



Cow-Calf Management Guide

III. Breeding Season

Management Objective—Manage cows and bulls for maximum conception rate.

Reproductive performance—The measure of the reproductive rate of a cow or herd expressed over a time period.

Detection rate—Refers to the recognition of cows that would be receptive to the bull against those that would be receptive but not identified.

Estrus—The actual heat period or period of standing for the bull.

Estrous—Refers to the cycle from one estrus period to the next.

Estrus synchronization—Bringing a large group of cows into standing heat by artificial means.

Prostaglandins—A compound that will alter the estrous cycle to bring a group of cows into heat in a short period of time.

Points to Remember

- *Reproductive performance* is quite poor in cows with low level energy rations the last trimester of pregnancy. Cows with adequate or high level of nutrition have excellent reproductive performance. **CL325, 331, 720**
- A sound health program and good nutrition are requirements of any breeding program. They become even more important in an A.I. program. **CL330, 404, 406, 408, 442, 600, 602, 605, 681, 691**
- A higher *detection rate* of cows in heat has been observed before noon than during the afternoon and evening. Shortly after sunrise a special effort should be made to detect *estrus*. **CL404, 405, 406**
- Some of the more important management decisions in an artificial breeding program are the length of the breeding season, the use of cleanup bulls, and management of the *estrous* period. **CL404, 406, 410, 442, 1002**
- Proper facilities are essential to an A.I. program. They can be very simple or very elaborate. **CL285, 404, 406, 791, 792**
- *Estrus synchronization* with *prostaglandins* has the potential to improve and increase artificial insemination programs with cattle. **CL405, 406, 408, 442**

Noncycling—Refers to cows that are not coming into estrus.

Heritable traits—Those characteristics that are passed on from one generation to another.

Fertility records—The written account of those cows that produce calves over a given time period against those that do not produce calves in the same time period.

- An estrus synchronizing program will not enhance overall pregnancy rates, increase conception, or benefit reproductive performance in *noncycling* or *subfertile* cattle, particularly when poor management is responsible for the condition. **CL405, 408, 720**
- Income and labor use can both be improved by shortening the calving season. **CL410, 1015**
- Reproductive efficiency has a greater impact on the economic returns of a ranch than any of the more highly *heritable traits*. **CL1024**
- *Fertility records* are the easiest of all performance records to keep. They reflect the level of management and environment more accurately than any other record kept. **CL1035**
- Bulls are purchased to improve the genetic merit of the offspring. **CL1002, 1024, 1037, 1038**
- Performance is influenced more by environmental factors than genetic factors. **CL1002**
- Economically the early calf is more valuable to the enterprise than the late calf. **CL410**
- Concentrate on improving the genetic potential of the early calf. To do this, the genetically superior or proven bulls in the bull battery should be turned out first. **CL1037, 1038**

Good Management Practices

1. A good manager will keep an eye on his bulls to make sure that they are getting the cows bred. Injuries to bulls during the breeding season are relatively common. **CL421, 425, 436**
2. During the breeding season, keep cows distributed over the feed resource so the nutrient level is kept high. Some of the most important “riding” of the year will be done at this time. **CL413, 436, 545**
3. Any cows that have lost their calves or did not calve should be marketed. **CL710, 735**
4. Be sure that the mineral-salt mixture is available for all of the cattle and that the mixture has adequate levels of special minerals for preventing problems such as grass tetany. **CL300, 315, 327, 627, 628, 629**
5. In single bull groups, watch the cows closely during the first 30 days of the breeding season so you will know if the cows are cycling and if the bull is settling the cows. **CL436**

Plan Ahead

- Review your mineral supplement program. Be sure mineral consumption level is meeting your needs. **CL300, 315, 327, 330, 627, 628, 629**
- Keep up-to-date on market reports and trends. **CL805, 810**
- Plan some marketing alternatives. **CL735, 800, 805, 815, 825, 828, 830, 832, 840, 843, 845**
- Review your budget for future needs. **CL925, 930, 935**
- Review good management practices for growing and harvesting alfalfa hay. **CL580**
- Prevent external and internal parasite problems. **CL685, 688, 690, 691**



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