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## Honesty and Integrity in Beef Cattle Production

K. Scott Jensen, UI Extension Educator, Owyhee County  
Ron Torell, Long-standing Educator and Advocate for Agriculture

Consumer confidence is of utmost importance to beef producers. Consider the front page story in the Idaho Press-Tribune August 29, 2013: "Idaho Farm to Stop Selling Over-Drugged Cows". That headline certainly caught my attention. A little more reading reveals that USDA meat inspectors identified the problem beef and none of it ever entered the food chain. The headline however was enough to catch the attention of consumers and throw at least some doubt in the safety of the beef they might be consuming.

The livestock industry prides itself in honesty and integrity. As an industry do we live up to these high moral standards? Consider the two scenarios below. What would your decision be?

You have three cull cows that need to go to the sale yard, not a trailer load, just enough to be in the way around the ranch. Your neighbor is going to town and offers to haul these cows the 200 plus miles to the auction yard. The problem is you treated one of the cows last week for foot rot and used LA-200, a long acting antibiotic with a 30 day withdrawal period. You always treat at above labeled recommendations figuring that if a little is good, a lot is better. To complicate matters, you cannot seem to remember which black cow you treated. There is no more sign of foot rot so why not send all three cull cows to market?

Scenario two: How about forward contracting for fall delivery, a set of "all natural" spring-born steer calves? You barely have a truckload, however, if all goes well, you can honor the contract. You received a premium as "all natural", signed on the dotted line, and received a large deposit. In mid-summer you had a foot rot, pink eye and pneumonia outbreak. You ended up treating twenty percent of the calves with a long-acting antibiotic. Based on your signed contract, your truckload of calves is reduced to 80 percent after you remove the treated calves from the mix. The market has since dropped by 20 percent of what it was when you sold the truck load. There are 90 days between when you treated these calves and when you ship. What do you do? Who and how will they know?

For the moment let's forget the integrity issue and examine testing procedures at the harvest plant. Random testing is used at USDA inspected plants. Additionally, any animal originating from a list of producers who are on the residue violators list is tested. Any red flag cattle are automatically tested. These include carcasses with inflamed or discolored lungs or other organs, fresh injection sites and unthrifty looking animals. Good inspectors get so they can anticipate animals that may have



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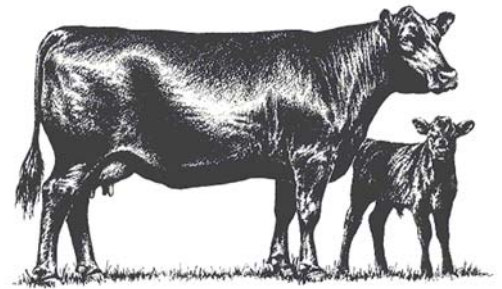
*This newsletter is provided as a public service to producers and others in beef industry related fields. If you do not have an interest in receiving the Cattlemen's Corner Beef Newsletter in the future, please contact the Extension Office and we will remove your name from our mailing list. Likewise, 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*

## Early Weaning Management Tactics

Rikki Ruiz, UI Extension Educator, Gem County

With our horrific fire season, high drought conditions, and lack of available forage, ranchers are facing some major challenges in producing high quality cattle. Our feeding resources are on the rapid decline as forage is in very short-supply. Idaho ranchers will have to start using a variety of management tactics to keep their livelihood intact.

One approach in management this fall is weaning calves early. Several studies have shown, in times of forage shortages, it can be a wise economical choice to wean calves earlier. Weaning earlier helps preserve the cow's energy reserves to allow development of the growing calf inside her, as well as keeping her body condition up for re-breeding once that calf is born. Preparing calves before weaning has many beneficial aspects. Calves go through both social and environmental changes. At weaning calves are forced to develop a new social group instead of trusting on their mother for direction. Environmentally, calves have to learn how to use new water sources and feed sources, as well as adjusting to new grains, tastes, and feed equipment. All of these new changes result in added stress. Studies have shown that most sickness and death loss due to respiratory disease happens during the first 30-40 days of weaning. Therefore it's imperative to have a good vaccination program and administer suitable vaccinations prior to weaning, thus allowing calves the best chance of staying healthy.



