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FEEDER INFORMATION HIGHLIGHTS

Volume XXIII Number 3

April/May 2015



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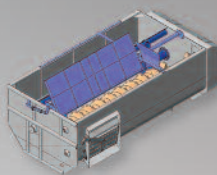
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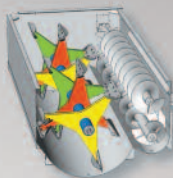
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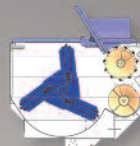
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THINK



OUTSIDE THE BOX

Comparison Chart

People In with Cattle in Narrowing Alleys Creating Potential Pressure on Cattle?

Are People Closing Gate Located at the Correct Animal Point of Balance?

How to Reposition Gate Open for Additional Cattle?

Human Exertion Required to Move Animals in High Impact Narrowing Alleys?

Turret Gate

No, Use Remote Control so People Don't Have to be in with Cattle

Yes, Remote Control Used at Correct Animal Point of Balance

Shuttle Gate back through Turret, Repositioning Behind Oncoming Cattle

No, Use Remote Control

conventional tub gates

Yes, People in with Cattle

No, People Closing Gate are not at the Point of Balance, but incorrectly behind the animal.

People & Closed Gate are in front of oncoming animals. Must open gate back into waiting animals.

Much Walking or Running

bud box

Yes, People in with Cattle

No, People Closing Gate are not at the Point of Balance, but incorrectly behind the animal.

People & Closed Gate are in front of oncoming animals. Must open gate back into waiting animals.

Much Walking or Running



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Talking Points For Commenting on the Dietary Guidelines

The comment period for the FDA's Dietary Guidelines has been extended to May 8th. Time is precious. It is vitally important that those supporting the beef industry and those who believe that the government is wrong to lead the nation down a meatless path need to comment on the issue. As of press time, 344 comments have been submitted online.

These recommendations will become the nation's nutrition policy for the next five years and affect many programs, including the school lunch program, military eating programs and physician recommendations. While the Dietary Guidelines Committee worked on these recommendations, they did not accept certain scientific studies that show lean meat is a vital part of a healthy diet. This year's recommendations also mention the Committee considered factors such as sustainability in addition to nutrition. Even though the beef industry is more sustainable than ever before, this reaches outside the task of reviewing the latest nutrition and health evidence as required to draft the guidelines.

In order to assist producers with facts and talking points, below are some suggested talking points that can be included in producer comments:

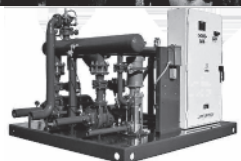
- Today's beef supply is leaner than ever before with

more than 30 cuts of beef recognized as lean by the government's own standards

- Eight extra lean beef cuts meet the American Heart Association's® requirements for heart-healthy foods as part of an overall healthy dietary pattern.
- The protein food group is one of the only categories currently consumed within the current dietary guidelines.
- Current recommendations to remove "lean meats" from the report is contradictory to the 2010 Advisory Committee's report and the 2010 Dietary Guidelines which included lean meats in a healthy diet pattern and recognized lean meats as being a nutrient dense food.
- The Committee endorsed food patterns such as the Mediterranean-style diet, which is higher in red meat levels than current U.S. diets, however it removed "lean meats" from what the report states as a dietary pattern associated with positive health benefits. This is inconsistent and confusing.
- The report excludes lean meat from a healthy diet pattern, and that move ignores decades of nutrition science and all previous editions of the Dietary Guidelines.
- The footnote the Committee included recognizes the role of lean meats in a healthy diet, however the actual report should emphasize lean meats as part of a healthy diet.
- I do not support the inclusion of topics outside of nutrition and health, like sustainability being included in the 2015 Dietary Guidelines. This is outside the scope as set by Congress and outside the committee members' expertise.
- The Dietary Guidelines that exclude lean meat will have a dramatic affect on programs like the School Lunch Program. Today's students need protein like lean meat to help them stay sharp and alert during the school day. It will also affect military eating programs, and our soldiers definitely deserve to have lean meat in their diets as they defend our country.
- I urge Ag Secretary Vilsack and Human and Health Services Burwell to review all the scientific evidence as well as the recommendations before developing the Dietary Guidelines.

Producers can submit their comments by going to www.beefusa.org. The website will direct you to a portal that has two links. The first link directs you to a PDF file that contains a sample letter. You are free to copy and paste that letter.

The second link is the actual comment website where you can write your own, or paste prepared comments. Please voice your opinion to the Dietary Guidelines committee by May 8th!



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Getting Prepared For The Veterinary Feed Directive

In the winter of 2017, feed store shelves may look a little different. Gone will be the days of producers walking in a store and purchasing items like medicated milk replacer or Aureomycin crumbles to top dress on feed without veterinarian involvement. Also gone will be the days of a feed mill manager adding tylosin or other antibiotics to a ration without veterinary oversight.

