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EFFECT OF TEMPERAMENT AND HANDLING ON REPRODUCTION

A group of 433 Angus X Hereford females, which had calved at least twice, were evaluated for chute behavior score and chute exit velocity. Cows were scored from 1 (calmest or slowest) to 5 (most nervous or fastest). Temperament scores were calculated by averaging the two evaluations. Cows with temperament scores >3 were classed as aggressive. Aggressive cows had reduced rates of pregnancy (89% vs. 95%, P<.03) and calving (85% vs. 92%, P<.04). Calf weaning weight varied by only 2 lb but, because of reproductive differences, calf weight per cow exposed tended to be lower (by 35 lb, P<.08) for aggressive cows. The authors concluded that temperament was important in cow reproduction and recommended that aggressive individuals should be considered for culling on that basis.

In another study, 88 Angus X Hereford heifers averaging 206 days of age were weighed and evaluated for temperament score. Heifers in one-half of each temperament group were acclimated to handling three times weekly as follows:



- beginning 11 days after weighing, heifers were gathered from pasture and walked through a handling facility but not restrained and then turned back to pasture;
- beginning a week later, heifers were restrained in a chute for 5 seconds and turned back;
- beginning after another week, heifers were restrained for 30 seconds and turned back;
- beginning after another week, heifers were restrained for 30 seconds and then turned out into the facility lot for one hour and then back to pasture.

The other one-half of the heifers was left undisturbed on pasture during each of the acclimation procedures.

All heifers were weighed and assessed for temperament score 40 days and 200 days after initial weighing and scoring. ADG did not significantly differ (p<0.37) between groups. Acclimated heifers had lower (P<0.02) velocity scores after 200 days. By day 200, acclimated heifers had 60% vs. 38% (P<0.01) puberty. Subsequent pregnancy rates (87% vs. 78%) did not differ significantly (P<0.26). The authors concluded that acclimation to handling could improve temperament and increase attainment of puberty.

EDITOR'S NOTE: No data were provided as to the time and expense required to run heifers after weaning through a handling facility for a total of 12 times over 28 days. (J. Animal Sci. 90:3547, Oregon St. Univ.)

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Portions of this newsletter are cited from the Texas A&M University Beef Cattle Browsing Newsletter, Dr. Steve Hammack.

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NEW ID AND TRICH RULES FOR CATTLE IN TEXAS

The Texas Animal Health Commission has ruled that, starting January 1, 2013, all sexually intact adult cattle must have an approved individual identifica-

tion device in place upon any change of ownership. Also, TAHC has announced plans to revise trichomoniasis regulation procedures to allow testing

pooled samples of up to five bulls. Details on both subjects can be accessed on the commission website, www.tahc.state.tx.us.

Education programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Court of Texas Cooperating.

MARKET COWS – DON'T FORGET THEY'RE PART OF INCOME

Sometimes we tend to think calves are the income from a beef cow herd, but calves are only part of the story. In a typical herd where replacement heifers are saved for breeding about 50% of income is from steer calves, 30% from heifers not retained for breeding, and 20% from marketed breeding stock.

Producers need to pay attention to factors affecting value of marketed breeding stock.

That may mean such things as increasing sale weight and body condition, if done economically, and marketing when prices are higher. Fall (especially October) has historically been the worst time to sell packer cows and bulls because marketings are typically highest at that time.



EFFECTS OF FORAGE QUALITY AND SUPPLEMENTATION FREQUENCY ON HEIFER PERFORMANCE AND REPRODUCTION

Brahman X British heifers initially averaging almost 10 months of age and 530 lb were assigned to one of four treatments providing supplement at approximately 1% of initial body weight per day, with free-choice hay provided:

8% CP stargrass hay, 35 lb supplement/wk fed daily (S7, 5 lb/feeding)

8% CP stargrass hay, 35 lb supple./wk fed three times/we (S3, 11.7 lb/feeding)

12% CP bermudagrass hay, 35 lb supple./wk fed daily (S7, 5 lb/feeding)

12% CP bermudagrass hay, 35 lb supple./wk fed three times/wk (S3, 11.7 lb/feeding)

The supplement, designed to provide a low-starch source of energy, analyzed 16% CP and consisted of 49% soybean hulls, 30% wheat midds, and 12% DDG, with the remainder being molasses, canola pellets, and mineral. The S7 group completely consumed supplement within one hour while S3 completely consumed within six hours. After 60 days in drylot, heifers were placed for breeding for 60 days on closely-mowed bahiagrass pastures, with the same treatments continued as above.

