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THE ROUNDUP

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

LIVESTOCK, RANGE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

KERN, TULARE, AND KINGS COUNTIES

YOU SELECT BULLS. BUT YOU CULL COWS

That is the opening line in Burke Teichert's recent Beef article (Beef Magazine, September 2016; http://www.beefmagazine.com/blog/burke-teichert-how-cull-right-cow-without-keeping-records) and it is an important basic principle in the cow business. The article that follows Teichert's one-liner is a common sense, practical approach to improving your cow herd through simple culling principles (I didn't say it would be easy, it will take discipline to fully implement all of them). Teichert's system does not require keeping individual records of any kind on your cowherd. In fact, Teichert argues against keeping individual cow records and even calls it "a waste of time." Instead what he proposes is a straightforward set of criteria to select which cows to keep and which cows to sell. Below is a summary of Teichert's herd culling system:

Heifers

- Sometime between weaning and breeding, sell the "ugly" ones (your definition – more on this later) and the poor doers.
- Next, either AI your yearling heifers or expose them to a bull for a short period of time, 30 days or less, in other words, one estrous cycle. Sell the heifers that do not breed.

While the first bullet makes sense and is probably something you are already doing, the second bullet might make you scratch your head. Teichert provides sound justification for

this suggestion, of which, the most compelling reason, is that research shows that yearling heifers that breed in their first estrous cycle average about one more calf and significantly more pounds of weaned calf than their counterparts who bred in the second estrous cycle. In other words, the heifers that breed in the first 30 days are going to make you more money, period.

Cows

- Sell every open cow. Yes, *every single* open cow. Teichert suggests making this sort right off the end of the chute when preg checking. No marking, no tagging, no records required.
- Sell all dry cows. Sometime between preg check and calving season, these cows lost their calf, and you had to pay to feed them for the whole 9 months to figure that out. That costs money. Running a cow herd in Foothill Abortion territory makes this principle more complicated to implement, however, sound management principles have been developed to help California producers as they work to manage losses from Foothill Abortion. Those principles are available for free from the University of California in a publication titled, "Cattle Management Strategies to Minimize Foothill Abortion"(UCANR Publication #8566; http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/Details.aspx?itemNo=8566). A vaccine is currently being tested and will hopefully be available within a few years. A recombinant vaccine (more affordable and easier to handle) may take as long as 10 or more years before it is available.
- Sell all cows that require individual attention, this includes those that had to have calves pulled or were doctored in anyway. To achieve this, Teichert suggests tagging all replacement heifers and then, if they need to be handled, notch their tag so you can identify them later. Handling cows takes time, and time costs money.
- Sell the cows that raise poor calves. A simple way to get this done is to sort off the poor calves when you wean, then turn them back in with the cows. Let them mother up and then sort off those pairs and prepare them for marketing.
- Sell the cows with bad dispositions. Cranky cows are a danger to handlers, but they also cost you money. They tear up fences and they cause more shrink in the whole herd by stirring up other cows. Teichert contends, "You just don't want them."
- Sell the "ugly" ones. I promised more on the "ugly" cows. An ugly cow is basically anything that doesn't fit within your herd and ranch objectives. Maybe she's too tall, bad feet, or has bad udders. Maybe she just calved late and you know she's not gonna breed back on time. Whatever the reason, establish criteria for your herd selection, call the ugly cows ugly, and sell them.

Cull Cows, cont.

Good herd culling practices have a direct influence on the quality of your cowherd and your bottom line. Teichert concludes his article by arguing that good culling practices will benefit your operation…"as long as you don't mess it up with poor bull selection."

One thing Teichert does not talk about in this article is the importance of marketing. What is the best way to market the "ugly" heifers, the heifers that don't breed in the first cycle, and what about those pretty cows that just don't breed during your defined calving season? The importance of marketing strategies becomes clear as you consider how to get top dollar for your cull animals. Look for more on marketing strategies in future newsletters.