December 2016 is when Guidance 213 from the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) will take affect, requiring a Veterinary Feed Directive (also known as VFD) for any feed or water-administered antibiotics classified as "medically important," with regard to their human medical importance.

According to Mike Apley, DVM, Ph.D., Frick professor and clinical pharmacologist with Kansas State University Veterinary School, the regulations will require a VFD for several commonly used products in the livestock industry, like tetracyclines including chlortetracyclines and oxytetracyclines and sulfonamides, as well as gentamicin,

neomycin, tylosin and others.

However, ionophores (Rumensin, Bovatec, Cattlyst), bambermycins (Gainpro), anticoccidials and bacitracin products (BMD, Zinc Bacitracin [Albac]) will not require a VFD. Those antimicrobials are not classified as "medically important" according to the FDA guidance documents.

"That's one thing that I want producers to understand. They will not need a VFD for ionophores," Apley said at the NCBA Cattlemen's College. "They are antibiotics, but they are not medically important." It is important to understand products such as ionophores, Deccox, and MGA, when fed alone will not require a VFD, however if they are fed in combination with a VFD regulated product will require the appropriate VFD.

Apley explained that of medically important antibiotics that are administered to food animals, 70% have feed labels and 24% have water labels. Until Guidance 213 takes affect, none of those have required a prescription. In fact, 97% of medically

important antimicrobials in the U.S. sold with the label for food animals are available over the counter, he said.

"It is indefensible in the public eye that we have antibiotics available for use in food animals without a prescription from a veterinarian,"



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Apley said. "And I support that. There needs to be a veterinarian involved in these decisions."

Although Guidance 213 will definitely require changes in the steps those in the livestock industry take to utilize feed and water-administered antibiotics, the regulations are not something to be afraid of says Marilyn Corbin, DVM, MS, PhD, member of the Zoetis technical services team. Instead, producers should focus their efforts in getting prepared.

"I've been communicating to producers if you don't currently have a consistent veterinarian that you go to all the time, the first step is to develop a relationship with a veterinarian. That way he or she has time to become familiar with your operation," Corbin explained.

As part of the regulations, a veterinarian must have oversight of how any medically important antibiotics are administered to food animals.

Thus, a professional relationship among all parties involved needs to be established.

"That's first and foremost. Make sure you have a veterinarian, and they are comfortable with your operation so he can write a VFD when and if it's needed," Corbin said.

Another step in being prepared for the regulations is building a relationship with a nutritionist. That nutritionist could be an independent consultant, work for a feed company, a co-op, etc.

"The nutritionist would be someone you could call and get answers to how the antibiotics are mixed in feed," she said. "The VFD is written by a veterinarian, but a lot of time there's some label language, mixing, or ration information that your vet may not have all the information about. So it's a really good idea if producers can develop a relationship with a nutritionist."

The third step in preparing for

the regulations is getting the veterinarian and the nutritionist to develop a professional relationship with each other. "If the veterinarian has a question on a product, maybe how a product mixes, how you deliver it and so forth, then the vet has someone he can call for some quick advice," said Corbin.

Large feedyards will likely be more prepared, with consulting veterinarians and nutritionists already in place. However, smaller operators, ranchers, backgrounders, etc. may not have established these professional relationships. Corbin believes it is very important that they start preparing.

More specific steps will need to be taken once the final regulations are published, and that is expected later in the year. Until that time, understanding what is known about Guidance 213 and getting prepared for it is one of the best things producers can do. **FL**

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PLAN: What to do if your wet co-products run out

Wet co-products are a common component of many cattle feeding programs.

However, the availability of these co-products can be less than consistent during times of inclement weather, plant shut-downs, or simply a temporary imbalance of supply and demand. If you rely heavily on a consistent source of co-products, it is imperative to have a contingency plan in place in the event that they are not available when you need them.

The easiest way to avoid an emergency ingredient shortage is to plan ahead. If only using a few loads per month, be sure to place orders more than a week in advance. This will give the plant enough notice to know what their availability will be in the upcoming days. Having sufficient storage space to hold enough feed to last two to three weeks is a good idea. When constructing a storage facility, be sure to make it wide enough so that when a new load is delivered it does not cover up old feed that is still on hand. Being able to utilize fresh feed all the time is the best-case scenario. However, wet co-products will usually maintain their integrity, with little to no loss in feeding value; up to three to four weeks in the winter and 1.5 to two weeks in the summer.

During the summer, wet co-products are typically substantially cheaper and often “fire-sales” are available, offering large quantities at significant discounts. Take advantage of these opportunities by purchasing and storing two to four weeks’ worth of expected winter usage. These feeds can successfully

be bagged and kept for long periods of time with little to no loss to freshness or quality. Hold this supply in reserve and only break into it in the event that an emergency arises.


