



Great Plains Livestock Consulting, Inc.

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The Great Plains News Feed



Great Plains Livestock Consulting, Inc.
"Turning Science into Money"

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March/ April
2010

The Latest Across the Plains



Best of Luck

What a winter this has been! Snow, snow, and more snow, but at last spring time is in sight. We know calving weather has been good for some and bad for others. Nonetheless, we hope everyone has a safe and successful calving season whether you are finishing up or just getting started.

Exacta Tub Refill

Those empty protein tubs have several uses after your cattle are finished with them such as stools, planters, waterers, or trash cans. Wouldn't it be nice if your cattle could reuse them? The Exacta Tub Refill is a self-limiting product designed to fill that need. Exacta Tub Refills use Exacta intake limiting technology to make protein supplementation easy and insure cost effectiveness. A *Custom Mix* can be designed to limit cattle 0.05 to 10.0 lbs/head/day depending on the protein needs for your situation. Exacta Tub Refills can be fed in your empty protein tubs, an abandoned water tank, or any other clean container. Recent university research compared cows grazing dormant pastures that were supplemented with protein versus cows that were not supplemented. Not only did the supplemented cows maintain higher body condition score, but they also weaned heavier calves – with enough additional weight to more than pay for the cost of supplementing the cows. With correct supplementation to your cows, there is no need to sacrifice weaning weight, carcass quality, or reproductive performance of your calves. Give us a call, we would enjoy the opportunity to discuss this research and help you select the right protein supplements for your operation.

For Your Benefit

Great Plains Livestock Consulting, Inc. is still offering its feedlot monitoring program. This service will be offered **FREE** until September 2010. As the old adage goes "you can't manage what you don't measure" and our staff has made a collaborative effort to design a program to help producers measure the performance of their feedlot cattle. For more information contact our office or your nutritionist. With sales coming up keep in mind our free classifieds on our website, whether you are planning a sale or you're looking to buy take a look!

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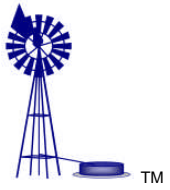
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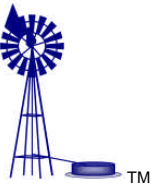
Calendar of Events



- **March 2-7** North Dakota Winter Show, Valley City, ND.
- **March 3 22nd** Annual Governor's Ag Conference, Kearney, NE.
- **March 3-5** 2010 Beef Industry Safety Summit, Dallas, TX.
- **March 4** Niman Ranch Pork Company Annual Meeting 2010, Ames, IA.
- **March 4-6** 2010 Pork Industry Forum, Kansas City, MO.
- **March 6** Goat Production and Marketing Conference, Phillipsburg, KS.
- **March 7-9** 2010 Meat Conference, Rosen Shingle Creek, Orlando, FL.
- **March 23-25** National Pork Producers Spring 2010 Legislative Action Conference, Washington, D.C.
- **March 25-26** Animal Care and Handling Conference, Kansas City, MO.
- **April 15** 2010 Roundup, KSU Agriculture Research Center, Hays, KS.
- **April 17** ICA Dunlap Bull Sale, Dunlap, IA.



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Timely Reminders

General

✓ Realize there are two fears in any market; fear and greed.

Beef

- ✓ Scrape snow from pens.
- ✓ Place cows on a High-Mag mineral.
- ✓ Be ready to add shades if you have plans to do so.
- ✓ Beef cows calving should be in a BCS of 6 and not fall below a 5.5.
- ✓ Be sure to adjust cow nutrition to match requirements as they calve.

Swine

- ✓ Make plans for summer marketing; 70-75% of yearly profits are made in summer months.
- ✓ Check fat levels in diets or plan when to use fat in diets for summer due to limited pig space.

Unused Feed

- ✓ An old timer is a man who has had a lot of experiences – Some of them true.

Young Bull Nutrition



By Dr. Jeremy Martin, Ruminant Nutritionist

Bulls are a troublesome group of cattle to manage. They are generally in the way, causing problems, or are somewhere they shouldn't be. However, they are a significant investment and it is important that investment provides you with the greatest return possible. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of university research examining bull development because it is a small part of a big industry. Experience as nutritionists and bull buyers, conversations with our clientele, and use of research that is available has taught us a few lessons about

managing bulls. Let's examine bull nutrition in the following stages:

- Pre-weaning
- Between weaning and the first breeding season
- During the first breeding season
- After the first breeding season

Pre-weaning bull nutrition is often overlooked. The main debate is whether bulls should be creep-fed. This is largely an individual decision based on your operation's goals and resources. If you do decide to creep-feed bulls, it is important they be fed a high-protein, low starch creep feed designed to promote growth, but not fattening. Mineral nutrition is important before weaning to help prepare the bull for weaning and reduce the chance of sickness when weaning occurs.

