

Fall Management To-Do List For Cow/Calf Producers

BROOKINGS, S.D. - Once again the brisk fall air is here, which means most cow-calf producers are busy processing and tending to new weaned calves.

"While weaning time usually requires all hands on deck, we can also take advantage of this time to manage the cows before they are sent back out to pasture," said Taylor Grussing, SDSU Extension Cow-Calf Field Specialist.

While cows are corralled, Grussing encouraged cow-calf producers to conduct pregnancy detection and take note of body condition score.

Pregnancy Diagnosis

With evolution of technology, there are now several methods of pregnancy diagnosis available for producers to choose from.

Rectal palpation has been utilized for decades, and

still remains as a viable way for an experienced person to physically palpate the fetus and determine the gestation length (age) of the fetus. "This method is quick, requires no extra equipment and is the least cost option for producers," Grussing said.

Another option available is transrectal ultrasonography. With this method an ultrasound machine is connected to a probe that is inserted into the rectum either by hand or using a hands-free probe extender allowing the fetus to be examined visually.

Grussing said the advantages of ultrasound include; earlier determination of pregnancy (as early as 28 days), more accurate age determination, sex of the fetus, presence of multiple fetuses as well as visual inspection of other structures of the

reproductive tract.

"For optimal results, pregnancy detection via ultrasound should take place before the fetus is 4 months along," she said.

Transrectal ultrasound requires special equipment which makes it more expensive than rectal palpation; however, the value of the additional information obtained can help make more precise decisions that may be beneficial to the overall performance of the operation.

Blood tests can be utilized to detect pregnancy. Blood tests measure the amount of pregnancy associated glycoproteins (PAGs) being secreted by the placenta, and are secreted from day 28 of gestation until calving.

Blood samples are sent to a lab for analysis which can take a few days; therefore, it

may not be the best option for a producer who wants to have the task completed in one day.

In addition, if a cow was pregnant but lost the pregnancy, PAGs will remain in the blood for an extended period of time (60 days) so false positives are possible.

"Determining pregnancy status of females is important for producers, not only to help them plan for calving season, but to also analyze overall reproductive efficiency of the herd," Grussing said.

Once herd pregnancy rates are determined, Grussing encouraged producers to consider different management for late calving, young, and thin cows.

Open Cows

Females that are not pregnant (open) should be sorted off from the rest of the herd and either re-bred

and entered into a fall-calving herd, placed on feed to add weight and value before being sold or sold immediately to decrease winter feed costs.

Body Condition Score

A good time to estimate a cow's body condition score (BCS) is as she leaves the chute following pregnancy detection.

A BCS is a visual evaluation of the energy reserves of an animal. This score is based off a 1 to 9 scale, with 1 being emaciated and 9 being obese.

Grussing said BCS should be done several times during the year (calving, breeding, weaning) in order to determine if cows are performing efficiently or if nutritional strategies need to be adjusted.

"In terms of reproductive efficiency, cows perform most efficiently at a BCS

of 5 to 5.5. Therefore, if a female is at a BCS less than desirable at weaning time, a nutritional plan should be implemented to get her to the appropriate score by calving time," he said.

Cows are in mid-gestation at preg-check time, which is also when the maintenance requirements are their lowest; thus, this is the most economical time to add condition, Grussing said.

"In order for a cow to remain in the herd, she needs to contribute revenue to the operation; therefore, becoming pregnant and weaning a healthy, productive calf each year is necessary," Grussing said. "While there is a cost associated with implementation of these practices, they can also improve management, efficiency and overall profitability of an operation."

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Tracy Leads Direction Of SDAHO

Timothy Tracy, CEO of Sanford Vermillion Medical Center, in Vermillion, SD was elected Chairperson at the Annual Business meeting of the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations (SDAHO). Tracy assumed his leadership role at SDAHO's 89th Annual Convention in Sioux Falls, SD. He will provide leadership and direction for health care across South Dakota on a state and federal level along with the 14-member SDAHO Board of Trustees. As SDAHO moves into its 90th year, Tracy will lead the Association as it strengthens its position with advocacy and member services.

Tracy has worked as a health care administrator in South Dakota and North Dakota since 1983, and has been the Chief Executive Officer of Sanford Vermillion Medical Center since April 2004. Tracy will have an exciting year as SDAHO's Chairperson along with leading a \$14 million expansion and renovation project for Sanford Vermillion scheduled for completion in the summer of 2017.

Tracy is an ordained Deacon for the Catholic Diocese of Eastern South Dakota currently serving at St. Agnes Parish and School in Vermillion while assisting with several Diocesan-wide assignments. He has also been active in other community service organizations including: the American Legion and various Economic Development organizations. Tracy has received recognition for his leadership from the Dakota Conference on Rural Health with its Outstanding Rural Health Professional Award in 1997 and was the recipient of the Shirley Ann Munroe Leadership Development Award in 2001 from the American Hospital Association.

Tracy is graduate of the University of South Dakota in Vermillion and received his master's degree in health services administration from Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, MI in 2004.

SDAHO represents 53 hospitals, health systems and 33 post-acute care facilities across SD providing a unified voice for its members with state and federal advocacy. Over 700 health care providers attended the convention representing administration, governance and 18 affiliated health care professional membership societies. Numerous health care issues were discussed including quality of care initiatives, patient safety, advocacy, leadership and health care policy and the implications it brings for South Dakota. For more information, please visit www.sdaho.org.

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The individual selected for this position will:

- Carry out office activities and functions pertaining to one or more of the program areas administered in the county
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Applications are being accepted online through November 2, 2015 at <https://www.usajobs.gov/>. Applications not submitted by this date through the USAJobs website will not be accepted. For more information contact **Keith Zanter, County Executive Director at 605-624-7060 Ext. #2, or at keith.zanter@sd.usda.gov.**
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