There are several weaning methods that can be useful in reducing and easing the stress. Fence line weaning reduces the initial stress of being separated. Keeping the calves and cows separated but still visible to each other for the first 4-5 days of weaning will ease the transition of separating for good. Another weaning method involves the two-step weaning practice. This method utilizes a nose-flap, which stops the calves from nursing for a few days before being separated. Prior studies have shown that the two-step method reduces the calves bawling and pacing by 80% while increasing the time calves spend eating by 25%. In addition to fence line and two-step weaning, pasture weaning is also a great method to introduce. Pasture weaning keeps calves in a familiar environment while continuing a familiar diet. This particular method does require an ample amount of forage available for the weaned calves. Lastly, creep feeding is also a useful method in reducing stress. Accustoming calves to new feed ahead of time keeps calves eating throughout the weaning period. Studies performed on this method, have shown that it reduces the time it takes for calves to get on a complete ration by roughly half simply because they know what the feed is and are familiar with it.

Feeding is the main consideration during weaning. It's important to remember that gradual changes in feed are required for development of rumen microbes. It can normally take one to two weeks for rumen microbes to adjust to new feed. It's recommended to start out with feeds the calves have been familiarized to and allow them enough space so they can all eat together at the feed bunk.

Easy handling of calves and reducing environmental stressors are good management techniques as well. When calves are bawling and in dusty conditions, upper respiratory irritations and sickness can happen quicker. Keeping conditions clean and as low stress as possible will lessen those problems. Working calves in the cooler temperatures will aid in reducing sickness and eating complications as well. In addition to these, watering can become an issue which leads to dehydration. Prepping calves before weaning with familiar water troughs helps in reducing this issue.

The heartache of our fire season will definitely send ranchers scrambling for more feed. Adding an early weaning decision into your management plan might help in managing the available forage and keep those cows in better body condition to the benefit of their next calf.



# Owyhee Research and Restoration Roundup

## October 23, Marsing American-Legion Community Hall

- 9:00 Welcome  
Governor Otter (*invited*)  
The people of the Owyhees and stewardship
- 9:20 **Owyhee Initiative Science Review and Restoration**  
Research project overview, Karen Launchbaugh | University of Idaho  
Restoration project overview, Art Talsma | The Nature Conservancy
- 9:40 **Watershed and wetland management**  
Overview and lessons learned from Reynolds Creek Research, Fred Pierson | Agricultural Research Service
- 10:00 **The Changing Role of Fire in the Owyhees**  
Research: Steve Bunting, Tim Prather, and Eva Strand | University of Idaho; Bob Unnasch | The Nature Conservancy
- 10:45 Break
- 11:00 **The Changing Role of Fire in the Owyhees**  
Restoration Projects, Eric Morrison | JV Cooperative Weed Mgmt Area  
Jason Pyron | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Vern Kershner | rancher  
Lessons learned from the Cow Creek Fire, Dennis Stanford | CWMA chairman, rancher
- 12:00 **Lunch and Poster Presentation of Owyhee Initiative Science Review Process and other studies**  
Video: Life on the Range, Steve Steubner | Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission  
Video: Juniper mastication, Gary Grimm | Mountain Visions for TNC & USFWS  
Video: Students and sage-grouse education, Gary Grimm | Mountain Visions for TNC & USFWS
- 12:45 Portraits of Ranching in the Owyhees - J.D. Wulfhorst | University of Idaho
- 1:00 **Sage-grouse Considerations**  
Latest Research, Assessments and Trends, Michele Kemmner and Jake Powell | Idaho Fish and Game  
Study on sage-grouse diets, Jennifer Forbey | Boise State University  
Livestock grazing and insects, Steve Cook | University of Idaho  
Restoration efforts: Donna Bennett | Owyhee Local Working Group  
Juniper mastication, Art Talsma | TNC; Dave Bunker | Branch Enterprises  
Federally funded sage-grouse programs, Josh White | Sage Grouse Initiative/NRCS  
Aerial cheatgrass control, Carl Rudeen | Mountain Home Air force Base
- 2:30 **Break**
- 2:45 **Redband Trout** - Restoration project overview: Pam Harrington | Trout Unlimited; Jerry Hoagland | land owner
- 3:15 **The Economics of Restoration** - Neil Rimbey | University of Idaho
- 3:45 **Summary comments:** John Robison and Brenda Richards | Owyhee Initiative
- 4:00 Confirm Day 2 logistics; Travel safe home

