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*This newsletter is provided as a public service to producers and others in beef industry related fields. If you do not have an interest in receiving the Cattlemen's Corner Beef Newsletter in the future, please contact the Extension Office and we will remove your name from our mailing list. Likewise, if you know of someone who would like to receive the newsletter, please let us know. <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/owyhee> 208-896-4104*

## Bull Selection

K. Scott Jensen  
UI Extension Educator, Owyhee County

Over the Christmas holidays, my wife was doing some cleaning and sorting. She came across a small box containing some old pictures, mostly of me. One of the pictures that caught my eye was a picture taken about 1989. I was about a year out of college (meaning I still knew almost everything) and working as the assistant manager of a purebred Charolais ranch in Leona, Texas (Eastern Central Texas). I was standing next to a bull by the name of Del Rio. I am 5'10" and the top of his back hit me about mid-forehead. Big and beautiful but not really very functional in the real cow world.

I also remember sitting next to another Charolais breeder at the All Breed Bull Sale held during the Fort Worth Stock Show. Many of the bulls going through the sale there had 95+ lb. birth weights. I commented to him that I personally would not be interested in any such animals, regardless of what their EPD's were. He seemed a little incredulous. Was I off base in my thoughts or were these bulls unacceptable?

What is important in bull selection? The answer to that question will vary some depending on the specific ranch and their cattle. Here are a few rules of thumb to consider.

1) The genetics of any bull you use will make up 50% of the genetics of his offspring. Four legs and 2 testicles should not be the sole selection criteria. This is especially important to remember if you plan to keep replacement heifers out of your own herd.

2) Frame and muscle are highly heritable traits. The tendency quite often is to select for bigger and heavier animals. Larger cattle producing more pounds of beef may not be the best match for your environment nor make you more profitable. Large frame bulls will not produce moderate framed offspring. Larger framed animals often reach sexual maturity later and require more feed for maintenance.

3) Structural soundness is important for all breeding stock, especially for those that will be doing their breeding in rough country. Be sure to evaluate young bulls for structural soundness since these problems tend to get worse as bulls get older and heavier.

4) Growth and calving ease are generally evaluated by birth, weaning, and yearling weights in breeding stock. This information accompanied with expected progeny differences (EPD's) can be invaluable when comparing the expected performance of different bulls' offspring. Identify the traits that are of most importance to your operation and then select for bulls that can improve those traits within your herd.

5) Consider the environment and manner in which the bulls you are considering were developed. Bulls developed in

... continued on page 2

## Disposal of Antibiotics and Vaccines

Danielle Gunn, MS, Extension Educator, Fort Hall Indian Reservation and  
James J. England, DVM, PhD, Professor and Extension Veterinarian,  
Caine Veterinary Teaching Center

With the increased pressure against the use of antibiotics in animals, proper disposal of all things related to antibiotic use at the farm and ranch level is as important as proper antibiotic use. Contamination of the environment, especially water with hazardous or potentially hazardous biological wastes is one of the top 30 environmental concerns of the public.

Antibiotics and vaccines are routinely used by cattle producers in maintaining animal health. Consequently, questions arise as to the proper disposal of these materials and the associated syringes, needles, empty vials/bottles, and outdated products.

"[Idaho] DEQ does not have regulations specific to medical waste and/or bio-hazardous waste. Vaccines containing live attenuated virus may go into a municipal solid waste landfill without being autoclaved or otherwise treated to inactivate the virus. Reconstituted live virus vaccines are unstable and will become inactive within a few hours at unrefrigerated temperature. Individual landfills may have policies regarding this type of waste. Many county landfills accept veterinary waste as non-hazardous provided the material is adequately packaged.

Animal vaccines, both modified live and killed/inactivated, can be disposed via trash/incineration. Killed veterinary vaccines, bacterial or viral, do not contain thimersol and can be disposed of through trash removal.

Outdated or unused antibiotics should be placed into a rigid plastic container with cat litter or compost, sealed and placed into the trash. DO NOT place antibiotics into sewer or septic systems or water sources. Empty antibiotic bottles should also be disposed in trash containers or incinerated.

Needles should be placed into an appropriate "sharps container" and placed into the trash. A plastic gallon jug with a small neck and lid are appropriate sharps receptacles. Used syringes should be disassembled and the leur tip removed before disposal; incineration is the optimal disposal to eliminate possible misuse.