Be sure to place bags on level terrain, especially if they contain more than 60% moisture. Wet corn gluten feed and modified distillers grain can be piled relatively high, and to some extent, can even be packed in a bunker silo or drive-over pile. Wet distillers grain can be piled as well, but ideally needs to be mixed with 12-20% (as-fed basis) dry roughage to bulk it up enough so that it can be packed and piled high. If mixing wet distillers with roughage is not a feasible option, an alternative method is to pile as much as possible into a bunker silo, then block the open end off with bales of hay or concrete blocks so it will not all run out. Covering a stored pile with plastic to keep the air, sun, and precipitation off is highly recommended and will greatly reduce shrink.

In the event that you run completely out of wet co-products, it’s a good idea to have a contingency plan in place. Keeping some dry distillers grains (DDG) or dry gluten feed on hand is probably the simplest option. Having dry co-products on hand will allow you to maintain the same ration on a dry matter basis. In this scenario it is important to have the ability to add water back to the ration to maintain consistency.

If dry co-products are not

available, we can temporarily replace wet co-products with a combination of corn silage, high quality hay, and corn. Be careful about only using corn as a replacement because this can cause a drastic increase in starch load, possibly leading to acidosis. Increasing roughage levels one step is advised if the ration must change substantially to help maintain a healthy rumen. In this scenario, some water may need to be added to the TMR to maintain intake and decrease bunk sorting. If you are using additives through a micro-machine, maintaining moisture levels of a ration is especially important because inclusion rates of these products are calculated based on total pounds of feed delivered.

Perhaps the most crucial thing to remember is to not wait until the day you run out of feed to implement these changes. In some instances, there is at least a two to four day advance notice that feed will not be available when you need it. If this occurs, make ration adjustments as soon as possible so that what little feed is left can be stretched out as far as possible. In addition, when the situation arises that an ingredient runs out completely, it will be a much more moderate change for the cattle. Furthermore, PLEASE do not shoot from the hip and attempt to make these ration adjustments on your own. If you find yourself in this unfortunate situation, we ask that you do not hesitate to utilize our services by contacting your nutritionist or our home office, and we will be glad to help you work through the situation.

Luke Miller is a beef nutritionist with Great Plains Livestock Consulting (www.gplc-inc.com). 



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Diagnosing Lameness

Lameness in livestock not only causes the animal discomfort, but it also causes loss of production. According to research from the University of Nebraska, a lame animal is estimated to be worth only 53 percent of its sound counterparts. Lameness accounted for 16 percent of all health problems in feedlots and five percent of deaths.

It's a serious issue, but it's not always easy to identify the cause. Proper diagnosis of why a calf is lame is essential to treating the ailment. Unfortunately, a calf won't set his foot on the side of the chute for a producer to examine, so clues like the location of swelling are key

in diagnosing livestock lameness.

According to Dr. Dee Griffin, Beef Cattle Production Specialist at the University of Nebraska, disease accounts for 70 percent of lameness. Foot rot is the most common infectious cause in both feedlot and pasture cattle. Basically, foot rot is an infection in the area between the toes.

"Foot rot occurs when we injure the skin between the toes of cattle," said Dr. Griffin. It can also be caused from constant wet conditions that soften or compromise the skin. This break in the skin allows for bacteria, typically *Fusobacterium necrophorum*, to penetrate

and cause infection. This bacteria is shed through manure and can easily infect the tissue.

Typically there will be swelling above the actual hoof, and inspection of the area between the toes will show a lesion, often accompanied by a foul odor.

Digital dermatitis or "hairy heel wart" is getting more attention in feedlot circles, according to Russ Daly, DVM, Associate Professor at South Dakota State University. Although the ailment has been recognized as a problem in dairy cattle, it is now appearing in beef cattle as well. Digital dermatitis is very contagious. Once it's introduced into a herd, it can quickly spread.

Swelling is often seen in the heel area. Raw, bright red or black circular erosion of the skin just above the heel is a tell-tale sign. Muddy pens can contribute to digital dermatitis, as can introducing new animals into the herd.

Abscesses and ulcers can also cause lameness. Abscesses are best diagnosed by using a hoof tester to check for tenderness. Often cattle become extremely lame. Abscesses are commonly caused by some type of trauma during processing, shipping, etc. It is important to treat the infection. Left untreated, the infection can migrate up the toe and into the joint.

Other ailments can also cause lameness, such as septic joints, laminitis or injury. A close assessment of the affected limb, plus any tell-tale signs like swelling or odor will help a producer diagnose the ailment, and thus properly treat it.

