



Cow-Calf Troubleshooting Guide

Total Beef Program Troubleshooting Guide

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In the cow-calf operation, total pounds produced is a function of three things: (1) the number of individual animals involved, (2) the rate of gain of the individuals, and (3) the time period in which the gain is made. Problems of reproduction and survival affect the total number of individual animals that are marketed. Reproductive problems are an expression of many management forms. With all things being equal, you would expect the greatest economic return to come from the cow with the oldest calf.

Again all things being equal, weight and growth are a function of time. Therefore, the objective of the breeding program would be to get all cows bred as early in the breeding season as possible.

In a well-managed herd, 75 to 80 percent of the cows will settle to first service, another 15 to 20 percent will settle in the second 21 days, and 5 to 7 percent will be open at the end of two heat periods. When calving season becomes longer than this, the following causes may be part of the problem.

Reproductive problem	Possible causes	Solution
Heifers		
Do not show estrus	Heifers not sexually mature	CL410, 442, 745
	Inadequate plane of nutrition (Could be energy, protein, minerals, or vitamins)	CL300, 303, 306, 325, 327, 331, 333, 629
	Too small at weaning	CL745, 793
Do not settle	Reproductive disease	CL661
	Infertile bulls	CL435, 436
	Poor A.I. technique	CL404, 406
High incidence of calving difficulty	Not developed enough before breeding	CL316, 402, 410, 745, 747
	Not fed adequately after breeding	CL300
	Birth weight of sire line too high.	CL1024, 1037, 1038

Reproductive problem	Possible causes	Solution
Cows		
Do not show estrus	Inadequate plane of nutrition last trimester of pregnancy	CL303, 306, 325, 327, 330, 331, 413, 1110, 1120, 1130
	Inadequate plane of nutrition postcalving (Could be energy, protein, minerals, or vitamins)	CL300, 303, 306, 315, 325, 327, 330, 413, 629, 1110, 1120, 1130, 1170
Do not settle	Postcalving interval not long enough	CL404, 406, 410, 413
	Disease or injury at calving	CL660
	Reproductive disease	CL660, 661
	Uterine infection	CL660, 681
Abortion	Infertility or low fertility of bulls	CL425, 659
	Bulls not traveling through herd	CL436
	Reproductive diseases such as brucellosis, leptospirosis, etc.	CL632, 636, 661, 662, 663, 681
Bulls		
Not settling cows	Insufficient number of bulls	CL436
	Immature bulls	CL421, 425
	Infertile bulls	CL424, 425, 659
	Crippled bulls	CL425, 435, 436
	Abnormal reproductive system	CL424, 425
Calving difficulty	Birth weight of sire line too high	CL446, 1024, 1037, 1038
Deformities	Genetic defects	CL1026
Artificial insemination		
Poor conception	Poor semen	CL404, 406, 425
	Poor A.I. techniques	CL404, 406
	Poor embryo transfer technique	CL408
	Cows not in good condition	CL330, 331, 720
	Postcalving interval not long enough	CL404
	Disease	CL661
	Failure to detect estrus	CL404

Beef reproduction at the commercial cow-calf level in its simplest definition is growth management. For efficient growth management, the growth of the individuals that make up the total production must be

evaluated in terms of what could be achieved and what was achieved. In cow-calf production, this is usually expressed as average weaning weights at about 331 days.

Growth problems	Possible causes	Solution
Cow condition poor	Inadequate nutrition	CL300, 303, 306, 315, 325, 327, 330, 331, 333, 720, 747, 1110, 1120, 1130, 1170
	Heavy internal parasite infestation	CL690
	Heavy milking cows in relation to nutritional level	CL300, 330, 747
Light weaning weight average	Poor milking mothers	CL720, 1037
	Nutritional	
	1. Poor pasture or range	CL326, 540, 542, 545, 594, 596
	2. Low level of total feed	CL300, 326, 500, 502, 545
	Wrong calving season in relation to feed source	CL311, 316
	Disease	
	1. Scours	CL601, 648, 685
	2. Respiratory	CL601, 607, 675
	Internal parasites	CL690, 691
	Wide age variation (long calving season)	CL331, 410
	Drought year	CL1100, 1110, 1130, 1140, 1180
Nonuse of implants	CL755	
Genetic	1. Small frame	CL1002, 1038
	2. Breeding program	CL1002, 1038
Weak calves or high death loss in newborn and young calves	Scours	CL601, 602, 605, 648, 649, 685
	Dystocia	CL447, 450
	Clostridial diseases	CL600, 605, 654
	Nutrition of dam	CL315, 327, 330



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