



Cow-Calf Management Guide

V. Weaning—Calves

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

Protein sources—Two sources of protein are available for food: plant protein and animal protein.

Income levels—Refers to the amount of disposable income a consumer has available for goods or services.

Annual price cycle—Traditional fluctuations in prices during the year.

Class—A market term that refers to a similar group of animals such as steers, cows, bulls, calves, etc.

Grade—Refers to the quality of a particular class.

Points to Remember

- A producer's understanding of the marketing system greatly affects the marketing alternative that is chosen. **CL800, 805, 815, 820, 825, 828, 830, 832**
- Factors outside the supply of beef that influence price movement may include, but are not limited to, the supply of competing meats and other *protein sources* and *income levels* of consumers. **CL805**
- The normal *annual price cycle* for calves has the lowest price of the year in late fall and early winter and the highest price early in the spring. **CL805, 810, 822, 823**
- Cow-calf operators can make better marketing decisions if all the alternatives are weighed ahead of weaning time and plans are made relative to the alternatives. **CL793, 800, 805, 815, 820, 822, 828, 830, 832**
- Several market news sources other than the local paper are available. **CL810**
- When reading the market reports note the numbers of a particular *class*, *grade*, and weight of cattle reported. If small numbers of a particular quality are reported, the quoted price may not reflect the true market price for these cattle. **CL810, 825**

Internal parasites—Those organisms that live on the inside of the animal such as worms and liver flukes.

Grubs—The larvae of the heel fly that live in the animal, migrating to the animal's back. They emerge through a hole in the skin.

Performance measurements—A record of important events usually of economic worth.

- *Internal parasites* of cattle have long been recognized as economic problems. **CL685, 688, 690, 691**
- There is hardly an organ in the cow that is exempt from the attack of parasitic worms. **CL688, 690, 691**
- Some of the greatest return for dollar invested is through the control of internal parasites of beef cattle. **CL685, 688, 690, 691**
- Cattle *grubs* cost the beef industry thousands of dollars annually. Losses result from poor gain by infested animals or from paralysis that may occur when grubs migrate through the spinal canal. **CL691**
- Hides of grubby cattle are peppered with holes at the thickest, most valuable part of the hide. **CL691**
- Grubs can be controlled easily and effectively using systemic insecticides at the proper time. **CL691**
- The two most important *performance measurements* are the pounds produced and the time it takes to produce those pounds. The major portion of pounds produced and marketed is growth. The most important economic measure of performance of the herd is the reproductive level at which it is performing. **CL410, 793, 1035**

Good Management Practices

1. Weaning is a stressful time for calves. They should be allowed 7 to 10 days to get over the stress of weaning before any vaccinations or further processing takes place. **CL340, 601, 792**
2. Review the vaccination program and give booster shots and any new shots after the stress of weaning and further processing. **CL340, 602, 605**
3. Watch to see that all calves are eating and drinking. Be on the look out for possible shipping fever, pneumonia, etc. **CL307, 340, 606, 607, 609, 650**
4. Isolate all sick calves as soon as possible where they can be given proper care. **CL748**
5. Calves will usually start eating long hay quicker than chopped hay or pellets. **CL748**
6. If calves are sold and are to be loaded and hauled, do everything possible to minimize shrink. **CL601, 793, 835**

Plan Ahead

- Review plans and goals for developing replacement heifers and marketing the remaining heifers. **CL745, 748, 752, 828, 832**
- Plan feeding program for overwintering calves. **CL300, 303, 306, 326, 380, 381, 745**
- Avoid injection site lesions with proper technique for vaccination and treatment. **CL200, 212, 213, 285, 290, 602, 605**
- Vaccinate according to ranch herd health plan. **CL605, 607, 652, 653, 654, 675**
- Closely observe for illness and early treatment. **CL606, 607, 610, 621, 624, 625, 639, 675, 685**
- Prevent parasite problems. **CL685, 688, 690, 691**



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