A diagnostic guide from Zinpro is now available in the form of an app for tablet devices. The Zinpro

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Since infections are the most common reason for lameness, it's important for producers to become familiar with the symptoms in order to properly treat the infection. Or if no infection is present, properly identify an injury or foreign object that could be causing the problem. **FL**

In a future issue of Feed-Lot, the third article in the series on

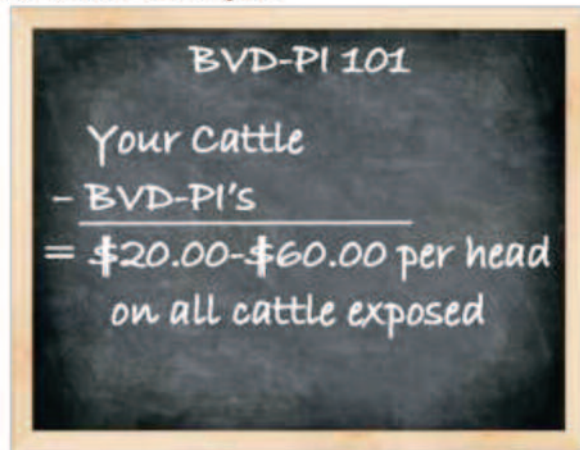
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Digital dermatitis is characterized by raw, bright red or black erosions of the skin just above the heel.

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Brief Summary of Full Prescribing Information



Antibiotic
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For subcutaneous injection in beef and non-lactating dairy cattle and intramuscular injection in swine only. Not for use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older or in calves to be processed for veal.

CAUTION
Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

INDICATIONS

Beef and Non-lactating Dairy Cattle

BRD—DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is indicated for the treatment of bovine respiratory disease (BRD) associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida*, *Histophilus somni*, and *Mycoplasma bovis*; and for the control of respiratory disease in cattle at high risk of developing BRD associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida*, *Histophilus somni*, and *Mycoplasma bovis*.

IBK—DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is indicated for the treatment of infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis (IBK) associated with *Moraxella bovis*.

Foot Rot—DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is indicated for the treatment of bovine foot rot (interdigital necrobacillosis) associated with *Fusobacterium necrophorum* and *Porphyromonas levis*.

Swine

DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is indicated for the treatment of swine respiratory disease (SRD) associated with *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae*, *Pasteurella multocida*, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, *Haemophilus parasuis*, and *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae*; and for the control of SRD associated with *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae*, *Pasteurella multocida*, and *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae* in groups of pigs where SRD has been diagnosed.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

Cattle

Inject subcutaneously as a single dose in the neck at a dosage of 2.5 mg/kg (1.1 mL/100 lb) body weight (BW). Do not inject more than 10 mL per injection site.

Swine

Inject intramuscularly as a single dose in the neck at a dosage of 2.5 mg/kg (0.25 mL/22 lb) BW. Do not inject more than 2.5 mL per injection site.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

The use of DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is contraindicated in animals previously found to be hypersensitive to the drug.

WARNINGS

FOR USE IN ANIMALS ONLY.

NOT FOR HUMAN USE.

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.

NOT FOR USE IN CHICKENS OR TURKEYS.

RESIDUE WARNINGS

Cattle

Cattle intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 18 days from the last treatment. Do not use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older. A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminating calves. Do not use in calves to be processed for veal.

Swine

Swine intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 5 days from the last treatment.

PRECAUTIONS

Cattle

The effects of DRAXXIN on bovine reproductive performance, pregnancy, and lactation have not been determined. Subcutaneous injection can cause a transient local tissue reaction that may result in trim loss of edible tissue at slaughter.

Swine

The effects of DRAXXIN on porcine reproductive performance, pregnancy, and lactation have not been determined. Intramuscular injection can cause a transient local tissue reaction that may result in trim loss of edible tissue at slaughter.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

Cattle

In one BRD field study, two calves treated with DRAXXIN at 2.5 mg/kg BW exhibited transient hypersalivation. One of these calves also exhibited transient dyspnea, which may have been related to pneumonia.

Swine

In one field study, one out of 40 pigs treated with DRAXXIN at 2.5 mg/kg BW exhibited mild salivation that resolved in less than four hours.

STORAGE CONDITIONS

Store at or below 25°C (77°F).

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TRANSPORTATION SYMPOSIUM SET

Transporting livestock is an important part of the production process. The Cattle Transportation Symposium, funded in part by the beef checkoff, will provide a venue for industry experts and stakeholders to gather and discuss issues, research, and solutions that directly relate to cattle transportation. The goal is to provide clarity about the state of the industry and the future of cattle transportation in the United States. The symposium is set for May 14-15 in Fort Collins, Colo.

