FOOTHILLS FORAGE AND GRAZING ASSOCIATION
Innovation, education and regenerative agriculture

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GRASSROOTS NEWS & VIEWS
February 2023

Director's Note — Ryan Scott

Howdy folks,

It's late January as I write this, and we have experienced all that a Southern Alberta winter can give us from the subarctic temperatures to record breaking highs. With all that, the cattle are happily grazing away on swaths left in the fall, something that I would have never considered 5 years ago. I believe we all feel the world has changed, we have changed, the economy is changing, people's perceptions are changing… we need to adapt. Producers are feeling the pressure of climbing input costs and looking for alternatives to maintain a profit margin.

Holding a membership with FFGA, attending the various events, and serving on the FFGA Board of Directors continues to provide our little farm with new opportunities to achieve a little more with a little less. Trying something new in your operation doesn't seem so daunting when you have subject matter experts and experienced producers to guide you along. Before long you are sharing your findings with others and discovering ways to adapt and integrate new watering systems, cutting-edge fencing technology, area specific grazing and cover crop blends into your operation and wondering why you didn't start years before.

For our operation specifically, we have definitely benefitted from winter swath grazing versus traditional feeding in bunkers or processing bales. It's the new norm here. The cows are in great shape through the winter and moving the electric fence a couple times a week has got us all in better shape too! Yes, we keep feed in the feed yard just in case, but its nice to not be out counting bales every week and watching the weather forecast to see if we'll make it to green grass…

All that said, FFGA is not just about making a little more with a little less, or adapting to the changing times, its about producers who love the paths they're on. The members of FFGA are passionate about what they are doing. They all strive for excellence in land stewardship and have the foresight to change and adapt so our industry can carry on for generations to come.

With this in mind, the Board has recently put together a 5-year strategy to grow FFGA and serve our membership in a renowned and impactful way without losing sight of our roots. It's an exciting time to be involved with FFGA! Looking forward to all that is to come in the next few years.

Please make sure to stay up to date on our up coming events, and plan to set some time aside to attend a few more this year and bring your neighbour too!

Ryan

Ryan and his helpers moving electric fence.

IN THIS ISSUE

On the Cover: Winter Feeding (bunch grazing). **Photo: FFGA**

Thank you for your support!

Snow can work as a winter water source for cattle


Photo: FFGA

Every year at this time there should be talk about winter water sources for livestock.

Since water is one of the main building blocks of the body, the quality and quantity of the water source are critical. It has been found in many studies over the years that if good-quality snow is available, mature cattle, bison and elk will accustom themselves to it. And with snow as a water source, they also can maintain their weight quite well if feed is adequate. The females will also deliver calves just as if they'd had access to a fresh water source.

There are several myths about watering cattle by eating snow so it is important to know what to watch for and to know when a source of fresh water should be used. Wild herbivores eat snow all the time, so we know it can be done, but we don't want the performance of domestic livestock to suffer.

A beef animal's big rumen, for example, does not expend any more energy to melt the snow. However, if we are talking about young cattle eating snow and the objective is to get them to grow after weaning, it is probably best not to rely on snow for the long term. This discussion is tied closely to many of our late-grazing cows that after weaning are left out to graze on stockpiled forage or on swath- or bale-grazing.

As long as there is enough fluffy loose snow to consume, cattle may take two to three days to get used to eating it. Pregnant cows will do fine with snow until they get into the third trimester when there is lots of uterine fluid produced and they start colostrum production. Then a reliable fresh water source is required.

Where snow is being used as the winter water source, we also need to watch the body condition on the cows and bulls. Look for gauntness or other clinical signs. Without a primary clear water source, clinical conditions can advance quickly. The dehydration that's created causes its own set of problems such as feed impaction.

Provide special attention

With older cows where dentition is becoming a problem, it is best to have these old gals kept with the bred heifers that are being supplied good feed and water. Coarse feed with lots of fibre can also make cows prone to impaction, so keep a close eye on the manure patties. If they don't plop down rather flat it could be a sign of an impending problem. Rumen impaction can come in multiples and is rather hard to reverse. We used to see many cases when people were feeding a little grain and lots of straw to their cows. This of course is greatly exacerbated if the cattle are eating snow, so always watch for those signs.

