



# Cow-Calf Management Guide

## V. Weaning—Cows

**Management Objective**—Evaluate production and shape herd for future management and marketing decisions.

**Pregnancy testing**—The determination if the cow is pregnant, usually done by rectal palpation.

### Points to Remember

- Performance records in commercial herds allow for maximum growth management on the herd as a whole and the individuals within the herd. The records will pinpoint areas of opportunity to change the environmental pressures to maximize growth potential and thereby increase potential profit. **CL917, 1002**
- *Pregnancy testing* as a routine practice can be an important tool in the efficient operation of a beef cow herd. **CL412**
- Carrying nonpregnant cows for a full year without any return is one of the largest drains on profits. **CL412**
- Only cows that are pregnant should be carried over the winter. With the high cost of maintaining the cow herd, a careful culling program is a must. **CL640, 735, 737, 747, 825**
- Barren or open cows are the first group that should be removed. **CL735, 737**
- Retaining any open cows is seldom justified regardless of the size of her last calf. **CL735, 955**
- Control parasites. **CL685, 688, 690, 691**

- Over 18 percent of the cows would need to be replaced each year just to account for the open and unsound cows. **CL735, 955**
- Overly fat or overly thin cows are poor candidates to raise a big calf the following year. **CL720, 735, 955, 1180**
- Culling the beef herd should be a year-round program. Failure to remove open cows from the herd would reduce potential profits in the average herd by nearly \$60 per head. **CL213, 215, 218, 735, 737, 955**
- The fleshier cull cows might best be sold immediately upon culling through the local markets. **CL213, 215, 218, 735, 793, 955**
- Cows that are thin and lightweight may be candidates for a 60-day feeding regime that would add an additional 200 to 250 pounds on these cows and thereby increase returns. **CL212, 215, 218, 735, 955**
- A 60-day feeding period on cows may be profitable; a 90-day feeding period could be disastrous. **CL735, 955**
- Vaccinate cows as outlined in ranch herd health program. **CL200, 212, 605, 636, 654, 655, 662, 681, 683**
- Avoid problems from feed changes. **CL319, 320, 619, 630**

## Good Management Practices

1. Pregnancy testing not only indicates open cows, but will give you a good picture of your next calving season and also identify possible breeding problems and associated reproductive diseases. **CL632, 636, 650, 657, 659, 662, 675, 681, 735, 747**
2. Most cattle will have internal and external parasites. The cost of treating for either or both is money well spent. Work out the program for your operation. **CL690, 691**
3. Have a program of cow evaluation. Keep only bred cows with good udders, eyes, and feet. **CL640, 735**
4. Any extremely thin or old cows should be sold. **CL671, 672, 735, 737, 793**
5. Use performance records in culling cows other than those that are unsound or open. **CL735, 737, 1035**
6. The cow is approaching a noncritical period of the biological cycle. The least damage to the cow and fetus will be incurred by underfeeding at this time. **CL300, 330, 720, 747**

## Plan Ahead

- Determine feed inventory. **CL300**
- Sample feeds for testing. **CL305, 307, 355, 381, 619**
- Check budget. **CL925, 930, 935, 960**



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