S3 heifers consumed less hay on days when all heifers received supplement. This is not surprising since S3 heifers were eating over twice as much supplement on those days as S7. But there was no difference in hay consumed on

days when only S7 received supplement. S7 were less variable in daily hay consumption, total dry matter consumption, and total energy and protein consumption. There was no significant difference in ADG due to supplement frequencies. Puberty and pregnancy rates were higher for S7, although both rates were lower than expected. Some other research has indicated that non-daily feeding of developing heifers on low-starch energy supplements resulted in acceptable performance compared to daily feeding. The authors of this paper concluded that was not the case in this study, at least at the weekly feeding level provided. (J. Animal Sci. 90:2371; Univ. of Florida, Oregon St. Univ.)

MORE EXPORTS TO JAPAN?

When the "mad cow" scare occurred in the U. S. almost nine years ago, Japan shut off our imports. Later, they allowed in beef from cattle less than 20 months of age. Recently, the Japanese Food Safety Commission recommended to their government the age be raised to 30 months. El Salvador and Mexico also

have increased access for U. S. imports. NOTE: Elevation to 30 months of age would cover most fed cattle in the U. S. It could also reduce the relative value of cattle in age-verified programs. (TCFA Newsletter, 9/7/12)



CENSUS PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO GROW THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

It's not every day that a walk to your mailbox leads to an opportunity to help shape farm programs, boost rural services and grow your farm future. But for producers across the country, that opportunity will soon become a reality. The 2012 Census of Agriculture, the only source of consistent and comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation, is currently being mailed to millions of farmers and ranchers across the United States.

Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Census provides detailed data covering nearly every facet of U.S. agriculture. It looks at land use and ownership, production practices, expenditures and other factors that affect the way farmers do business and succeed in the 21st Century.

"The 2012 Census of Agriculture provides farmers with a powerful voice. The information gathered through the Census influ-

ences policy decisions that can have a tremendous impact on farmers and their communities for years to come," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "I strongly encourage all farmers, no matter how large or small their operation, to promptly complete and return their Census, so they can voice to the nation the value and importance of agriculture."

Vilsack added that in addition to affecting policy decisions, Census information also influences community growth and development. Many companies review Census data when determining where to establish or expand their businesses, as well as where they can go for supplies of locally-produced food and agricultural products, which further emphasizes the importance of supplying accurate information. Information from the Census also is valuable to explain the many ways farming is important to urban or non-farming residents and decision-makers.

"Along with their accomplishments as busi-

ness men and women, farmers know about the challenges they face in their local areas," said Vilsack. "Taking part in the Census is increasingly important to farmers and every community in America because it provides important information and helps tell the true story about the state of agriculture in the United States today."

All farmers and ranchers should receive a Census form in the mail by early January. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2013. Farmers can return their forms by mail or online by visiting a secure website, www.agcensus.usda.gov. Federal law requires all agricultural producers to participate in the Census and requires NASS to keep all individual information confidential.

For more information about the Census, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call 1-888-4AG-STAT (1-888-424-7828). The Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your responsibility.

28th ANNUAL FORT BEND COUNTY VEGETABLE CONFERENCE

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Wharton, and Waller Counties will host the 28th Annual Fort Bend County Vegetable Conference on Thursday, February 7, from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., in Building "C" of the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, 4310 Hwy. 36 South in Rosenberg.

Attendees may receive up to five continuing education units (CEUs) for attending the full-day educational event. The conference presentations will include:

- Soil Management to Combat Soil Borne Pathogens, by Steve Divers

- Multiple Approaches to IPM, by Dr. Michael Hare
- Pest and Disease Resistant Vegetable Varieties, by Dr. Joe Masabni
- Pesticide Laws and Regulations, by Dr. Don Renchie
- Product Marketing, by Francisco Abello, and
- Safe Preparations for Spray Applications, by Joe Mask.
- Keynote Speaker will be Mike Dobrovolsky

Please contact Brandy Rader at the Fort Bend County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Ser-



vice Office at 281-342-3034 to request a registration form. Registration on or before Monday, January 28, is \$20 per person and includes lunch. Registration at the door is \$25 per person and cannot be guaranteed a lunch.

FAST FOOD WITH SLOW COOKERS

Imagine coming home at the end of the day with a great tasting meal already prepared and waiting for you. Does this sound too good to be true? Not if you have a slow cooker. Slow cookers can help busy people prepare meals on a budget, saving both money and time. If you are new to slow cooker cooking or want to get re-acquainted with one you already have, then the following information is just for you!