Early winter is a delicate time to rely on snow, as it might be scarce and at the same time fresh water sources are starting to freeze. Every year I hear reports of several instances where livestock have fallen through the ice. Severe hypothermia sets in quickly and drownings are common. The edge of the water body has thick ice and the middle has thin ice. Cattle walk out on the ice in search of open water and cause the ice to give way. These are always heartbreaking situations, so at this time of year it is important to pull livestock away from ponds and dugouts or get those water sources fenced off. We all know the trouble spots, so extra effort in this regard can be money well spent to prevent further mishaps.

When rotating cattle through pastures for winter grazing, or opening up new swaths for swath grazing, this inadvertently exposes cattle to fresh snow. In heavy snowfall areas, 18 inches was found to be the maximum depth domestic cattle can handle to still find adequate feed. While bison, elk and horses can deal with much more snow cover than that.

The rule I have always used in summer is that cattle should consume about 10 per cent of their body weight in water per day and in winter this may cut down to about half or two-thirds of that amount. With winter feeding, especially if they are on moist swaths or silage with about 50 per cent moisture, that will also help meet daily water requirements.

In the absence of snow or to supplement snow, frost-free nose pumps and watering bowls that don't require power can be used to access water under ice-covered dugouts. These systems require some attention to remove ice, sometimes daily.

Some producers are successful at chopping a hole in the ice. I am not a big fan of this practice, because as cattle congregate there is a risk of manure contamination in the water. And there is also the potential of dugout ice collapsing if cattle venture onto the ice. Having said that, many respected cattle producers I know make this work well in the right situation. On the positive side, chop- ping ice has producers out there daily observing and examining their cattle.

It is always a good idea to provide younger, growing animals a fresh water source as clean, accessible water has been proven over and over again to help improve weight gains. It is important especially spring and fall to drain and clean the watering bowls.

Also, water sources should periodically have a water sample taken and tested for several quality factors such as TDS (total dissolved solids). These are inorganic salts that can get too high and result in death of cattle due to salt poisoning. Periodic water analysis is especially important in drought conditions when dugout levels run low, and certainly if a new well is drilled it is important to determine water quality.

Author: Dr. Roy Lewis

Original Article: https://www.grainews.ca/cattlemans-corner/snow-can-work-as-a-winter-water-source-for-cattle/

ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN (EFP) WORKSHOP SERIES

FOOTHILLS FORAGE AND GRAZING ASSOCIATION

WORKSHOP DETAILS

- Workshops will begin at 9:00am and wrap-up around 3:00pm
- Lunch will be provided
- Please bring the following items:
  - Laptop or Tablet for internet access
  - Information on the Farm's water sources & water bodies
- If you are renewing your EFP and you have your old binder, please bring it as this can be helpful

Registration is required

BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION
Alberta EFP
ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN

KNEEHILL

When: February 16, 2023
Where: Kneehill County Maintenance Shop
https://www.foothillsforage.com/kh-efp

ROCKY VIEW & BIG HORN

When: February 22, 2023
Where: Rocky View County Office
https://www.foothillsforage.com/efp2023

FOOTHILLS

When: March 1, 2023
Where: Heritage Inn, High River
https://www.foothillsforage.com/fh-efp

Vulcan County · Kneehill County · Rocky View County · Municipal District of Bighorn · Foothills County

Tongue Creek Ranch Prescribed Fire Info Session

Weston Family Foundation

February 24, 2022
Longview Community Hall

DETAILS

- 9:45am: Registration
- Noon: Lunch (provided)
- 3:00pm: Wrap-Up

TOPICS

- Forage quality post-fire and recommended burn frequency- Dr. Roy Vera
- Update on Woody Encroachment at Tongue Creek Ranch
- Tongue Creek Ranch 2023 Prescribed Fire plans and Q&A

***This event is free to attend!**
Please register using the link below.*

REGISTRATION

https://www.foothillsforage.com/prescribedfire

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Meewasin
Tongue Creek Ranch VH
Canadian Prairies Prescribed Fire Exchange
Foothills County
Foothills Forage and Grazing Association

