienced technicians should have no difficulty identifying which heifers are pregnant and which heifers are not pregnant (open). Those heifers that are determined to be "open" after this breeding season should be strong candidates for culling. Culling these heifers immediately after pregnancy checking serves three very economically valuable purposes.

1) Identifying and culling open heifers early will **remove sub-fertile females from the herd**. Lifetime cow studies from Montana indicated that properly developed heifers that were exposed to fertile bulls, but DID NOT become pregnant were often sub-fertile compared to the heifers that did conceive. In fact, when the heifers that failed to breed in the first breeding season were followed throughout their lifetimes, they averaged a 55% yearly calf crop. Despite the fact that reproduction is not a highly heritable trait, it also makes sense to remove this genetic material from the herd so as to not proliferate females that are difficult to get bred.

2) Culling open heifers early **will reduce summer forage and winter costs**. If the rancher waits until next spring to find out which heifers do not calve, the pasture use and winter feed expense will still be lost and there will be no calf to help eventually help pay the bills. This is money that can better be spent in properly feeding cows that are pregnant and will be producing a salable product the following fall.

3) Identifying the open heifers shortly after (60 days) the breeding season is over will **allow for marketing the heifers while still young** enough to go to a feedlot and be fed for the choice beef market. The grading change of several years ago has a great impact on the merchandising of culled replacement heifers. "B" maturity carcasses (those estimated to be 30 months of age or older) are very unlikely to be graded Choice and cannot be graded Select. As a result, the heifers that are close to two years of age will suffer a price discount. Currently non-pregnant, yearling 875 pound heifers (shortly after a breeding season) are selling for about \$94 per cwt. Therefore an 875 pound, culled replacement heifer is worth about \$822. Non-pregnant two-year old cows are selling for about \$65 to \$70 per cwt. Open two-year old cows (those that could have been identified shortly after the breeding season) that weigh 1000 pounds would only sell for about \$700 next spring.

The average expense for owning the cow is about \$1 per day. So the total loss of keeping the open heifer would be about \$200 in feed and forage and another \$122 in lost value. **The grand total expense for not culling open replacement heifers in today's market is about \$322 per head**. Therefore, it is imperative to send heifers to the feedlot while they are young enough to be fed for 4 to 5 months and not be near the "B" maturity age group. Certainly the percentage of open heifers will vary from ranch to ranch. Do not be concerned, if after a good heifer development program and adequate breeding season, that you find that 10% of the heifers still are not bred. These are the very heifers that you want to identify early and remove from the herd. It just makes good economic business sense to identify and cull non-pregnant replacement heifers as soon as possible.

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Timely Tips

Spring-Calving Cow Herd

The breeding season continues. Observe the cows and bulls! Watch bulls for injury or lameness and change bulls if a high percentage of cows are returning to heat. Record cow breeding dates to determine next year's calving dates and keep records of cows and bulls in each breeding group. Use your IRM Beef Calendar to record breeding dates.

This is a critical time for getting cows bred. They should be on good pasture with clover and preferably low endophyte levels for the spring breeding season. Keep pastures vegetative by clipping or making hay. Cows should have abundant shade and water; heat stress can ruin the breeding season.

Keep a good pasture mineral mix, which contains adequate levels of phosphorus, vitamin A, selenium and copper, available at all times. Consider a special area for creep grazing calves, or practice "forward grazing", allowing calves to graze fresh pasture ahead of the cows. This can be accomplished by raising an electric wire or building a creep gate.

Fall-Calving Herd

Wean calves as soon as pasture quality deteriorates, if not already done.

Pregnancy test cows if not done previously.

Cull cows at weaning time

- Smooth-mouthed cows
- Cows weaning light weight and/or poor-quality calves
- Open cows

Select replacement heifers on the basis of:

- conformation
- weaning weight
- temperament
- dam and sire records
- select more than needed to allow for culling after a short breeding season
- select heifers that will reach their target weight by the beginning of their breeding season



General

Finish harvesting excess pasture as hay soon! It should be cut before it becomes too mature. Be sure and replenish your reserves. Try to put up more than you think you will need.

Pasture should supply adequate energy, protein and vitamins at this time. However, be prepared for drought situations. Don't overgraze pastures so that recovery time will be faster. Overgrazed pastures will recover very slowly during July/August.

Keep pastures small for rotational grazing so that nutritive quality can be maintained. They should be small enough so cattle do not graze longer than a week. As the season progresses, you need several paddocks to give each properly stocked pasture about 4 weeks' rest.

Clip grazed-over pastures for weed control and so that seed heads do not irritate eyes. Pastures should be kept in a vegetative state for best quality.

Control flies. Consider changing insecticides and/or methods of control this year, because insecticide resistant flies may have developed if you have used the same chemical year after year.

Prevent/Control pinkeye

- consider vaccinating,
 - control flies,
 - clip tall, mature grass,
 - treat problems quickly, inject antibiotics and steroids in infected animal's eyelid or intramuscularly according to product used.
- Glue patch over eye.

Maintain a clean water supply and check it routinely. Water is extremely important in hot weather.

