

Inside this issue:

Pre-Weaning Strategies	2-4
Beef Quality and Eating Satisfaction	5
Strategic Weaning: Managing Cow Body Condition During Drought	6
Quality Grading Cattle	7-8



August 6-11, 2012

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



**Owyhee Cattlemen's Summer Meeting
July 28 in Silver City**

[Membership Form on page 9]

Grazing Right

K. Scott Jensen
UI Extension Educator, Owyhee County

I recently read an article in BEEF Magazine written by Burke Teichert that addresses the subject of management strategies aimed at making ranches more profitable. He identified some of the strategies that he discussed in previous columns and then identified three tactical areas that require the most significant attention. These areas are grazing right, culling the right cows, and good animal handling. Over the next few newsletters, I will expound on each of these subjects.

Grazing right is much easier said than done. It takes good planning, prior to the start of the growing or grazing season. Review maps of allotments and pastures. Review precipitation and potential irrigation. Just how much forage do you expect will be available? How many animals are you planning to graze? Matching animal numbers to available forage is critical for both animal performance and resource sustainability.

Once the plan is in place and the livestock are turned out, the next step is CRITICAL for good management and grazing right. MONITOR what is happening on the ground! Monitoring seems to be something all producers know they need to do but few actually take the time to get it done. Monitoring is ESSENTIAL to good grazing management. It is often said that you can't manage what you can't measure. Measure what the animals are doing. Measure what is happening with the resource. Monitoring will aid in making grazing management changes quickly.

Monitoring data will provide the information required to make necessary changes to your grazing plan.

Monitoring can also help improve animal performance. At the University of Idaho Extension's Lost Rivers Grazing Academy we teach about the importance of residual. We make the statement that what you leave behind is more important than what you take. When livestock are on "short grass", their intake is reduced and their performance (growth, weight gain, milk production) is reduced. This also has a detrimental effect on the forage resource in most instances. Recovery from grazing will be much slower and total forage production for the growing season will be reduced. This is especially true of irrigated pasture. Residual is everything!

Monitoring will also provide the data over time that just might protect your right and ability to graze. I am reminded of the story that Dr. Wayne Burkhardt told at the Owyhee Cattlemen's Association meeting last summer about some clients of his in Colorado. When an environmental group sued to stop their ability to graze on public lands, these producers pro-

... continued on page 4

Pre-Weaning Strategies

John B. Hall
University of Idaho Extension Beef Cattle Specialist

Even in the present high priced calf market, buyers are paying premiums for weaned vaccinated calves. Management of calves pre-weaning is important to maximizing calf health and minimizing problems during the weaning period. As pairs come in from range, ranchers can begin preparing calves for weaning. Most of pre-weaning management can be accomplished in the two to four week transition as cattle are gathered from range. In many operations, groups of calves may have pre-weaning periods of different lengths depending on when they are gathered relative to other calves in the herd.

Maximizing Nutritional Status. In order for calves to respond to a health program or withstand the stress of weaning, they must have proper nutrition. The most important aspect is that calves continue to gain weight. Often in late summer and early fall, forage may be limited and quality can be poor which severely reduces calf gains. Range conditions across Idaho are highly variable this year. If possible pairs should be brought into pasture or hay meadows for grazing during the pre-weaning period. High quality pasture or hay aftermath should provide sufficient nutrients for calves to continue to gain weight. If forage is limited or range is being used during pre-weaning then providing 3 to 5 lb. per head of a fiber-based protein-energy supplements – brewer's grains, distiller's grains, corn gluten or soy hulls are good choices. Self fed protein supplements may be helpful on range. Ranchers should be careful to compare supplements on a cost of pound of protein or pound of energy basis.

Minerals during the pre-weaning phase are essential. Recent research indicates that the mineral status of calves entering the weaning phase or feedlot may be more important than the mineral program during weaning. In other words, a good mineral program pre-weaning is essential to calf health during the transition from ranch to feedlot. Research from Montana State and other universities demonstrated that mineral consumption of cattle on range is highly variable. Differences in range quality, water availability, or water quality highly influence mineral intake. Even

though salt and mineral are used to enhance grazing distribution in range cattle mineral needs are not often met.

Growing calves need calcium and phosphorus, which are usually provided in milk and grazing. A complete mineral containing calcium and phosphorus should be provided if soil phosphorus content is low and few legumes are in the pasture.