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PALLISER GRAZING CLUB

RUMSEY HALL
FEBRUARY 21, 2023
10:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Meeting Ticket Price $10.00
Club Membership Price $20.00
Speaker Topics: Funding opportunities for Grazing, Principles of Grazing, Cover crops and extended grazing options

LUNCH INCLUDED WITH TICKET

for more info or to pre-register contact:
Kent 403-820-6353 Terri 403-916-4217

PRODUCER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

FOOTHILLS FORAGE AND GRAZING ASSOCIATION

CFGA Canadian Forage & Grassland Association / Association canadienne pour les plantes fourragères

RDAR Results Driven Agriculture Research

February 23, 2023
Standard Community Hall

Topics Include:

- Grazing Principles
- Utilizing New and Existing Water Sources
- Pasture Design Tips to Improve Rotational Grazing
- Introduction to Cover Crops
- On-Farm Climate Action Funding
  - To offset the cost of implementing new rotational grazing plans, cover crops and nitrogen management on your farm.

Agenda:

- Registration & Coffee | 9:45am
- Lunch (provided) | Noon
- Wrap-up | 3:00pm

Cost: FFGA Members: $15 | Non-Member: $20
Register at: https://www.foothillsforage.com/producerfunding

Special Guest: Grant Lastiwka

Grant Lastiwka is a forage extension expert and is a director with the Alberta Forage Industry Network. Grant has worked in Central Alberta with Alberta Agriculture is varying roles: Forages/Grazing/Livestock/Economics Extension for over 30 years. These efforts are almost always related to trying to realize the value from seizing the opportunity of managing forages and grasslands to be a highly productive crop.

COUNTY NO. 4 NEWELL

Kneehill COUNTY

WHEATLAND COUNTY AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

STARLAND COUNTY

Vulcan COUNTY

Rake-bunched hay a winter option


Photo: FFGA

Rake-bunched hay is one option to reduce winter cattle feed costs, which are generally the most expensive aspect of owning cattle.

If cattle can graze longer and feed themselves in the field, they also tend to stay healthier, says David Bohnert, beef extension specialist with Oregon State University.

Rake bunching involves raking windrows into numerous piles like tiny haystacks.

"In terms of any published data on this method, I think our experiment station here at Burns (Oregon) was one of the first to really look at it back in the 1980s. Many ranchers in our area use rake-bunched hay for fall and winter feed and it works well. The hay in piles retains its quality and is comparable to baled hay," says Bohnert.

The piles must be big enough for cattle to find when covered in snow.

"When you put up hay in this manner, make sure it's not too dry when you rake it into piles. It needs enough moisture to be able to stick together, probably a little more moisture than if you were baling it."

Ideally the piles will dry further and the hay will bind together so it can better resist wind. Raking the hay when damp may result in some fermentation, which cattle like because the material is sweeter.

"It's best if you can rake the hay a little green," says Bohnert. "You also need a different rake to get the windrows into piles. Some people use the old dump rakes and there are some modern ones that work even better. Some of the original ones were horse-drawn and you went through the field scooping up hay and then lifting the rake and dumping it.

"Now there are bigger rakes you pull behind a tractor and you can quickly cover a lot more ground."

Piles that contain 150 to 200 pounds of hay are most common though size varies. The biggest advantage is that the hay doesn't need to be hauled from the field, eliminating expense and time. Bohnert says rake bunching typically costs about half as much as baling.

Another advantage is that cattle eat the forage where it was cut and fertilize the field while doing so.

"To utilize rake-bunched hay most efficiently, you can strip graze the field, but many people don't bother with the electric fencing. They just turn cows into that field. The waste is higher, but it puts more nutrients back into the soil," Bohnert says.

"Rake-bunching hay is effective in fields and pastures where it's difficult to haul hay. This method allows you to harvest the hay and utilize it, even if it's impossible to go in there with a big truck or stack wagon to haul hay."

It also allows growers to harvest when hay is at the maturity level for best quality.

"If you have a field with lower production and it's not worth baling, you can still cut it and rake it into piles the cattle can use. Or you just cut it (without raking) and use that field first.