Economic Benefits of Slow Cookers

Slow cookers can save us money in several ways. First, it actually takes less electricity to use a slow cooker compared to an oven. Second, it doesn't heat up your house like an oven (an added bonus during those hot summer days). Third, slow cookers are a great way to prepare inexpensive, lean cuts of meat. The moist heat generated by the cooker makes these cuts of meat more tender compared to other cooking methods. However, a slow cooker is not limited to meats. Other foods including soups, casseroles, beverages, and cereals can also be prepared with a slow cooker. With a little practice, a slow cooker can help prepare more meals at home which can help save money.

Testing Your Slow Cooker for Accuracy

If your slow cooker has been in the back of a cabinet for a while, test it for accuracy before you use it. Here is a simple way to test your slow cooker:

1. Fill the slow cooker 1/2 to 2/3 full with water.
2. Turn the slow cooker on to LOW and let heat for 8 hours. Do not lift the lid during this time!
3. Check the water temperature with an accurate food thermometer. Do this quickly since the temperature in the slow cooker drops 10 to 15 degrees once the lid is removed.

4. The temperature of the water should be between 185 and 200 degrees.

If the water temperature is less than 185 degrees, the slow cooker is not safe to use and should be replaced. If the temperature is over 200 degrees, then it is likely that food cooked in the slow cooker for 8 hours without any stirring will be overdone.

Tips for Safe & Successful Slow Cooking

1. Start with a clean cooker, utensils and work area. Wash hands before and during food preparation, especially after handling raw meat and poultry.
2. Spray the inside of the crock with non-stick cooking spray before adding ingredients to keep the food from sticking. This makes cleaning the crock easier.
3. Prepare foods that have high moisture content like as chili, soup, or spaghetti sauce. When using a commercially prepared frozen slow cooker meal, follow the instructions on the package.
4. Keep perishable foods refrigerated until preparation time. Meat and vegetables should be stored separately in the refrigerator in covered containers. It takes time for slow cookers to reach a temperature hot enough to kill bacteria so keeping these foods refrigerated helps ensure that bacteria, which multiply fast at room temperature, don't get a head start during the first few hours of cooking.
5. Always thaw meat or poultry before putting it into a slow cooker. Never put frozen meat or chicken in a slow cooker.
6. Depending on the age, the size of meat or poultry you cook in the slow cooker matters. Until recently, placing a whole roast or chicken in a slow cooker was not recommended. New research conducted by USDA FSIS suggests that for newer models, it is safe to cook large cuts of meat and poultry in a slow cooker. The newer models of slow cookers are larger and more powerful than the older ones, so it is safe to cook larger pieces of meat and poultry. If you have an older model, continue

to cut your meat or poultry into smaller pieces before cooking.

7. Fill the cooker between 1/2 and 2/3 full. Vegetables such as potatoes and carrots cook slower than meat and poultry so place them at the bottom of the cooker. Be sure the liquid almost covers the ingredients so there is proper heat transfer throughout the crock. The liquid is needed to generate the steam that cooks the food.
8. Keep the lid on the slow cooker during the cooking process. Remove only to stir the food or check for doneness. Each time the lid is raised, the internal temperature drops 10 - 15 degrees and the cooking process is slowed by 20 to 30 minutes.
9. Use a food thermometer to make sure foods have been cooked to a safe internal temperature. Recommended temperatures are: poultry (165 degrees), ground beef (160 degrees), beef steaks and roasts (145 degrees) and pork (160 degrees).
10. Store foods cooked in the slow cooker in shallow, covered containers and refrigerate within two hours of cooking. Reheat foods to 165 degrees using an oven, microwave, or stove top. Soups, stews and gravies should be brought to a rolling boil before eating.
11. If you are not home during the entire slow-cooking process and the power goes out, throw out the food - even if it looks done! If you are home when the power goes off, finish cooking the ingredients immediately by some other means: on a gas stove, on an outdoor grill, or even at another house where there is power. If this is not possible, throw out the food.

If you are home when the power goes off and if the food was already completely cooked, the food should remain safe for up to two hours in the cooker with the power off.

Other Tips for Successful Slow Cooking

- Processed cheese tends to work better than Cheddar cheese.

CARBON MONOXIDE

What is odorless, colorless and tasteless but can be very harmful to you if present in your home? Carbon Monoxide (CO). Carbon Monoxide poisoning occurs when you breathe in enough CO that it begins to replace the Oxygen in your blood. This article contains some basic information about Carbon Monoxide and ways to detect and prevent high CO levels.