Zinc, copper and selenium all appear to be especially important in preparing calves for weaning. Zinc should be provided at 0.18 % to 0.36 % (1800-3600 ppm) in the mineral mix. Research from NC State indicates that 0.1 % of copper will improve health status of calves. Current recommendations are for copper levels in minerals to be 1000 to 2500 ppm (0.1% to 0.25%). High levels of iron, molybdenum, and/or sulfur inhibit absorption of copper. Copper content of mineral mixes should be customized to individual ranch or area conditions.

If ranching in a selenium deficient area, selenium should be supplied at the maximum level allowed by the FDA – 52 ppm for free-choice mineral. Selenium can be toxic in high levels and selenium content of forages varies from extremely deficient to toxic in our region, so contact your Extension Educator about the need for selenium supplementation in your area. Read the mineral feed tag and talk with your mineral supplier, veterinarian, or nutritionist about the levels of these key "stress minerals".

Injectable mineral formulations such as MultiMin® are effective ways to rapidly enhance mineral status of cattle. Research clearly indicates that these injectable products increase serum and liver/tissue trace mineral levels in cattle. Effects on immune

Artificial Insemination . . . continued from page 2

response or sickness range from significant improvement to little advantage. However, most of these studies were conducted in animals that were already receiving free-choice mineral supplements. The advantage to injectable mineral formulations may be greater in animals with limited mineral intake.

Vitamins are also important. Vitamin A, D and E are usually provided in sufficient levels in grazing (A and E) or made by the animal from precursors in the diet (D). Limited information indicates there may be an advantage to supplementing vitamin E, but levels in the normal diet should be sufficient. Vitamin A, D and E should be supplemented if calves are not consuming fresh forage.

Maximizing Health Status. After a solid nutrition program, proper stimulation of the animal's immune system pre-weaning is essential for minimizing health problems during weaning. There are 6 key diseases to vaccinate calves against (See insert). Modified-live vaccines (MLV) provide the greatest level of immunity, but MLV Bovine Viral Diarrhea and IBR are not recommended for calves suckling pregnant cows. However, several MLV products are approved for use on calves suckling pregnant cows if the cows were vaccinated pre-breeding with the same product. You should contact your veterinarian for assistance in choosing the right type of vaccine for your situation.

Timing of vaccination is crucial. If vaccinations require a booster, they should be given so the second (booster) injection is given 14 to 21 days before weaning. Regardless of type of vaccine, the last dose should be given no later than 14 days before weaning. This will have calves at the maximum antibody levels at weaning. Remember to use clean sharp needles and give all injections in the neck. Also

Recommended Preweaning Vaccinations for Calves (VQA standards)

- IBR
- BVD
- PI3
- Clostridial - 7 way
- Pasturella w/ leukotoxiod
- BRSV (not required for VQA)

keep vaccines cool and out of sunlight.

Calves vaccinated pre-weaning respond very well to vaccines as they are not stressed since they are still with their dams. In addition, minimize stress by handling cattle quietly and calmly while vaccinating or performing other health procedures. Make sure all personnel have been instructed in proper cattle handling. Work cattle in the cool parts of the day.

Deworming calves at this time will help increase gains during the pre-weaning and weaning phases. Increases in weight gain should easily pay for the dewormer if calves are kept for 45 to 60 days after weaning. Liver flukes are a problem in several areas of Idaho, so consult your veterinarian for recommendation on deworming products.

Implanting

Implanting of steer calves definitely pays for itself in increased weight gains. However, ranchers need to answer several questions before deciding to implant.

- 1) Am I part of a natural program that does not allow implanting or am I SURE that I will receive a substantial premium for not implanting?
 - A. Yes - Don't implant; No - Consider implanting.
- 2) Will I retain ownership of the calves for at least 60 days after implanting?
 - A. Yes - Consider implanting; No - Don't implant
- 3) Will the nutrition program for my calves during pre-weaning and weaning support rapid growth rates (2 lbs/day gain)?
 - A. Yes - Consider implanting; No - Don't implant

In general, growth promotants for suckling or weaned calves such as Ralgro, Synovex, or Component are ideal for calves on grass. More aggressive implants should be left for the feedlot period when nutrient availability is high.

. . . continued on page 4

Pre-Weaning Strategies. . . . continued from page 3

Adaptation to Reduce Stress

The pre-weaning and weaning periods mark a huge behavioral and "social" transition for calves which can cause stress. Face it most calves in Idaho spend the summer roaming the rangeland and forest lands of our state. Calves may only drink out of streams or reservoirs having limited exposure to water troughs. They see range riders, are moved in large groups, trailed occasionally, and sometime see another calf get roped and treated for pinkeye. Other than those experiences, close contact with humans and even large groups of cattle are limited.