“Managing cattle stress at the time of transportation is vitally important for the health and well-being of the cattle and safety people working with the cattle,” says Dr. Dan Thomson, director of the Beef Cattle Institute at Kansas State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. “Cattle that are stressed are difficult to handle, and the quality

of their beef can be affected. This symposium is aimed at teaching producers, packers and dairymen how to get the most value from the carcass and provide consumers with the highest quality beef possible through best animal handling and transport practices.

“Producers will have the opportunity to hear more about loading and unloading practices for ranch, feedlot and dairy cattle, how to select animals that are fit for transport and principles of proper cattle transportation using stock trailers, including loading, hauling, and unloading, as well as weather-related considerations,” says Thomson.

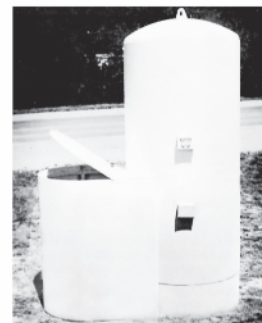
Transporters can preregister by emailing cdecoite@beef.org. More information is available at: www.beefboard.org/news/150310BQATransportSymposiumRelease.asp. **FL**

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Whole Pond Test

Electronic Sensors Improve Accuracy

We discussed why a “whole pond” test is required in last month’s issue. Now, let’s discuss what a “whole pond test” is.

Lagoon seepage has historically been measured with stand pipes driven into the liner or with laboratory tests of soil liner cores. Both

tests represent as little as one millionth of the liner. A “whole pond water balance” however, measures seepage over an entire lagoon. The “whole pond” test measures the drop in water surface elevation and subtracts evaporation to reflect daily seepage.

Modern electronic sensors, communication, and data collector technology has allowed the evolution of a “whole pond” seepage test, which can be completed with very high accuracy over as little as two nights. It is a much simplified and more accurate version of the “thirty day barrel test” widely relied upon until the last decade. The system includes precision sensors for recording changes in water surface elevation, as well as sensors for water surface temperature, wind speed, air temperature, humidity,



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¹KEYSER ET AL., 2007, J. ANIM. SCI. 85: 1264-1273.



A data collector setting on the embankment of the pond records wind speed, air temperature, humidity, and rainfall. The pond sensor (inset) collects water surface temperature, and changes in water depth. The atmospheric parameters and water surface temperature predict evaporation. Decrease in water depth minus evaporation equals seepage.

and precipitation. This data stream allows calculation of evaporation and “taking data only at night” in moderate wind and temperature conditions provides high accuracy in the evaporation calculation. Usable data typically includes six or more hours of consecutive data points with winds under 10 mph and no rain. The regulators requiring whole pond tests currently insist on a minimum of two nights of data.

Radio transmission of data allows concurrent testing of multiple lagoons at a CAFO even with significant distances between them. The data collection process is monitored over the internet so we can check if the data is okay or if there are problems with the equipment and/or data without having to travel to the site.

Allowable seepage rates vary by regulatory dictate, but can be as low as 1/64” per day. The precision electronics used in current “whole pond” test equipment allows efficient data collection to accurately measure such low seepage rates. **FL**



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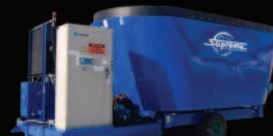
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AG GAG LAWS:

Even if your state offers such protection, good employment practices & record keeping is important

Livestock producers need to be proactive when it comes to preserving their public image and not rely exclusively on the protection of anti-whistleblower laws, says one expert.

Cari Rincker of New York-based Rincker Law, touched on this topic in a recent presentation at the New York State Bar Association's annual meeting. In her presentation, "Advising the Livestock Producer on Ag Gag Laws," she offered a working definition of these so-called "ag gag laws," their implications, and actions producers can take to counter bad publicity or maintain a positive image.

In the context of agriculture, Rincker says "ag gag" laws are designed to restrict employees from taking photographs or videos illustrating alleged cruelty to animals, food safety issues, and/or poor working conditions and/or restrict people such as activist and undercover journalists from obtaining illegal access (commonly through job application fraud) onto agricultural operations for this purpose.

Third-party access can be detrimental to producers, for several reasons. In her presentation she explains that exposure, in the form of photos or video, only presents one side of the story. She notes these videos are often times taken out of context.

"The video and photography does not accurately portray what happens on the farm day in and day out; instead, it shows the worst isolated incidents that can usually be explained," Rincker notes.

While controversial, producers should be aware these laws are not universal. To date, Kansas, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Iowa and Missouri all have anti-whistleblower laws in place, and several other states have proposed but failed to pass legislation like this. Therefore the majority of states don't have ag gag laws in place. Even if your state has an ag gag law, that doesn't mean producers should turn a blind eye. Rincker says "whether or not you live in a state with an ag gag law, livestock operators need to have good employment practices in place."