The incomplete burning of fuels that contain carbon, such as wood, fuel oil, natural gas and gasoline, produces Carbon Monoxide. In your home, the build-up of Carbon Monoxide may be a result of your gas-burning stove or water heater not being properly vented. It may also occur if you use non-electric space heaters for warmth. Another way CO may get into your home is from an automobile in your

garage. If you allow your vehicle to run while enclosed in your garage, you are not only making your garage a dangerous place to be but also may be allowing CO to seep into your home.

Though you may not be able to see, taste or smell Carbon Monoxide, there are some common symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning that you may experience. Symptoms of CO poisoning may include headaches, dizziness or nausea. If the exposure continues, you may lose consciousness and even die. A blood test is necessary to diagnose Carbon Monoxide poisoning. CO poisoning can be hard to identify since the symptoms can also be caused by several other illnesses. If you think you have been exposed to Carbon Monoxide, your health professional can test you



for poisoning. If you are suffering from CO poisoning, treatment for the condition is available.

Preventing Carbon Monoxide build-up in your home involves making sure that all of your fuel burning equipment is properly vented to the outside. This may require your bringing a professional into your home to ensure that all vents are working properly. Also remember that your automobile, lawnmower and other gasoline-powered equipment should only be left running outside of your garage.

Several commercial Carbon Monoxide alarms are on the market and readily available at local retail stores. Make sure the alarm you select has the Consumer Product Safety Commission and Underwriters' Laboratory seals of approval. An alarm that has a digital readout is recommended. Also, be sure your alarm may be easily tested and reset. Alarms should be placed near all sleeping areas in the home. Alarms are now required to sound at CO levels of 70 parts per million (ppm) and are prohibited from sounding or indicating at levels below 30 ppm. When and if the alarm makes an audible sound, you should get out of the house immediately and leave a door open for ventilation. Go to a neighbors house and call your local fire department to report it.

We all spend a lot of time in our homes, especially during the winter months. Your awareness of risk for Carbon Monoxide poisoning will ensure that your time in your home is safe and healthy.

Fast Food with Slow Cookers ... continued from page 4

- If time permits, brown pieces of meat before placing in the slow cooker. This allows excess fat to be removed.
- Cook and drain ground meats before adding to the slow cooker.
- Add crushed or ground seasonings near the end of cooking because they may become too mild during a long cooking period. Whole seasonings may withstand long cooking times and may have an intensified flavor so use only about half the amount.

Adapting Recipes for the Slow Cooker

If you are trying to adapt recipes for slow cooking, find a slow cooker recipe that is similar to the traditional recipe and then use it as a guide. Unless preparing soups, sauces, chowders, or chili, use about half of the liquid that is listed in the traditional recipe. Also, remember that the liquid doesn't boil away as fast as it does in the oven or on the stove top. Some other tips:

Vegetables

- Make sure vegetables are cut into pieces that are similar in size and shape.

- Vegetables that cook quickly (such as peas) should be added during the last 20 or 30 minutes of the cooking process.

Dairy Products

- Sour cream, milk or cream tends to break down during long cooking processes. Add them during the last 30 minutes of cooking. In some cases, you can add condensed soup in place of milk when using the slow cooker for several hours.

Rice and Pasta

- When rice and pasta are cooked for long periods of time they become starchy and pasty. To prevent this from happening, cook rice or pasta on the stove and add them to the slow cooker a few minutes before serving.

Seafood

- Fish and shellfish cook very fast and tend to overcook and fall apart during a long cooking process. If your recipe includes fish or shellfish, add them to the slow cooker during the final 30 to 60 minutes of cooking.



2013 Brazos Valley CEU Conference

Date: January 25, 2013

Location : Burleson County Fairgrounds Caldwell, TX

Cost: **\$35 Pre-Registration** (by January 18th) or \$45 At the door

<u>Time</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u># Credits- TDA (Category)</u>
7:30-8:30	Registration	
8:30-9:30	Dr. Mark McFarland- Optimizing Fertility for Forage Production	1.0 - General
9:30-10:30	Dr. Larry Redmon- Beef Cattle Management & Water Quality	1.0 - General
10:30-11:30	Dr. James Cathey- Feral Hogs in Texas	1.0 - IPM
11:30-12:30	Catered Lunch	
12:30-1:30	Dr. Don Renchie- Laws & Regulations Pertaining to Pasture Management & Forage Production	1.0 - L&R
1:30-2:00	Mr. David Stichler- Weed Control Products	0.5 - IPM
2:00-2:30	Mr. Rob Brooks- Weed Control Products	0.5 - IPM
2:30	Evaluation & Conclude	

Individuals with disabilities who require auxiliary aid, services, or special accommodations in order to participate in this event are encouraged to contact the Extension office at (979) 567-2308 on or before January 18th to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.

For more information please call
(979) 567 - 2308

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