### *Bull Selection . . . continued from page 1*

a feedlot on a high input ration sometimes "fall apart" when placed in tough range conditions to do the breeding.

6) Finally, insist on a complete breeding soundness exam that includes testing for trichomoniasis. A bull that is infertile or spreading disease will not be a good addition to your herd no matter the price!

This is certainly not an all-inclusive list but it will hopefully stimulate a few thoughts as you make decisions on bull selection. I wish you much success and a very prosperous New Year!



### *Self-Disciplined . . . continued from page 3*

ment of the market. Few expressed the self-discipline to pull the trigger at that time. Many anticipated that the market was moving higher and were fearful that they might miss out on selling at higher levels. Putting greed aside those self-disciplined individuals who sold early for fall delivery used a form of risk management.

Becoming involved in the political effort to preserve the beef industry is another type of risk management. Again, this requires self-disciplined time management. Instead of sitting on the sidelines become a part of the solution by joining local, state and national agricultural sounding voice organizations such as the Farm Bureau and Cattlemen's Association. Assist in the educational effort to inform the general public about production agriculture by telling the real story.

The cattle industry has always been cyclic in nature. The benefit of tough times is improved management skills and/or enforcement of the skills we already possess. Knee jerk crisis management decisions based on emotion rather than logic generally spell long term disaster and are a sign of a non-disciplined management style. It takes ambition and self-discipline to make ranching work. Working hard is not enough. We need to work hard **and** smart.



## Self-Disciplined Ranch Management

Ron Torell  
Long-Standing Educator and Advocate of Agriculture

Why does it take something like a drought or low cattle market to get the attention of those of us in the cow business? It was easy for us to become complacent with \$1200 yearlings, \$900 calves and \$1000 market ready cows. It seemed as if there would never be another bad day in the industry. With the cycle now moving in the opposite direction we are thrust in to a situation where forces outside of our control have brought on a downward trend and softer market. How do we deal with it?

Mother Nature plays a huge role in influencing the market. Occasionally it takes a crisis like a drought to force managers to follow good decisions. During up markets many become lackadaisical. Take for example zero tolerance culling practices. During herd expansion excuses are made for poor producing cows. They remain in the herd. Management mistakes might be made yet financially we keep our head above water. During drought and tough times when every penny counts the zero tolerance rule is enforced in an effort to reduce inventory and generate operating income. Those cows who are dink raisers, late calving, aged, dry and/or may have poor dispositions or marginal bags are generally the first to leave the ranch. Remaining are the best lot of young to middle-aged cows ready to produce in the coming years. Prudent management techniques should be employed at all times regardless of whether the market is up or down.

Now, more than ever, the industry as a whole faces not only challenges from Mother Nature in the form of unprecedented droughts but also political pressure in the form of environmental issues and government mandates. The global economy and demand for beef impact the market as well. It is imperative for producers to remain self-disciplined and stay focused on management. In order to survive it is vital to manage resources in anticipation of what is to come. Supply and demand cycles are no longer as predictable as they once were. The successful manager knows exactly what his break-even cost of production figure is. Even in a down market he is a price seeker rather

*Working hard  
is not  
enough. We  
need to work  
hard and  
smart.*

than a price taker.

It is crucial for those who do not know their break-even cost of production to perform a complete enterprise budget analysis which includes out-of-pocket expenses as well as fixed and variable costs. With this knowledge producers are then able to make use of some form of risk management. Risk management, a broad term used to describe a method of protecting or reducing the downside risk of production and marketing, is a feature many cattle people should consider employing.

Some in the cattle industry automatically associate risk management with futures and options contracts which are bought and sold on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME). As effective as futures and options contracts may be when properly utilized there is still a tremendous amount of distrust within the industry in respect to their use. Everyone knows of a neighbor or a friend who has had a wreck utilizing CME contracts. Recent news of greed and scandals associated with financial firms tied to the CME have added to this level of distrust.

Utilizing futures and options effectively requires not only the knowledge of your break-even cost of production but also a tremendous amount of education, training and self-discipline. One must put forth the effort required to climb the steep learning curve associated with trading contracts. Lack of knowledge pertaining to the internal workings of CME contracts and failure to exhibit the required self-discipline could very easily be the reasons for the wrecks many may have experienced. Keep in mind that risk management of this type isn't for the small producer. In order to fill contracts it takes truckload lots of feeder cattle.