An important aspect of minimizing stress at weaning is to accustom calves to close contact with people during pre-weaning. Riding or walking through the herd daily will "tame" cattle down considerably. Although not always practical or possible, exposing calves to feed bunks and water troughs is very helpful. Using portable feed bunks with limited amount of feed while pairs are still together helps calves learn about feed bunks. Even some mine belting rolled out in the pasture with some distiller's grains scattered on it helps calves associate feed with specific areas as well as people. 

Grazing Right. . . . continued from page 1

vided 14 year's worth of monitoring data showing improved resource conditions and excellent grazing management. Faced with all the data, the environmental group withdrew their lawsuit. Sure made their monitoring efforts pay off, both in preserving their ability to graze AND in money savings from not paying attorneys for a long drawn out court battle.

Plan, implement, and monitor. Make adjustments. Record your data. A finely tuned grazing plan that is adjusted as seasons and conditions change is one strategy to help you be more profitable. 

Eating Satisfaction . . . continued from page 5

by marbling (flecks of intramuscular fat) is generally associated with consumer preference. In other words, USDA Quality Grades, which are determined primarily by the level of marbling in a beef carcass, provide a reasonable means of gauging consumer satisfaction of beef and beef products. 

Strategic Weaning . . . continued from page 6

functional rumen. Research has clearly shown that by implementing post-weaning health practices, nutrition, and care, successful weaning can occur. Without adequate weaning facilities including feed, water and fences, an off-ranch weaning system should be considered. This is especially true on drought years when feed resources are limited.

As this article deals specifically with strategic weaning as it relates to managing cow body condition during times of drought, the subject of the actual weaning process of calves has not been specifically addressed. Consult your local ruminant nutritionist or health care professional for recommendations on the weaning process of young calves. 

Quality Grading Cattle. . . . continued from page 8

Summary

The beef industry has done a great job of conducting audits to analyze product quality. Results have shown that there is a definite need to improve marbling and quality grades. The industry target is 70% of carcasses grading low choice or higher. In 2005, that number was 57%. Improvement is needed and we have tools available to help with selecting for improved quality grades. 

Beef Quality and Eating Satisfaction

J. Benton Glaze, Jr., Ph.D., Extension Beef Cattle Specialist
Department of Animal & Veterinary Science, University of Idaho

Consumers expect each food product they buy to be safe, wholesome, high quality, and consistent. To ensure that beef and beef products meet the needs of consumers, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials are located in all federally inspected packing plants to oversee the implementation of safety, quality, and animal welfare standards. During the harvest process, all beef is inspected for safety and wholesomeness. Beef carcasses are then graded for quality and yield. Beef grading is an attempt to connect physical carcass traits with quality and yield attributes in beef end products.

USDA Quality grades indicate the expected palatability [eating satisfaction (i.e. tenderness, juiciness, and flavor)] of the meat from a carcass and are determined primarily by carcass marbling (flecks of intramuscular fat) and carcass maturity. There are eight USDA Quality grades: Prime, Choice, Select, Standard, Commercial, Utility, Cutter, and Canner. The top four grades (Prime, Choice, Select, and Standard) are reserved for younger cattle (less than 42 months of age) and the other four grades are used for older cattle (greater than 42 months of age). Generally, increases in marbling result in better quality grades.

USDA Yield grades indicate the yield of boneless, closely-trimmed, retail cuts from the major wholesale cuts (round, loin, rib, and chuck). Yield grades are influenced by the external fat on the carcass, the kidney, pelvic and heart fat, the carcass loin eye area, and the hot carcass weight. USDA Yield grades range from 1 (lean and heavy muscled) to 5 (fat and lightly muscled).

As noted previously, beef with higher quality grades have a greater amount of marbling (flecks of intramuscular fat). Some might question whether the different levels of intramuscular fat in the various quality grades of beef have an impact on the palatability of beef and beef products. Recently, Texas Tech University conducted a taste panel study (O'Quinn et al., 2012) to gauge the effects of intramuscular fat level on the palatability traits of beef strip loin steaks.

The consumer taste panel consisted of 120 in-

dividuals (54% female, 46% male) with the majority (83%) of them coming from homes with four people or less. Eighty-six percent of the panelists had average annual household incomes greater than \$20,000, with the largest percentage (30%) of panelists having incomes between \$70,000 and \$100,000. Most consumer panelists (56%) ate beef one to three times per week followed by 35% that ate beef four to six times per week and 8% that ate beef more than seven times per week.