If you'd like to follow Burke Teichert, he has been a columnist with Beef magazine since August 2011. Visit beefmagazine.com and search Teichert.

UC Cooperative Extension Wild Pig Survey

In managed rangelands and agricultural areas, feral or wild pigs are a significant pest species. However, estimates of total damaged area occurring on these lands are ill-defined and subject to a high degree of variability. Wild pigs can be important vectors of disease, can cause forage and crop loss and set up sites for erosion effecting water quality and allow invasive plant species to establish. They can also prey on livestock. The geographical extent of wild pig damage in California is currently unknown making it difficult to mitigate and manage losses, and estimate the economic impact on private landowners and public lands.

UCCE Livestock and Range Advisors and Wildlife Specialists need your help by filling out a short statewide survey on wild pig damage found at: http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=16522. It should only take about 15 minutes to complete. Individual identities and survey responses will be kept confidential. Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary.

In conjunction with the survey we have developed a smart phone or tablet app that will help landowners and managers identify and record feral pig damage so that we can estimate the land area and economic impacts of feral pig damage over a longer time period. If you are interested in participating in data collection using our mobile application, please fill out the survey and indicate your interest at the end.

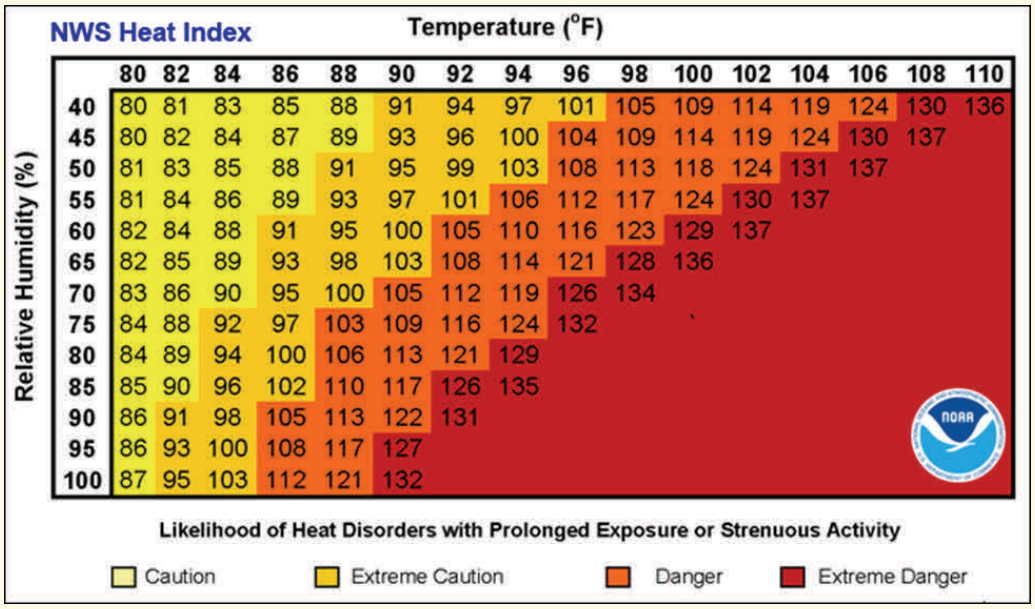
If you have questions about the survey or would like a paper copy, please contact either UCCE Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor, John Harper, at 707-463-4495 or jmharper@ucanr.edu or UCCE Wildlife Specialist, Roger Baldwin, at (530) 752-4551 or rabaldwin@ucdavis.edu.

Ask The Advisor

One of two water troughs in a summer pasture stopped working in the middle of a heat wave. How were my cattle affected?

The Heat Index and Why It's Important

The National Weather Service publishes a chart that indicates the effects of temperature and humidity and how the two factors interact. The chart is commonly used to indicate relative levels of potential heat stress in humans, but the heat index can be applied to livestock as well. The heat index provides a guide for understanding the degree of heat stress animals may be under on hot summer days.