Another risk management strategy involves selling your product for a profit when the opportunity presents itself. For example, many had the opportunity to forward contract spring-born calves and/or yearlings for fall delivery prior to the downward move- . . . *continued on page 2*

## Cow Tales

Ron Torell

Long-Standing Educator and Advocate of Agriculture

Many of the conversations those of us in the cattle business have around the branding fire or over the hood of a truck often center around the behavior and internal workings of the bovine. When something out of the ordinary happens to spark our curiosity we may question if there actually might be a possible explanation. Consider the following thought provoking cow tales some of which have been substantiated by research.

- Nearly every cow person at one time or another has questioned why some cows will eat the after-birth after they've calved (placenta-phagia). One theory is that they eat it for bonding purposes. This may be true but then again there are a large percentage of cows that bond with their calves without eating the afterbirth. Some believe they eat it out of hunger or because they crave specific nutrients postpartum that are contained in the placenta. With that said, there are many well-fed cows that eat the afterbirth who have been and remain on a nutritionally sound feed program. The most probable theory for placentophagia is the cow's natural instinct for predator avoidance - hiding her newborn calf from predators such as coyotes and wolves. Regardless of the reason there have been isolated cases where cows have choked and died from eating the placenta. This is especially true with first calf heifers who are inexperienced with the calving process. Because of this it helps if cattle producers remove the placenta from the calving area when possible.
- Occasionally a cow will give birth to a freemartin, a sterile female calf that is twinborn with a male. Why did they start calling these calves freemartins? Folklore dating back to the mid-1600's claims that when European farmers had a set of male/female twin calves they would donate the sterile heifer to the annual St. Martin celebration. They knew from past experience that these females were generally infertile and of no use for breeding. For this reason they would donate the heifer to be slaughtered and consumed during the festivities. The free heifers donated to St. Martin became known as freemartins. Incidentally it has been scientifically proven that a freemartin heifer is sterile 92% of the time as a result of exposure to masculinizing hormones produced by the male calf while in the womb. Freemartins develop physically like castrated males and are used for beef in the same way.
- Have you ever wondered if the sex of a calf has an influence on how quickly a cow will rebreed? Research by Cow Tek Inc. utilized data collected from seven major beef breeding associations representing more than 400,000 young cows. Their research was specifically designed to evaluate calving intervals in beef cows through age five. Cow Tex Inc. found that "females weaning steer calves exhibit significantly shorter calving intervals compared to those with either bull or heifer calves at side, possibly due to an interruption in normal suckling patterns brought about by castration. It seems logical that castration could be similar to short-term calf removal in terms of its impact on the postpartum cow." Cow Tek Inc. confirmed that young cows raising bull calves take a day or two longer to breed back compared to similar-age cows nursing heifer calves. This extended postpartum interval is possibly due to bull calves suckling their dams more aggressively.
- Does shipping bred cows affect pregnancy retention? Colorado State University researchers artificially inseminated cows over a three-day period and randomly allotted them to one of three shipment groups. One-third were shipped at less than 12 days after insemination. One-third were shipped after 12 days and one-third were shipped after 30 days of insemination. A depression in fertility was realized in the group that was shipped between 12 and 30 days after insemination. Researchers theorized that the reason for reduced problems for those cattle bred less than 12 days of shipping dealt with maternal recognition of pregnancy. Maternal recognition of pregnancy occurs at approximately 12 days. Their reasoning for reduced problems with shipping at over 30 days of pregnancy dealt with implantation of the fetus to the uterine wall. Implantation of the embryo to the uterine wall occurs at 30 days. Bottom line, the best time to ship after a breeding program is at less than 12 days of pregnancy or more than 30 days.
- Are hair whorls - the spiral of hair that forms on the forehead of cattle - a sign of fertility and/or temperament? Research by Colorado State University looked at the location of hair whorls and found that the configuration of the whorl is an indication of a bull's fertility. Bulls with a round epicenter had a significantly higher percentage of normal sperm than bulls with an elongated, straight-line hair whorl pattern. Research also showed that cattle with a whorl above the . . . *continued on page 5*

**Cow Tales . . . continued from page 4**

- eyes are more excitable than those that have a whorl below the eyes.
- Does color influence the performance of cattle? Texas A & M evaluated factors that might enhance feedlot gain. They looked at various colors of pens and feed bunks to see how color affected feed consumption. Results published in the Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course Proceedings showed that the color tan had the biggest influence. Cattle were more relaxed and calm. They also ate more and performance was enhanced. Does this subject require further research?
  - It's been said that cattle facing north or south when grazing or resting are reacting to the planet's magnetic influence when doing so. It's an interesting theory but sometimes good old-fashioned common sense is the only explanation when you hear or see something out of the ordinary.