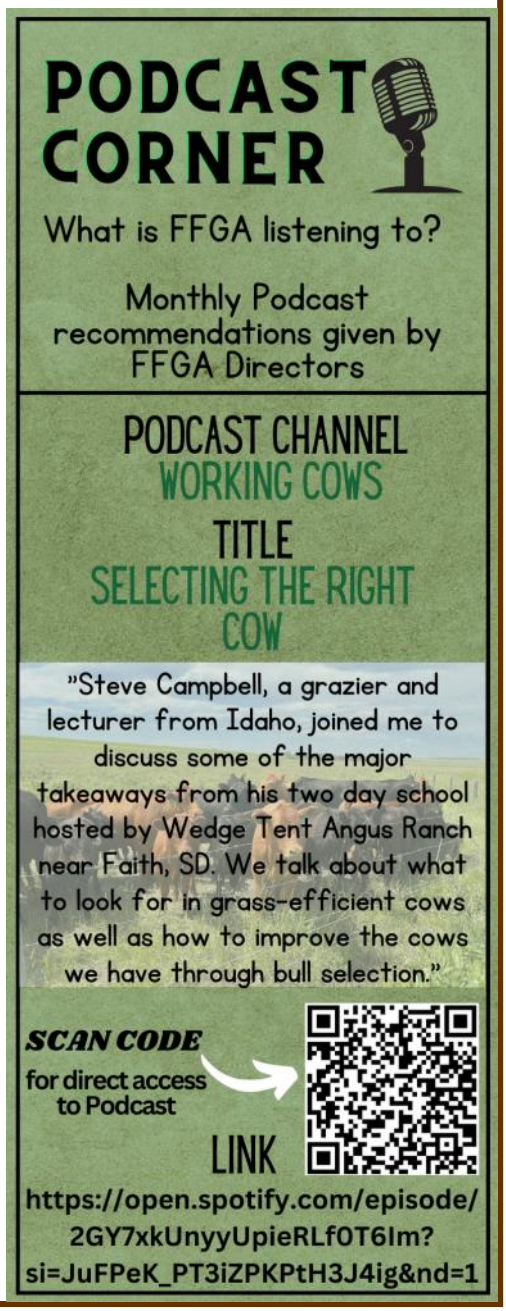
"Some ranchers use rake-bunched fields when they bring cows home from summer range. Some people graze them through winter, but many folks use them mainly for late fall grazing," says Bohnert.

"Studies here, and in Nebraska and Montana, have shown that stockpiled forage loses a lot of quality by late fall. You have to use a lot of supplement, and the cattle won't graze all of it. By contrast, if you cut it, the forage is all on the ground in piles and the cattle utilize it better.

"Some people wonder if plants under those piles are damaged. With the forage we have here and in areas where it's a grass-alfalfa mix, you really don't damage the forage underneath the windrows or piles," Bohnert says.

He cautions growers to be aware of the risks associated with rake bunching. It may not work well in areas with high winds or when there is either abundant fall rain or early wet snow.

Author: Heather Smith Thomas
Original Article: https://www.producer.com/livestock/rake-



2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

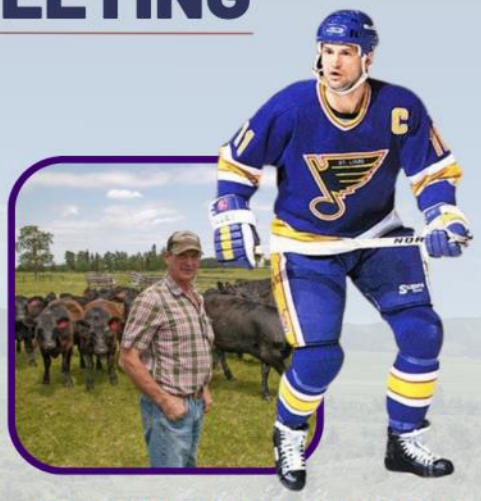
March 22, 2023 - 11:30
Highwood Centre
High River, AB

- Lunch served at 11:45pm
- AGM Business Meeting
- Keynote Address from Brian Sutter

Cost:
$25 for FFGA Members
$30 for Non-Members

Please note, you must be a member in good standing to vote during the Business Meeting. Memberships can be purchased online at www.foothillsforage.com/membership or at the door (cheque or cash only)

Are you interested in joining the Foothills Forage & Grazing Association Board of Directors? Email manager@foothillsforage.com or contact a FFGA Director for more details!