"It should happen as a matter of course," Rincker says about implementing such practices. "Times are changing and producers need to be more diligent."

Such practices should include thorough interviewing, reference checks, background checks, and posting notices of prohibited devices—like smartphones—in the workplace.

Producers should also invest their energies into what she refers to as "positive marketing," to build goodwill in the community. Such examples include voluntarily participating in livestock animal welfare programs. Operators can also foster a culture of transparency by investing in an online presence, too. A website with a virtual tour of the operation, and posts on social media channels can be means to engage the public. Other ways operators can keep up their image might include sponsoring a local baseball team, joining the PTA, offering a farm tour or getting involved in the local 4-H fair.

If all else fails, detailed record-keeping is a defensive move. Rincker says "farms should consider keeping as much documentation that they can on everything they are doing right to care for their animals each day. This will be useful in court for any defense against animal cruelty charges."

"Being proactive is multi-faceted," she says in summary. "Producers should be equally concerned with hiring practices, as well as their reputation in the community."

FL

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Factors That Affect Breeding Ability in Bulls

He passed a breeding soundness exam. So why do I have open cows?

Many factors affect breeding ability. A bull may pass his breeding soundness exam and still not sire any calves. Dr. Ram Kasimanickam, Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, Washington State University, says that after a bull passes this evaluation, with requirements set forth by the Society for Theriogenology, it is the producer's responsibility to see whether the bull has good libido. Even if the bull is fertile, with good sperm quality, he won't settle cows if he doesn't actually breed them.

It's also important to observe behavior in a multi-sire group. Social factors play a major role in multi-sire breeding programs; a dominant bull may keep the others from breeding cows. "If a dominant bull develops a problem (lameness, or a fertility issue) he won't settle cows, plus he won't let the other bulls breed cows." Thus it pays to monitor bulls and make sure they are able to do their job.

"Another important factor is size

of the pasture. In western states, range pastures are huge. Yet some breeders try to maintain the same bull-to-cow ratio as recommended in smaller pastures, such as one bull to 30 cows. This would be insufficient in a pasture with hundreds of acres," he says. In that situation you may need more bulls, to make sure they can get around the whole pasture and find all the cows in heat.

"Bulls that pass a breeding soundness exam before the breeding season may not have enough breeding potential in the middle of the breeding season. Producers tend to think that one breeding soundness exam is enough to guarantee the bull will be adequate through the season, but studies show that bulls may not maintain

the same level of breeding soundness. This can be due to many factors, including stress, social interaction, nutrition, or not enough libido to get the job done," says Kasimanickam.

A bull may get foot rot or some other disease that results in fever.



This can affect fertility temporarily, since sperm being formed during that time will not be viable. Illness or lameness issues can adversely affect the bull's performance. Soreness in a hind limb can make it difficult for him to mount and breed cows.

Producers should observe what happens in a breeding pasture or out on the range. Then if something goes wrong or a bull has a problem, he can be brought home, and replaced with another bull.

The young, inexperienced bull should be closely watched to make sure he is doing his job, but a libido problem can happen with an older bull as well. An older, overweight bull may become lazy or arthritic and lose interest in breeding. Weight/body condition are important factors in whether a bull will be a good breeder. He needs to be in proper fitness condition to be athletic and have the endurance to cover a lot of territory and breed a lot of cows.



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TOO FAT IS WORSE THAN TOO THIN

Producers generally think they need to have bulls in body score 6 or 7 because they lose weight during breeding season and need some reserve, but an interesting study in Canada in large community breeding pastures showed that thinner bulls sire more calves than fat bulls.

The research was done by Dr. Glenn Coulter who earlier measured fat in bulls' scrotums (and found that fat bulls are less fertile because fat insulates the testicles and keeps them too warm for optimum sperm production, and also hinders ability to raise and lower the testicles to keep them at proper temperature). In the recent study in community pastures, all they did was check backfat, using ultrasound. Then they turned out 30 to 50 bulls in each pasture. They blood typed the bulls, cows and resulting calves, so they could tell which bulls sired which calves—to know how many calves each bull sired.

The bulls with zero backfat bred the most cows. There is more detriment in making a bull too fat than in having him thin. A fat bull is not as athletically fit and more likely to hurt himself, just like an overweight,

out-of-shape human who tries to exercise. The fat bull is not very athletic, and more apt to be lazy.