# Intermountain Rangeland Livestock Symposium and Technical Training

January 10–11, 2013 – College of Southern Idaho – Twin Falls, Idaho

## Registration:

**Full:** \$80 (\$100 after Jan 1)

**Additional Person:** \$40

**Optional Supper:** \$15

**Student:** \$40

**Register online at**

<http://www.idrange.org>

Contact: (208) 398-7002

[ghyde@idahorange.org](mailto:ghyde@idahorange.org)

Continuing education credits will be available for veterinarians, professional animal scientists and rangeland professionals

## Lodging:

Rooms have been reserved at the following hotels.

Please reference "Rangeland Livestock Symposium" when you make your reservations

**Hampton Inn**

(208) 734-2233

**Holiday Inn Express**

(208) 732-6001

**Red Lion Canyon Springs**

(208) 734-5000

## Thursday, January 10

8:30 am Registration

Lunch included, Supper optional

### General Session

Get an overview of this summer in regard to fire, and what it means in the future, a fresh perspective on the new generation of ranchers, and a general overview of estate planning

### Concurrent Sessions

Topics will include:

- Range rehabilitation and restoration
  - Grazing before and after fires
  - Grazing and monitoring for sage grouse habitat
- Implications if sage grouse is listed
- Beef industry segment coordination
- Meeting beef marketing conditions

### For more information contact:

Benton Glaze

Extension Beef Cattle Specialist

208-736-3638

[bglaze@uidaho.edu](mailto:bglaze@uidaho.edu)

## Friday, January 11

8:30 am to 3:30

Lunch included

### Keynote Topics

- National Beef Quality Audit results and implications
  - Equal Access to Justice Act impacts from litigation on ranchers
- CattleFax industry update and outlook

### Concurrent Mini-Workshops

Topics will include:

- Range monitoring by and for ranchers
  - Evaluation of beef quality
- Evaluation and options for pregnancy testing in livestock
  - Special issues in estate planning

Amanda Gearhart

Rangeland Extension Specialist

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## Preparing for Winter Shipping

Rikki Ruiz  
Gem/Boise County Extension Educator

The cold winter chill has arrived. We are grabbing coats, hats and gloves to head out to feed cows and ship calves. It's the time of year that we see the big wheels turning and making their way down the road through the wind, snow and ice as cattle are moved out to winter feeding grounds. While you're getting bundled up to head out and ship calves, are you ensuring that your calves are in the best condition to make the long trek? Pre-conditioning your calves is important in decreasing stress on them during transport. It's also imperative to double check that the truck driver hauling your cattle is taking pre-cautions to make it an easier trip on your livestock.

As producers we take pride in our livestock. Preparing cattle for transport is an important component in being a successful cattle producer. Proper feeding and watering will better equip calves for the cold temperatures and stress during transportation. Well-nourished animals will have added strength and body reserves to maintain a healthier condition after being trucked. A few steps to keep in mind prior to shipping include; providing ample water before transport and withholding feed from animals a few hours before transport during extreme cold temperatures. By withholding feed from your cattle, it will help decrease the amount of manure soiled on each animal, which makes them colder. Excessive over-feeding before shipping will cause the cattle to become uncomfortable and possibly ill during transit. Withholding feed a few hours prior helps solve this potential problem. Another step to keep in mind is to avoid high energy "green" feeds before transit, unless the cattle are already on a high concentrate diet. Feeding cattle 70% roughage and 30% grain-based feed 24 hours before shipping will help keep their rumen functioning throughout the haul and make them less susceptible to illnesses. For newly weaned calves, an important step is conditioning them to hay and/or grain 4-5 weeks before shipping. This will help reduce stress and prevent illness.