Featuring Keynote Speaker
Brian Sutter

Brian Sutter is a Canadian former Ice Hocky forward and former head coach in the National Hockey League (NHL). Brian currently ranches near Sylvan Lake with his Wife Judy.

PLEASE VISIT: HTTPS://WWW.FOOTHILLSFORAGE.COM/AGM-23
REGISTER BEFORE MARCH 15, 2023

MASH

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES FOR SOIL HEALTH

Champion Community Hall
March 20, 2023
9:00am - 4:00 pm

Register at:
https://www.foothillsforage.com/mash

THE SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

Dr. James White
How Plants Use Soil Bacteria to Obtain Nutrients

Dr. Mir M. Seyedbagheri
Humic Products & Balancing Mineral Nutrients for Soil Health

THE PRODUCER PERSPECTIVE

Wayne Robinson
The good, bad and the ugly. A producers soil health journey near Mossleigh Alberta.

Chad Monner
Trial and error on swath and corn grazing in Milo Alberta.

Rick Bieber
Utilizing Various Soil Health Strategies to Enhance Production Efficiency & Quality

Cost: $50

Optional Evening Workshop Session

A maximum of 15 producers can discuss humic products and mineral ratio balance for their specific soils with Dr. Mir. A CARA Soil Health Benchmark report from the past 3 years will be required.

Cost: $75

FOOTHILLS FORAGE AND GRAZING ASSOCIATION · Vulcan County · Wheatland County Agriculture & Environment · Chinook Applied Research Association CARA · RAWEST

A guide to selecting the perfect heifer bull


Photo: Kayla Minor

Winter water for cattle can be a challenge in cold weather, especially in

Whether home raised or purchased, open replacement heifer candidates are one of your biggest investments on the ranch.

Heifers experiencing dystocia or a difficult calving are less likely to mother up and breed back and more likely to wean lighter calves. Assisted calves are more likely to become sick or die before weaning.

Proper heifer bull selection is absolutely crucial. Here are some tips to help identify the perfect heifer bull for your operation.

Understanding EPDs

Expected progeny differences (EPDs) are used to evaluate the difference between one animal's progeny compared to another's.

For many years, birth weight EPDs were the go-to tool for heifer bull selection. A bull with a birth weight EPD of +3 indicates that on average, calves sired by that bull will weigh three pounds more compared to a bull with a birth weight EPD of 0.

This means that bull birth weight EPDs with a negative value are preferred. However, just because a calf has a low birth weight doesn't necessarily mean delivery will proceed without a hitch.

Calving ease EPDs are an absolute game changer and have a distinct advantage over simply using birth weight EPDs. They do the work for you by factoring in birth weight, but also the calving ease history of that bull, as well as his sire, dam, grand sires, grand dams, siblings, and progeny if available.

This is where the true value of the calving ease EPD truly lies. Here, factors such as calf shape and gestation length play a role. So don't be surprised if calves sired by bulls with high calving ease EPD values have a more streamlined appearance and drop a few days earlier than expected. Depending on what you are looking for, it may be important to consider both calving ease direct (abbreviated as either CE or CED), as well as calving ease maternal (abbreviated as CEM or MCE).

Calving ease direct (commonly termed just calving ease) indicates how easily that sire's calves will be delivered by first-calf heifers compared to calves sired by other bulls within that breed.

Here, positive values are desired.

So a bull with a calving ease direct EPD of +5 will have on average six per cent fewer calves requiring assistance during delivery compared to a bull with a calving ease EPD of -1. But there are many factors determined by the heifer that also impact calving ease. Calving ease maternal can be used in the same fashion to predict how easily a sire's daughters will calve at two years of age when compared to the daughters of other sires.

If you plan to sell all heifers born to your first-calf heifers, then you only need to evaluate calving ease direct.

However, if you envision keeping some heifers as replacements, then both calving ease direct and calving ease maternal EPDs should be considered. It is important to note, if true calving ease is what you are after, then birth weight EPDs should be ignored. Evaluating both will result in less genetic improvement as you will overemphasize birth weight and underemphasize calving ease, which is the more critical component.