## October 24 - Field Tour highlighting local research and restoration projects

- 8:00 Marsing American Legion Community Hall  
OR
- 9:00 Reynolds Creek ARS
- 9:30 **Sage-grouse** - Tour John Romero's restoration projects on his ranch and discuss sage-grouse census techniques
- 12:00 **Lunch at Reynolds Creek ARS** - Tour Reynolds Creek watershed Agricultural Research Service
- 1:00 **Sage-grouse and Redband Trout**  
Tour sage-grouse and redband trout restoration areas with Trout Unlimited on Jerry Hoagland's ranch and have a juniper mastication demonstration by Dave Bunker.
- 3:00 Say goodbye and head for home

**Register online at [owyheeroundup.org](http://owyheeroundup.org)**

### About the Owyhee Research and Restoration Roundup

The vast mountains and canyonlands of the Owyhees are a special landscape and home to plants and wildlife found few other places. Across this landscape, a multitude of studies and restoration projects are underway. This two-day gathering will provide an opportunity to learn and share insights of local on-the-ground efforts underway to address challenges and opportunities for Owyhee County residents and land managers. Researchers will highlight ground-breaking research efforts and locals will showcase their innovative restoration projects.

### Who should attend?

Local landowners, students and members of the public who have interest in rangeland management, fish and wildlife conservation, and local restoration efforts.

### SPONSORED BY:



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Association

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United States Department of Agriculture  
Farm Service Agency



## Emergency Loan Information

Canyon, Ada, and Owyhee counties were designated natural disaster areas July 31, 2013. You may qualify for a low interest emergency (EM) loan from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Contact your FSA Office for information and assistance.



## Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) helps farmers and ranchers rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. At this time we are taking applications for EC6), water hauling for livestock. Contact your FSA Office for information and assistance.



## Questions?

Please contact Kyla Pearson, County Executive Director, at (208) 454-8695, 107, [kyla.pearson@id.usda.gov](mailto:kyla.pearson@id.usda.gov) for farm Loans, please contact Lora Ulrich, farm Loan Manager, at (208) 454-8695, 102, or [lora.ulrich@id.usda.gov](mailto:lora.ulrich@id.usda.gov).



## Gestating Cow Nutrition Important to Calf Performance

John B. Hall, Ph.D. Extension Beef Specialist, University of Idaho

For many ranches, dry conditions this year resulted in thinner cows, limited and lower quality range, and potential winter feed shortages. A planned winter feeding program that is based on individual ranch resources will be critical to producing a healthy calf and a fertile cow next spring. Working with an Extension Educator or consulting nutritionist on a custom program for your ranch is important.

While working on a winter feed plan reducing costs always a consideration. However, gestation, especially late gestation, is not the time to be making cuts if it compromises cow nutrition. There is increasing evidence that nutrition during late gestation has profound effects on the calf which affect subsequent performance throughout life.

Nutritional recommendations for gestating cows have generally been based on insuring cows were in body condition score (BCS) 5 at calving. Considerable research indicates that cows that calve in BCS 5 tend to have healthier calves and breed back earlier. However, the trend to get cows fat early in winter and allow them to lose weight before calving to get to BCS 5 may not be a good idea. Similarly, allowing cows to consume low protein range or hay without supplementation may cause problems for the calf.

**Maternal nutrition and calf health.** It is well established that maternal nutrition during gestation impacts fetal growth and calf vigor. Cows consuming high energy diets during late gestation give birth to calves weighing 5 to 8 lbs. more than calves from restricted fed dams. Contrary to conventional thinking, late gestation reduction in energy does not decrease calving difficulty or dramatically decrease calf birth weight. Severe reduction in gestation nutrition may compromise calf survival especially in heifers. Calves from undernourished dams are more susceptible to hypothermia, respiratory disease, and scours.

Cows consuming range or hay that is low in protein (< 10% CP) may or may not lose weight depending on the energy content of the forage. However, these cows can produce "weak calf syndrome" calves. Low protein decreases the ability of the cow to efficiently digest forage which results in less energy reaching the calf. Calves from protein deficient cows are unable to generate body heat from brown fat as effectively as calves from well fed cows. Therefore, the calves from protein deficient cows are more susceptible to hypothermia.

**Effects of nutrition during gestation may last well beyond early calfhood.** Research indicates that the nutritional environment in utero may affect an offspring's long-term growth, health, and reproductive ability. Often called "fetal programming", it appears that fetal nutrition may activate different genes which affect biological processes later in life. For example, steers born to cows that were supplemented with protein during late gestation were heavier at weaning, produced heavier carcasses, and had better marbling than steers from unsupplemented cows (Table 1).