There are several trucking practices specifically recommended to minimize stress during the cold

*Taking pre-cautions and pre-conditioning your calves for winter time shipping is crucial in raising and selling healthy livestock.*

winter months. Truck drivers need to be aware of and understand wind chill factors. Livestock entering a trailer with a wet coat in freezing temperatures with wind, rain and snow is a bad combination. Truck drivers should close the nose vents in the front of the trailer to keep the trailer warmer. If hauling weanling calves, the trailer should be lined with straw or shavings to help insulate and absorb waste. Closing the bottom half of the trailers side slats will also help increase the temperature of the trailer. Failing to close those slats can be a contributing factor to hypothermia. When hauling in the winter cold, it's recommended to reduce the number of livestock in the trailer to decrease death loss and hypothermia. By reducing the number of cattle, they will have more room to move away from wind and lay down to preserve body heat. Truckers should also monitor the well-being of the livestock closely. Stopping to check on them regularly is a good trucking practice.

Warning signs of cold stress include; cattle eating their bedding, shivering or having frozen fluid on face and nostrils. When cattle reach their lower critical temperature (LCT) they must begin to produce heat. When cattle reach their LCT, they will shiver, causing their metabolism to increase and releasing energy from fat. The LCT of cattle who have a winter hair coat is 20 degrees Fahrenheit. If the hair coat is wet, that rises to 57 degrees F. Cattle in the back of a moving trailer traveling 60mph on a day the temperature is 30 degrees F, means they are experiencing a wind chill factor that makes it feel like it's a -10 degrees F. That is a very cold ride for cattle that could typically be traveling 12 to 14 hours or longer.

Taking pre-cautions and pre-conditioning your calves for winter time shipping is crucial in raising and selling healthy livestock. Talk to your livestock hauler and devise a plan for winter-time trucking. It's important for the health and safety of your cattle.



**OWYHEE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION**  
 P.O. Box 400, Marsing, ID 83639  
 (208) 896-4104

**OCA Winter Meeting  
 and Beef School**  
**Saturday, February 9**  
**Oreana**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Your dues are now payable **ONLY IF** it has been a year since they were paid.  
 LIFE MEMBERS are not required to pay annual dues. Note new payment schedule.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING** Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cow-calf operations (mother cows)	
1 to 20 .....	\$15
21 to 100 .....	\$25
Over 101 .....	\$30
Over 201 .....	\$35
Over 301 .....	\$40
Over 401 .....	\$45
Over 501 .....	\$50
Over 601 .....	\$55
Over 701 .....	\$60
Over 801 .....	\$65
Over 900 .....	\$70

**Dues Assessment Schedule**

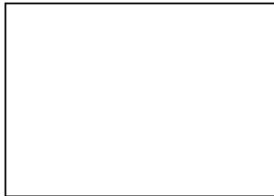
Feedlot operations (one time capacity)	
Up to 1000 .....	\$25
Over 1001 .....	\$30
Over 2001 .....	\$35
Over 3001 .....	\$40
Over 4001 .....	\$45
Over 5001 .....	\$50
Over 6001 .....	\$55
Over 7001 .....	\$60
Over 8001 .....	\$65
Over 9000 .....	\$70

Check one: (See schedule above, and back of form for definitions, examples)

- INDIVIDUAL** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- FAMILY** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- CORPORATION** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- PARTNERSHIP** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDITIONAL Family (age 18 or over), Corporation, or Partnership Member(s)**  
 to be included and eligible for voting (add \$5 for each) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$5 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*(If these additional members would like to receive mailings, please note address(es) -- use back of form if you need additional space -- otherwise, one mailing will be sent to the address above.)*

- ASSOCIATE DUES** (for businesses or individuals that do not own cattle) ..... \$ 35.00
- Youth Member(s) under 18** (please list below) ..... **NO CHARGE**

To purchase a **brand block** (\$15 to cover cost), draw the brand in the box as accurately as possible



..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT DUE** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Authorizing Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

University of Idaho  
Extension

## Owyhee County

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**OCA Winter Meeting  
and Beef School  
Saturday, February 9  
Oreana**

## Upcoming Events in 2013 . . .

January 10-11 Intermountain Range Livestock Symposium, CSI,  
Twin Falls (see page 5)

**February 9 Winter Beef School and  
Owyhee Cattlemen's Association Meeting,  
Oreana [Note change in date]**



February 25-28 Artificial Insemination School, Marsing

June 11-14 Lost Rivers Grazing Academy, Salmon

September 9-12 Lost Rivers Grazing Academy, Salmon