(Source: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/heat/heat_index.shtml)

Heat and Cattle Health and Production

Cattle have been described as a furnace because the digestion of forage produces heat inside the rumen. Cattle respond to heat stress by increasing bloodflow to the skin (cutaneous vasodilation) which enhances cooling through convection, increasing sweating rates, increasing respiration rates, and finally decreasing forage intake. Increasing bloodflow to the skin, increasing sweating, and increasing respiration all increase the maintenance requirement for the animal. When a heat stressed animal cannot lose enough heat through the first three processes, the animal eats less to reduce the heat produced within its body. The result is decreased animal performance which causes an economic loss to the producer.

Water is essential at all the times of the year, but adequate amounts of easily available water are especially important in the hot, dry summer months. Cattle are receiving almost no water from the forage they consume and their water requirements are higher in the summer as they are compensating for greater water loss through sweating and respiration. Additionally, water is required for digestion. Reduced or limited water intake equates to a further re-

duction in forage intake because the ingested forage takes longer to move through the rumen. The amount of water required per cow (dry, pregnant) per day varies but is estimated at 17-20 gallons during the summer months. For a herd of 300 cows, that is a total of 5,100 – 6,000 gallons of water consumed daily.

Water Location and Livestock Distribution

In some cases, water troughs are placed at the top of a steep hill, or in a location that requires the cattle to physically exert themselves in order to access the water. When cattle must work hard physically to reach an area, it increases their energy requirements. If heat stressed cattle must physically exert themselves in order to access water, the result is a further increase in nutritional maintenance requirement and an additional potential loss to the producer. Further, physical exertion produces additional heat within the body, and the heat stress the cattle are experiencing will be exacerbated.

The location and availability of water affects more than just the heat stress cattle are under, it also affects their ability to utilize available forage. One of the key tools for distributing livestock and efficiently utilizing available forage is through the careful placement of water troughs. Cattle will only walk a certain distance away from water in order to graze. Cattle understand that they need to get back to the trough to drink within 24 hours. This translates to an estimated circumference of about a half a mile to one mile of accessible forage around each water source. If there is only one water source, then the entire herd is grazing, basically, within a one mile circle surrounding that water source, which can place stress on the cattle, as they seek to meet their nutritional needs, and also places stress on the range, as it inevitably becomes heavily grazed without further grazing management.

In feedlots, the allowance of bunk space per head in order to allow each animal to have space to access the feed bunk without competing with other animals is very important for animal production. The same concept can be applied to water availability for heat stressed cattle. In some cases, only one relatively small water trough may be available to cattle which will cause dominant cattle to push more submissive cattle out of the way. The submissive cattle are forced to wait and may be further affected by heat stress and related effects if adequate water flow is not available to quickly fill the trough and maintain an adequate water level. In other words, if cattle are forced to stand and wait for the trough to fill in order to be able to drink an adequate amount of water, the effects of heat stress will be further exacerbated.

In summary, readily available, clean, cool water is important for cattle production for two main reasons: 1) water is an essential nutrient used in digestion and almost all other body functions and 2) water is an important tool for livestock distribution to help ranchers maintain a productive herd and well-managed rangelands.

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2017 Southern San Joaquin Livestock Symposium
February 15th, 2017

UC Cooperative Extension
1031 S. Mt. Vernon Ave.
Bakersfield, CA 93307
8 AM – 12:00 PM

Cassandra's on Pine
165 E. Pine St.
Exeter, CA 93221
4 PM – 8:00 PM

Focus on Profitabilty! Topics Include:

- Financial Tools for Beef Producers
- Successful Risk Management Strategies
- Local Vaccine Protocols
- Environmental Benefits of Cattle Grazing

- A beef meal will be served at each meeting. Cost is $15 pre-registration. $20 at the door.
- Please note registration will begin 15 minutes prior to events start time. Events will begin promptly.
- Please register online at: http://ucanr.edu/livestock2017 or by filling out the registration form available at the website below.
- For more information visit: http://cekern.ucanr.edu/Livestock/ or contact Julie at: 661-868-6219 or at jafinzel@ucanr.edu

A Big Thank You to our Sponsors!