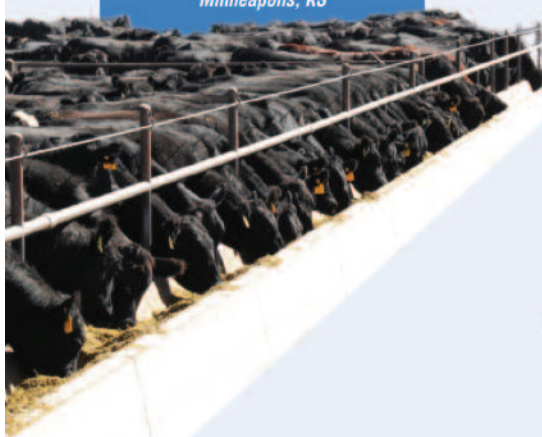
A yearling bull that's still growing may run himself ragged during his first breeding season and lose too much weight for good health, however. This is why it's important to give a yearling bull fewer cows or shorter turnout time, bringing him back in and resting him before he gets too thin. Thus, it is important



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Interviewing for Character Traits

Sometimes we get overly concerned about the legal limitations to the types of interview questions we can ask, and miss the opportunity to glean crucial information about the personal character of a candidate. It is essential to ask the skill-based

questions about experience, background, education and knowledge—but we can't spend all of our interviewing time on these issues and neglect their other important traits.

There is an old adage among professional hiring managers that goes, "We hire people on their skills...but fire people on their character and attitude." The reason for this is that we don't ask enough questions or get enough information about their character before we hire them.

Aside from the documents we should have available at the interview such as a Job Description, the Employee Handbook and their completed Job Application, we should also have a set list of questions that we plan to ask to ensure that we do not overlook key

points of inquiry, and to also ensure that we are being consistent with all candidates.

To make that list, we first have to identify the character traits we want in our operation. Here are some common ones:

Integrity; Work Ethic; Sincerity; Honesty; Compassion for Animals; Teamwork; Loyalty; Achievement; Fairness; Common Courtesy; Quality; and a Sense of Purpose.

Here are some sample questions to glean information about these character traits:

- What are some of the ways you try to extend "common courtesy" to your coworkers?
- Tell me something that you did for someone else in the last week, just to help them, without wanting or asking for anything in return.
- Think about the last time you made a mistake or reacted inappropriately to a situation. What did you do next? (You don't have to tell me what you did that was a mistake or inappropriate.)
- Give me three words that describe some of your core values.
- Describe a time in your last position that you went out of your way to ensure that animals in your care got everything they needed, even though it was inconvenient for you.
- Tell me about a time that you "did the right thing" but still paid a price as a result. (Follow up—"Would you do it again?")
- What do you think about gossip at home or the work place?
- Tell me about an area that you are trying to learn more about or

get better at, and how you plan to apply the lessons you learn.

- Tell me about charities you are involved in, or some other way that you help people in your community.
- Tell me something that you saw a coworker do that was disloyal to the company. (Follow up: "What did you do about it?")
- If you personally saw a coworker obviously stealing something from the business, what would you do?
- Tell me about your overall work ethic and the evidence that your former boss or coworkers would use as examples.
- What are some ways that you ensure good quality work?
- What is important to you above all else?
- A lot of people today feel it is important to have a "sense of purpose" in their life. What is yours?

Though there are many right or acceptable answers to these questions, there are a few clearly wrong ones that will jump out at you when you hear them.

You can decide which of these questions are most appropriate for your situation. The answer to any one specific question is not crucial, but the general theme of their answers will give you a clear sense of their personal priorities, their individual core values, and whether or not they would be a good fit for the culture you are trying to establish and reinforce in your business. **FL**

Don Tyler is the owner of Tyler & Associates, Clarks Hill, IN. For more information on these and other business or employee management topics, contact him at 765-523-3259 or don@dontyler.com.

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Flexibility in Grazing Management

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS



Adapting to grazing conditions is key to utilizing forage.

Chad Lemke is a 5th generation rancher in Mason County, Texas. “We live where it seldom rains, the wind always blows, and every now and then we see some green grass!” he says.

“We’ve learned to adapt, to survive. We run several hundred animals on several thousand acres, but numbers fluctuate. We are flexible every year, and sometimes every month—constantly monitoring, planning and adjusting,” says Lemke.

The ranch runs cow-calves, stockers, finishers, sheep and goats, often grazing in one herd. “We separate our finishing animals at a certain point and take them to better quality pasture, but try to keep the entire herd as one group most of the year, to take advantage of the animal impact and rest periods this allows,” says Lemke.

“We may mob graze, we may move twice daily, or may set stock for a week or two. We may have an area with a lot of brush we need to tear up, or a brushy area that needs more sheep/goat activity. We constantly use the herd and plant base

to maximize what we have growing each year,” he says.

Grazing animals are a good tool to improve the land. “Things we used to consider noxious weeds or brush are now part of the feeding/grazing program for certain animals during certain times of year,” he says.