I can't tell you how many times I have heard ranchers say "I do not want to buy a fat bull". Truth is, fat bulls generally sell better. Until this dichotomy changes, I expect there will still be many overfat yearling bulls. It is, however, possible to develop bulls with the opportunity to express their potential for growth, without getting them overfat. Ultrasound data on yearling bulls is widely available, and allows buyers to evaluate fat thickness. Ideally, groups of yearling bulls should average between 0.15" and 0.30" of backfat, depending on age at scanning, biological type, and environmental factors. Low-starch rations containing high energy by-product feeds in combination with high levels of roughage allow bulls to gain 3 lb/day or more, without depositing excess fat. Additionally, vitamin and trace mineral nutrition of young bulls is critical. Research at Kansas State (Arthington et al., 1995) found that bulls supplemented with chelated zinc had higher normal sperm counts than those supplemented only with inorganic zinc. Development of yearling bulls could be a five page discussion in and of itself. The bottom line is that developing bulls should receive a complete vitamin and trace mineral supplement, and should not be fed to the point they experience acidosis or bloat, or deposit fat in their scrotum. These factors have long-term consequences in terms of bull longevity and

soundness. Bulls should be transitioned slowly to a roughage diet and introduced to pasture at least 10 days before being turned in with cows. For more information or to discuss your specific situation, give us a call.

Bull nutrition during the first breeding season is often out of our control. Aside from plentiful forage, bulls should have access to salt and mineral at all times during the breeding season. Young bulls that are active and aggressively breeding cows should be expected to lose some weight. If they have been managed correctly prior to the breeding season, this weight loss should be minimized. Do not leave yearling bulls with cows longer than 60 days, preferably 45 days. Young, inexperienced bulls will continue to chase cows and lose weight long after the cows are bred. They need to be removed to save them from their own good intentions.

Once the breeding season is completed, take time to evaluate condition of your young bulls. Manage them to be at a body condition score (BCS) of 5 or greater going into winter to achieve the greatest longevity. We expect the bulls to work hard enough as yearlings to lose some weight, and it is much easier to make sure they are in shape before winter than to play catch-up as 2 year-olds. The appropriate management will depend on your situation. If the bulls have good pasture, they will likely gain weight without supplementation. If pasture quality or quantity is limited, supplementation will be required. The most important consideration is to maintain a BCS of 5-6 between a bull's first and second breeding season. How that is achieved depends on condition of the bull, time of year, and feedstuffs available. Bulls will continue to grow as 2-year-olds, so do not forget about them after their second breeding season. Although they will probably require minimal supplementation at this point, remember that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Take care of your young bulls and they should do their job for a long time.

Implants



By Dr. Ki Fanning, Ruminant Nutritionist

Implants have been used for the past 45 years but are one of the most overlooked and poorly managed tools we have available in the cattle industry. According to R. Preston (1999), implants can improve growth rate by 30% and feed efficiency by 15%. They have one of the highest rates of return of any product in the beef industry because numerous companies make implants, keeping prices competitive. Therefore, there are many different strategies that will work for specific situations which creates some confusion. The following are some simple guidelines to point you in the correct direction and stimulate you to think about your implant program.

Implants increase frame size of the animal, dressing percent, and ribeye area. The number of days an implant will pay out (release hormone(s)) ranges from 70 to 350 days. Implant programs add about 100 pounds of body weight onto a finished animal; therefore, the animal must be well-finished (29% body fat) to achieve its full genetic potential (Dr. Guirouy). Dr. R. H. Pritchard reported that in a narrow choice/select spread implanted cattle returned an additional \$56 over non-implanted cattle and in a wide spread \$43 per head.

Delayed implanting is a strategy used to reduce the negative impact of implants while still reaping the benefits of the performance. Instead of implanting the cattle on arrival, the animal is implanted about 20 to 30 days after they arrive at the feedlot. This gives them time

to acclimate to the feedlot and to be stepped up onto feed. Since marbling is the last place the animal uses energy, the animal must be on a higher energy diet and in a low stress situation to lay down intramuscular fat. If the animal is implanted on arrival, the growth rate is increased prior to the animal having the energy to start marbling. The animal will not start laying down intramuscular fat until it is consuming enough energy.

Bullers (steers that stand to be ridden) can become more likely as the aggressiveness of the implant program increases. Typically a feedyard will have between 1 and 4% bullers. Problems with implanting that can cause bullers are: implants that are crushed, a second implant

is given while the first is still paying out, an infection or abscess at the implant site, and/or an implant containing trenbolone acetate (TBA). To avoid some of these problems, calculate your implant program working back from the day the cattle should be sent to slaughter or sold. In other words if the cattle come in at 900 pounds and are going to be harvested in about 100 days a single terminal implant is all that is needed. However, if the cattle are 700 pounds steers, they will likely be fed for 150 to 180 days and two implants will yield the greatest return on investment. Another simple strategy to preventing bullers is to sterilize the needle between uses by using an implanting tray which contains a sponge soaked in antiseptics.

Common Implant Usage Guideline

Calf (Suckling, grass, and backgrounding)	*	Initial (Backgrounding & 140 - 200 d prior to kill)	*	Terminal (70 - 120 d prior to kill)	*
Ralgro	W	Ralgro Magnum	M	Synovex S or H	I
Synovex C	W	Synovex S or H	I	Revalor S or H	I
Component E-C	W	Synovex Choice	I	Component TE IS or IH	I
Revalor G	M	Revalor S or H	I	Component E S or H	I
Component TE-G	M	Component TE-IS or IH	I	Component T S or H	I
		Component E S or H	I	Component TE S or H	I
		Component T S or H	I	Synovex Plus	S
		Component TE S or H	I	Revalor 200	S
				Component TE-200	S
Encore (350 days)					W
		Compudose (175 days)			W
		Revalor XS (200 days)			I

* Relative Implant Strength: W = Weak, M = Mild, I = Intermediate, S = Strong