Veterinary Services, Inc.
Master Stockman Consulting
MultiMin USA, Inc.

USDA

UC CE University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension

2017 Southern San Joaquin Livestock Symposium
Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Registration Form

Please mark the location you wish to attend below:

☐ 8 – 12:00
UC Cooperative Extension Office
1031 S. Mt. Vernon Ave.
Bakersfield, CA 93307

☐ 4:00 – 8:00
Cassandra's on Pine
165 E. Pine St.
Exeter, CA 93221

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Daytime Phone: (_____) _____ Number Attending: _____

Email: _____

Refreshments and lunch or dinner will be provided to all participants.

Cost: $15 Pre-registration. $20 at the door.

Registration is available online at: **http://ucanr.edu/livestock2017**
Or, return this form, with payment, by February 10, 2017

Make checks payable to: UC Regents

Mail registration to:

Livestock Symposium
UCCE Kern County
1031 S. Mt. Vernon Ave.
Bakersfield, CA 93307

Please call: 661-868-6200 with questions

UC CE University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension

2017 Southern San Joaquin Livestock Symposium

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

UC Cooperative Extension
1031 S. Mt. Vernon Ave.
Bakersfield, CA 93307

7:45 – 8:00 **Registration**
Coffee, tea, and light refreshments

Moderator: Julie Finzel

8:00 – 8:45 **Economic Ranch Tools for Beef Producers**
Dr. Bridger Feuz, University of Wyoming Livestock Marketing Specialist

8:45 – 9:30 **Facts and Fiction about Livestock and Climate Change**
Dr. Frank Mitloehner, UC Davis Air Quality Specialist

9:30 – 9:45 **Break**
Coffee, tea, and light refreshments

9:45 – 10:15 **Water Footprint of Beef Production on California Rangelands**
Julie Finzel, UCCE Advisor

10:15 – 11:00 **Risk Management for Beef Producers**
Dr. Bridger Feuz, University of Wyoming Livestock Marketing Specialist

11:00 – 11:30 **Vaccination Protocols for your Herd**
Bear Mountain Veterinary Associates

11:30 – 11:45 **The Advantages of MultiMin**
Dr. Brad DeGroot, DVM, MultiMin USA, Inc.

11:45 **Beef Lunch!**
Provided by Multimin USA, Inc.

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2017 Southern San Joaquin Livestock Symposium

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Cassandra's on Pine
165 E. Pine St.
Exeter, CA 93221

3:45 – 4:00 **Registration**
Coffee, tea, and light refreshments

Moderator: Julie Finzel

4:00 – 4:45 **Economic Ranch Tools for Beef Producers**
Bridger Feuz, University of Wyoming Livestock Marketing Specialist

4:45 – 5:30 **Facts and Fiction about Livestock and Climate Change**
Dr. Frank Mitloehner, UC Davis Air Quality Specialist

5:30 – 6:00 **Beef Dinner**
Provided by MultiMin USA, Inc.

6:00 – 6:15 **The Advantages of MultiMin**
Dr. Brad DeGroot, DVM, Multimin USA, Inc.

6:15 – 6:45 **Vaccination Protocols for your Herd**
Dr. Lindsey Eby and Dr. James DeGroot, La Osa Veterinary Services

6:45 – 7:30 **Risk Management for Beef Producers**
Bridger Feuz, University of Wyoming Livestock Marketing Specialist

7:30 – 8:00 **Water Footprint of Beef Production on California Rangelands**
Julie Finzel, UCCE Advisor

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