Weeds become forage if you can train animals to eat them. “If we have a mob with 200 pairs, 100 stockers and 100-200 sheep and goats in 1/2 acre and move them daily or twice a day, they start eating more things they may not normally eat, consuming nearly all the plants in that pasture. In spring and summer when chemical trucks are rolling up and down the road and farmers are spraying pastures, we just use electric fence to move the animals around to eat the weeds,” says Lemke.

“We have a lot of semi-permanent fence, especially for paddocks that may be 500 feet wide by 1 or 2 miles long, and put temporary fence across those. This allows flexibility at certain times of year to move twice a day or whenever

we need to,” he says.

“During spring and summer we usually tighten up the moves when grass is growing. It all depends on the rainfall. A few years ago we went through 15 months in which we only had about 3 inches of rain total at one of our places. Fortunately we had a little more rain after that, but we try to build flexibility into our grazing plans and facilities, so things can be modified as needed,” he explains.

He likes to have a lot of 30 to 40-acre paddocks and be able to subdivide them into quarter or half-acre pastures or whatever is needed. Flexibility has helped this ranch survive drought. “We are constantly monitoring. Part of our drought contingency plan is to reduce numbers if the year doesn’t look promising. In 2010 we were forced to cull ruthlessly. We pared numbers down to what our place could support in the drought, to protect the land. It was hard to do, because we had spent years building good genetics. But you can’t make it rain,” says Lemke.

"Some producers think they are in a drought if it doesn't rain for 30 to 60 days, but we don't start worrying about drought until it hasn't rained for 9 months. This helps with our management because we may be in a paddock only once or twice a year, depending on the year, the plants, and what time of year it rains. Being able to let pastures recover for that long really helps. Usually something will grow back," he says.

"We don't take more than 50% off the plants at any one time. Our goal is about 70 to 75% left behind. We keep moving on, and those plants recover faster. Certain times of year we graze harder than that, if it's a wet spring and we're trying to control the weed problem. In the fall, if we are trying to open up space for whatever annual growth we can get in winter, we may take some of the forage down a little more so seed can germinate and grow during winter," he explains. The annuals planted are usually cool season forage species that do well in cooler weather.

There are many ways to tweak and manage pastures for optimum production, and intensive grazing is improving fertility/productivity of the soil. "We plant cover crops with no till—to improve pasture quality for our late stocker and finishing animals. We have a combination of native and improved perennial grass base and are constantly adding alfalfas, clovers. In winter we may plant vetch, wheat, rye, oats, triticale, barley, etc. We always try to include legumes. People call these cocktail mixes, and

Cows, sheep and goats often run together to compliment what forage is available.



these are what we've been no-tilling for 12 years. In some pastures we may plant sweet clover or turnips to break up the ground," says Lemke.

"Long-term, the number one goal has to build soil fertility. The days of inexpensive inputs are over. Mob grazing and manure do an amazing job at very little cost.

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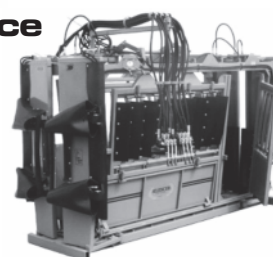


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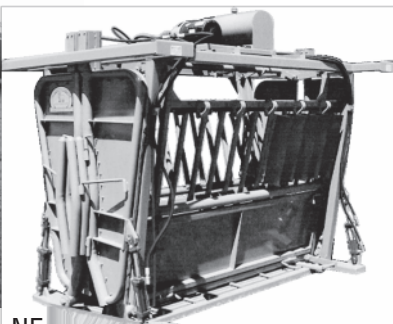
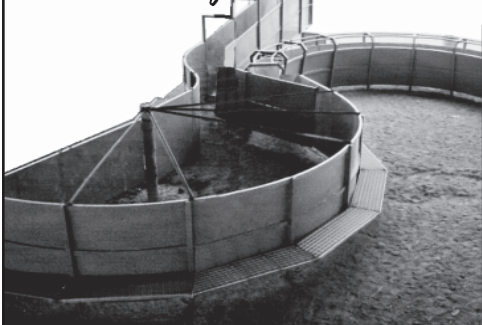
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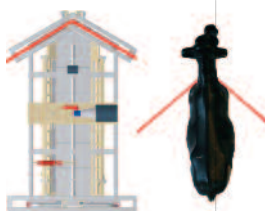


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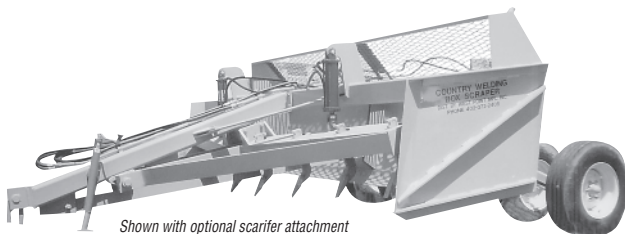


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