Breed	Calving Ease Direct	Calving Ease Maternal
Black Angus	+ 3.2	+ 6.9
Red Angus	+ 2.4	+ 5.5
Simmental	+ 6.7	+ 4.0
Hereford	+ 1.1	+ 1.5
Charolais	+ 4.5	-

A true heifer bull will have calving ease EPDs well above breed average. However, in most cases, bulls within maternal-based breeds such as Angus, with only moderately high calving ease EPDs are suitable to use on well-developed heifers within continental breeds such as Simmental. *(See table for current breed averages for all calves born during 2018-19.)*

A balance of all other EPDs is desired.

Bulls with below-average birth weight and above-average weaning weight or yearling weight EPDs are termed 'curve benders.' Expect to pay up for these boys as they likely offer adequate calving ease without compromising on the performance side.

Steer clear (no pun intended) of bulls with exceptionally high milk EPDs or extremely low gestational length EPDs. The age-old saying of 'too much of a good thing' holds true when it comes to these two traits. Genetic potential for milk should be matched to environment and forage availability to avoid compromising on feed efficiency or reproductive performance. Though calves born early weigh less and are more likely to be delivered with ease, selecting very heavily for short gestational length and even extreme calving ease is believed by some researchers to lead to slightly premature calves with underdeveloped lungs, reduced vigour, and decreased overall compatibility with life.

That being said, there are distinct breed differences when it comes to gestational length. Here-ford calves typically drop around the commonly referenced 285 days, whereas Angus calves tend to come earlier around 280 days. Continental calves, such as Simmental and Charolais, wrap up closer to around 290 days.

Keep in mind breed averages are constantly changing and EPDs should never be compared across breeds without using proper adjustment factors.

Good conformation and disposition

A bull is only valuable insofar as he can settle heifers. Physical soundness is absolutely crucial. When evaluating your heifer bull prospect at an upcoming sale make sure you get him off the bed pack and on flat ground where he can get out and walk. Evaluate his gait, his feet, and overall structural soundness. Short-strided bulls

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)
with inadequate angle and flex to their hock are more likely to endure stifle injuries or turn up lame.

Evaluate the shape of their head and shoulders.

Heavy-boned bulls with a large blocky head or extremely wide, coarse shoulders are more likely to sire calves with similar characteristics that may negatively impact calving ease. Keep your eye out for a bull that is well balanced with a pleasant disposition. Heifers already tend to be more flighty than the mature cow herd. Adding a high-headed bull to the mix can make the group even more difficult to handle, not to mention, their calves.

A clean bill of health

Most heifer bulls make their debut as yearlings and, as such, the value of a breeding soundness evaluation cannot be overemphasized. A satisfactory breeding soundness evaluation result is needed to ensure that bull has reached sexual maturity and is not affected by wart or persistent frenulum that could negatively affect his ability to settle heifers.

Be sure to double-check for adequate vaccination and health history. Bulls should be vaccinated with a modified live or intranasal respiratory vaccine and a seven- or eight-way clostridial vaccine at branding, weaning, and boostered at least once prior to breeding.

Those with a history of any disease should be avoided.

If the bull is from an operation that is not on a vaccination program guaranteeing against the birth of calves persistently infected (PI) with BVD, then the bull should also be tested for PI status before purchase. Negative status for other infectious diseases such as Johne's or carrier-free status for common genetic defects such as arthrogryposis, hydrocephalus, dwarfism, etc. are also ideal.

Purchasing a virgin bull to use on heifers is preferred. Non-virgin bulls should be tested for trichomoniasis, regardless of the age group they are turned out with. New additions should be isolated and quarantined for 30 days.

Final considerations

The value of crossbred bulls and positive impacts of hybrid vigour should not be ignored.

A crossbred heifer bull has the ability to give you the calving ease you need to sleep at night while still packing enough punch to help your calf crop tip the scales. Luckily, we are seeing more crossbred heifer bulls on offer in sale catalogues with each passing year. Talk to seedstock producers about their value and versatility.

Regardless of the breed or breeds you buy, always keep in mind that a heifer bull's residency on a ranch may be short lived. Heifer bulls no longer suitable to use on replacement heifers (either because of large size or risk for inbreeding) may not be economical to use on the mature cow herd. Though there are true curve benders out there, you are likely giving up too much performance to justify keeping a true heifer bull around. This is something that should be considered when establishing your budget.

