

MANAGE COWS AND BULLS FOR MAXIMUM CONCEPTION RATE

Points to Remember

- Reproductive performance is quite poor in cows with low level energy rations the last trimester of pregnancy. Cows with adequate or high level of nutrition have excellent reproductive performance.
- A sound health program and good nutrition are requirements of any breeding program. They become even more important in an AI program.
- A higher detection rate of cows in heat has been observed before noon than during the afternoon and evening. Shortly after sunrise a special effort should be made to detect estrus.
- One of the more important management decisions in an artificial breeding program is the length of the breeding season and the use of cleanup bulls.
- Proper facilities are essential to an AI program. They can be very simple or very elaborate.
- Estrus synchronization with prostaglandins has the potential to improve and increase artificial insemination programs with cattle.
- An estrus synchronizing program will not enhance overall pregnancy rates, increase con-

ception or benefit reproductive performance in non-cycling or subfertile cattle, particularly when poor management is responsible for the condition of the cattle.

- Income and labor use can both be improved by shortening the calving season.
- Reproductive efficiency has a greater impact on the economic returns of a ranch than any of the more highly heritable traits.
- Fertility records are the easiest of all performance records to keep. They reflect the level of management and environment more accurately than any other record kept.
- Bulls are purchased to improve the genetic merit of the offspring.
- Performance is influenced more by environmental factors than genetic factors.
- Economically the early calf is more valuable to the enterprise than the late calf.
- We need to concentrate on improving the genetic potential of the early calf. To do this, the genetically superior or proven bulls in the bull battery should be turned out first.

Good Management Practices

- A good manager will keep an eye on his bulls to make sure that they are getting the cows

bred. Injuries to bulls during the breeding season are relatively common.

- During the breeding season, keep the cows distributed over the feed resource so the nutrient level is kept high. Some of the most important “riding” of the year will be done at this time.
- All cows that have lost their calves or did not calve should be marketed.
- Be sure that the mineral-salt mixture is available for the cattle and that the mixture has adequate levels of special minerals for preventing problems such as grass tetany.
- In single bull groups, watch the cows closely during the first 30 days of the breeding season so you will know if the cows are cycling and if the bull is settling the cows.

Plan Ahead

- Determine if creep feeding is an economically viable alternative.
- Review mineral supplementation program. Be sure consumption level is meeting needs.
- Get up to date on market prices.
- Plan some marketing alternatives.
- Review budget for future needs.