While an ever expanding volume of research is giving insight into how prenatal nutrition affects growth and metabolic functions in the postnatal animal, limited information is available on the long-term effects on female offspring. Recently, a study by Nebraska researchers discovered that protein deficiency in late gestation results in heifers having greater difficulty becoming pregnant (Table 2). Heifers from dams that were protein supplemented were heavier at pre-breeding, pregnancy exam and the beginning of the second breeding season. Interestingly, heifers from protein deficient dams were the same age at puberty as heifers from the protein supplemented dams, but fewer of these fetally undernourished heifers became pregnant or calved during the first 21 days of the calving season. In another study, more heifers from unsupplemented dams failed to reach puberty before the breeding season compared to heifers from protein supplemented dams. Therefore, in the Nebraska studies undernutrition during late gestation produced heifers that were smaller and more reproductively inefficient.

This year's protein supplementation program on cattle wintering on range or low quality feeds can have an impact on next year's calf weights and replacement heifer performance. An additional 10 to 15 lbs. of calf or 10% more heifers becoming pregnant will help offset the pain of supplementation costs.

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**Keys for late gestation nutrition**

- Cows should gain 1.0 lbs per day; 1<sup>st</sup> calf heifers should gain 2.0 lbs per day.
- Supplement protein and/or energy as needed
- Available supplements vary greatly in cost and convenience; choose wisely and don't over-supplement
- Cows should calve in BCS 5
- High quality mineral that is formulated for your area should be fed free-choice

Table 1. Effect of maternal protein supplementation on steer progeny performance.

Item	Dietary Treatment					
	Stalker et al., 2006		Stalker et al., 2007		Larson et al., 2007	
	No Supp.	Supp.	No Supp.	Supp.	No Supp.	Supp.
Adj. 205-day weaning wt, lb.	----	----	----	----	494	505
Feedlot Performance						
Initial wt., lb	462 <sup>a</sup>	475 <sup>b</sup>	462 <sup>a</sup>	488 <sup>b</sup>	508 <sup>x</sup>	522 <sup>y</sup>
DMI, lb	18.7	18.8	24.6 <sup>a</sup>	26.6 <sup>b</sup>	19.8 <sup>x</sup>	20.3 <sup>y</sup>
ADG, lb	3.45	3.44	3.52	3.70	3.66 <sup>x</sup>	3.75 <sup>y</sup>
Feed:Gain	5.41	5.46	6.97	7.19	5.37	5.38
Carcass wt., lb	800	814	764 <sup>a</sup>	805 <sup>b</sup>	804 <sup>a</sup>	822 <sup>b</sup>
Marbling <sup>1</sup>	467	479	449	461	445 <sup>a</sup>	492 <sup>b</sup>
% Choice	85	96	----	----	71 <sup>a</sup>	85 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup> Means within a study differ with different superscripts ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

<sup>x,y</sup> Means within a study differ with different superscripts ( $P \leq 0.10$ ).

<sup>1</sup>400 = Small<sup>0</sup>.

Adapted from Stalker et al., 2006; Stalker et al., 2007; Larson et al., 2007; and Funston et al., 2010a.

Table 2. Effect of maternal protein supplementation on reproductive performance of heifers.

	No Supplement	Supplement
<b>Age at Puberty (d)</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>339</b>
<b>% Cycling</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Calved 1<sup>st</sup> 21 days (%)</b>	<b>49<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>77<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>Final % Pregnant</b>	<b>80<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>93<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>Calving date (d of yr)</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>% Unassisted births</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>78</b>

a,b Supplement improved trait. Adapted from Funston et al., 2010



Thanks to all who supported our 4-H and FFA youth at the 2013 Owyhee County Junior Livestock Sale!

We had another record-breaking sale due to your generosity! Congratulations to Wesley Grim of Marsing FFA who placed first in the beef carcass contest! Others meeting the gold standard of excellence with their beef projects were: Sage Raine, Brian Skow, Dylan Westrand, Cassity Gluch, Jaycee Engle, Annie Bass, Janae Volk, Devin Edmiston, and Kelsey Gluch.


