Beef Cattle Management Considerations for February 2023

Rachael Brooke
Phillips-Rooks District Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Cowherd management -Target Body Condition Score (BCS) at calving for spring calving cows: 5 for mature cows and 6 for young females. Be ready to start your post calving nutrition program for spring-calving cows. Evaluate fall calving cows for BCS: adjust nutrition program as needed relative to weaning date. If conditions allow, keep grazing crop residues and dormant pastures but be prepared to move cattle or provide supplemental feed. Increase energy content 1% for every degree F below the lower critical temperature (LCT). Put down bedding, remove snow, and ensure cattle have access to wind protection. Supply adequate water volume and space in freezing conditions.

Don’t forget about your herd bulls! Bulls need to be in a BCS greater than 5 prior to the next season of use. Keep young and mature bulls separate if possible and provide plenty of space to prevent injury. Spread sufficient fresh bedding to help avoid testicular frostbite

Calf management - Do you have a plan for weaning and marketing fall-born calves? Evaluate your feed resources and cost of gain relative to the value of gain. Talk to prospective buyers in advance of selling. Evaluate calf health protocols, both spring and fall born calves. Monitor growth and pubertal development of replacement heifers.

General Management - For spring calving herds this calving season: How are you going to record your calving data? What information are you going to record? Take inventory of supplies and clean equipment prior to spring calving. If making bull selection decisions: Review your herd performance relative to your marketing and genetic goals. Study EPDs influencing your marketing and genetic goals and do your homework well before sale day.

For more information, please contact the local K-State Research and Extension Office.

Article written by: Jason Warner, K-State Research and Extension Cow-Calf Specialist