Also consider the number of replacement heifers a bull is expected to cover, which is roughly equivalent to their age in months. For example, a 16-month-old bull should be able to cover 16 head in a 60-day breeding season. This rule of thumb holds true until a bull reaches his maximum breeding capacity at approximately 36 months of age.

Lastly, have fun!

Bull sale season is a great opportunity to get out, admire some fantastic bulls, eat good food, and visit with friends. Here's to wishing you the best of luck and the top bid as you search for that perfect heifer bull candidate and a restful, dystocia-free 2020 calving season.

Elizabeth Homerosky is a veterinarian and partner at Veterinary Agri-Health Services in Airdrie and operates a small commercial cow-calf herd near Cremona.

Author: Dr. Elizabeth Homerosky

Original Article: https://www.albertafarmexpress.ca/livestock/a-guide-to-selecting-the-perfect-heifer-bull/

It is time to begin the early evening feeding


Photo: Kayla Minor

On most ranching operations, supervision of the first-calf heifers will be best accomplished in daylight hours, and the poorest observation takes place in the middle of the night.

The easiest and most practical method of inhibiting nighttime calving at present is by feeding cows at night. The physiological mechanism is unknown, but some hormonal effect may be involved. Rumen motility studies indicate the frequency of rumen contractions falls a few hours before parturition.

Intraruminal pressure begins to fall in the last two weeks of gestation, with a more rapid decline during calving. It has been suggested that night feeding causes intraruminal pressures to rise at night and decline in the daytime

The concept is called the Konefal method. A Canadian rancher, Gus Konefal, reported his observations in the 1970s.

In a follow-up Canadian study of 104 Hereford cows, 38.4 percent of a group fed at 8 a.m. and again at 3 p.m. delivered calves during the day, whereas 79.6 percent of a group fed at 11 a.m. and 9 p.m. In a more convincing study, 1,331 cows on 15 farms in Iowa were fed once daily at dusk; 85 percent of the calves were born between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Kansas State University scientists recorded data on five consecutive years in a herd of spring-calving crossbred cows at the Kansas State University Agricultural Research Center at Hays, Kansas. They recorded the time of calving (to within the nearest one-half hour).

Births that could not be estimated within an hour of occurrence were excluded. Cows were fed forage sorghum hay daily between 4 and 6 p.m. For statistical purposes, the day was divided into four-hour periods:

- Between 6 and 10 a.m., 34.23 percent of the calves were born;
- Between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., 21.23 percent of the calves were born;
- Between 2 and 6 p.m. 29.83 percent of the calves were born;
- Between 6 and 10 p.m., 8.41 percent of the calves were born;
- Between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., 4.4 percent of the calves were born; and
- Between 2 and 6 a.m., 1.91 percent of the calves were born.

It is interesting to note that 85.28 percent of the calves were born between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. This is very similar to Iowa data when cows were fed at dusk.

These data also revealed that for a majority of animals in the herd, the time of calving was within three hours of the average time of day that cow had previously given birth. Feeding forage in the early evening hours undoubtedly influenced the percentage of cows calving in daylight hours.

Many cow-calf producers put large round bales in ring feeders and leave them out for round-the-clock feeding for cows. Records here at Oklahoma State University indicated that when cows had constant access to large round bales but were fed supplements at about 5 p.m., 70 percent of the calves were delivered between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Some producers choose to put the big round bales and the ring feeders inside a fenced enclosure. The gates to the hay-feeding enclosure are opened at dusk and the cows are allowed access to the hay in the evening and overnight hours, then they are moved to another adjacent pasture the following morning. Anecdotal reports have indicated that this method has the desired results with a higher percentage of calves born in the daylight.

Author: Glenn Selk
Original Article: https://www.agproud.com/articles/52007-it-is-time-to-begin-the-early-evening-feeding

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Mission: Assisting producers in profitably improving their forages and regenerating their soils through innovation and education.

Vision: We envision a global community that respects and values profitable forage production and healthy soils as our legacy for future generations.

This Publication is made possible by our major funder -
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FFGA is a proud member of AFIN Alberta Forage Industry Network, ARECA, CRSB