	# Sold	Average per lb.	Average	Gross Sale
<b>Beef</b>	28	\$1.66	\$2,118	\$59,300
<b>Swine</b>	92	\$3.52	\$915	\$84,200
<b>Sheep</b>	69	\$6.54	\$822	\$56,750
<b>Goats</b>	16	\$5.35	\$453	\$7,250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>205</b>			<b>\$207,500</b>

been recently treated. The needles and the product do leave their mark under the skin or in the muscle for quite some time. If a carcass looks suspicious it is side-railed and a quick test is performed at the plant. If the quick test is positive, the tissue is sent forward and an in-depth test is run that can detect residues at finer levels. Producers that get caught with positive animals are "punished" economically by the packer. This encourages them and others to better observe the withdrawal times.

Testing is also done at breaker plants, after the harvest plant and prior to retail. For example, one gondola of hamburger may represent muscle tissue from over 250 animals. Once ground and mixed, one hamburger will represent this same number of cows identified to that gondola. A sample is tested from all these gondolas for e-coli and drug residues. If violations are found the entire batch must be disposed of. The gondola is traced back to the plant of harvest and if the plant kept good records, they can trace it back to the owners of cattle that went into that harvest mix. You can imagine the economic loss to all segments of the industry because of one violation.

The short answer to all of this is that as producers we have to recognize that we are not just producing cows or critters but are producing a meat product for someone's table. We have to assure that the product meets the standards established, not just what we might get away with. Also, those cull cows don't all go to hamburger. Many of their cuts end up at the cheaper "steak houses" and at the sandwich shops with sliced roasts, etc. That is another critical reason for avoiding muscle injections even in cull cows.

The moral of the story is, do your part! Read and follow labeled directions and live up to the industry standards of integrity and honesty. Resist the temptation to take short cuts. Tell your neighbor you will have to wait on all three cull cows for thirty days. Contact your buyer and tell him about your dilemma with filling the contract with "natural" calves.

Every producer that is Beef Quality Assurance certified has agreed to follow drug withdrawal times on all antibiotics. Does your signature live up to the integrity and honesty of industry standards? After all we are to a large degree on the honor system. 



## Annie's Project Financial Risk Management Course Begins October 10


It's time to start preparing those financial statements and making sure your record keeping is updated. The fall is usually the time to meet with your accountants and get things in order before the end of the year arrives quickly. If you're like many of us, preparing, analyzing and understanding your finances may be a challenge. The University of Idaho Extension System is here to help!

We will be offering the Annie's Project course starting October 10! Annie's Project is an Extension risk management education program based on the needs of farm/ranch women who manage or want to learn how to manage the finances of their operation. This course is developed to meet the needs of farm/ranch women who come from a variety of backgrounds and experience levels in agriculture. **The class topics focus on five risk management areas:**

- human risk;
- financial risk;
- legal risk;
- marketing risk; and,
- production risk.

The mission of Idaho's Annie's Project is to empower farm/ranch women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information. The course is six-weeks long and designed especially for farm/ranch women to help them develop their management and decision-making skills. The six different sessions include brief presentations, discussions focused on the participants questions, and computer training in enterprise budgeting and spreadsheets. Annie's Project provides the opportunity to learn from other agriculture professionals and network with women in similar situations.

Annie's Project is named in honor of Annette Kolhagen Fleck, a woman that lived in a small town in Illinois. She spent her life learning how to become a better business partner with her husband. With her inspiration, the course was developed by the University of Illinois in 2003 and is now being taught in over 30 states across the U.S.

The class will be held at the Heart and Home Conference Room in Emmett, October 10 - November 14, 6:00-9:00 p.m. The cost of this six-week course is \$50, which includes a notebook, computer program, and resources. If you're interested in registering for the Annie's Project course or would like more information, contact Rikki Ruiz at the Gem County Extension office, 208-365-6363 or rikkiw@uidaho.edu. Course size is limited, so register today! 

University of Idaho  
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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Owyhee Research  
and Restoration  
Roundup**  
October 23-24

## Upcoming Events . . .

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| September 9-12 | <b>Lost Rivers Grazing Academy</b> in Salmon  |
| October 8      | <b>Owyhee Cattlemen's Association<br/>Board of Directors' Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. in Murphy  |
| October 23-24  | <b>Owyhee Research and Restoration Roundup</b><br>in Marsing and tours of various project sites in Owyhee<br>County. <i>See agenda and information on page 3.</i> |
| November 11-13 | <b>ICA Annual Convention</b> in Sun Valley  |
| January, 2014  | Farm and Ranch Estate Planning Class,<br><b>"Keeping the Legacy Alive"</b> will meet once a week<br>for four weeks. More details coming soon!                     |