Consumer panelists were surveyed regarding their purchasing habits of beef. USDA Choice steaks and roasts were the most popular grade purchased (38%), followed by USDA Select (18%), store brand (13%), and USDA Prime (3%). Twenty percent of the panelists did not know the quality grade of the steaks and roasts they normally purchased. Tenderness, flavor, and juiciness (in that order) were noted as the most important palatability traits when panelists consumed steaks and roasts. The consumer panelists were also asked how often they had an excellent eating experience when consuming steak in a restaurant. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of panelists indicated almost always, 49% indicated some of the time, and 9% indicated almost never.

In the actual sensory (taste) panel test, consumer panelists were asked to evaluate samples of beef strip loin steaks representing the various USDA Quality grades. Intramuscular fat (all external fat trimmed) content of the steaks was as follows: Prime = 14%, High Choice (upper 1/3) = 7%, Low Choice (lower 1/3) = 5%, Select = 3%, and Standard = 1%. In their

Strategic Weaning: Managing Cow Body Condition During Drought

Ron Torell
Long-Standing Educator and Advocate of Agriculture

Many regions of the country are experiencing one of the driest precipitation cycles in recent history. These extreme drought conditions require management intervention on behalf of the bovine. Some ranchers are turning their cows out on irrigated pasture with no plans of haying their meadows. Others are reducing the size of their herds through stringent culling and marketing. Cattlemen are faced with making critical management decisions. They need to either increase nutrient supply, which is costly, or decrease nutrient demand. During periods of drought strategic weaning is one management option ranchers can use to reduce nutrient demand in an effort to manage cow body condition relative to the available nutrient supply.

Reduced quantity and quality of feed during drought years coupled with the effects of suckling and lactation generally causes thin cows. Thin cows are set up to fail reproductively unless steps are taken to turn this around. The short-term effect of suckling and lactation during drought conditions lengthens a cow's postpartum interval. This may reduce or delay pregnancy during her current breeding season. Long-term effects may delay or reduce pregnancy in subsequent years.

Forage resources vary greatly in different regions of the country contingent upon annual precipitation. In areas and years when feed conditions are favorable, some cows and calves may actually gain weight late in lactation. Under these conditions an extended lactation or delayed weaning date may be warranted. However, if low reproductive rates and low body condition scores are anticipated due to drought conditions, altering weaning dates is one option to be considered to add body condition to thin cows.

Weaning calves from mature cows at 5 to 6 months of age has the potential to increase cow body condition by reducing forage and nutrient demands. The most favorable months to change body condition in late spring calving cows are generally September, October and November. Prior to September, *and/or a calf age of 150 days*, the production/demand for milk is high making it

difficult to add cow body condition. After November expensive processed feeds may be required because often times standing dry forage may be in short supply and of inferior quality. This coupled with the impact of colder temperatures makes it difficult to add body condition.

Long-term drought management options should be taken into account when purchasing herd sires. Many cattlemen chase frame size, growth and high milk EPD bulls. Drought years usually will reveal the error of their ways in doing so. By selecting bull power based off of wet years a ranch is setting itself up to fail on dry years. Conceivably bulls should be selected based on the criteria of a dry year. Big framed high milking cows sired by these bulls have a higher nutrient demand which shows up in reduced body condition and open cows during harsh times. An additional long-term management tool is to calve later in the spring during green grass which better matches the nutritional supply to the nutritional demand of the cow.

When considering strategic or early weaning, it's important to point out that the seed stock beef industry adjusts weaning weights to 205 days to make a fair comparison of animals born on different dates. Older calves normally weigh more than younger herd mates. The practice of adjusting weights to 205 days of age has led many to believe that weaning should occur at 205 days. The 205 day weaning date is not set in stone. In reality there is little basis for the practice of 205 day weaning in commercial herds. Weaning time should be in sync with feed resources and cow body condition. Calves of 150 days of age or more have a fully

Quality Grading Cattle

Jim Church
University of Idaho Extension

Importance of Quality!

The first National Beef Quality Audit was conducted in 1991 and was conducted again in 1995, 2000, 2005 and the results from the most recent audit will be released this summer. In each of the audits, various segments of the beef industry were surveyed to determine what they thought were the major quality challenges for beef.

One of the industry segments surveyed were the purveyors, retailers and restaurant owners. This group identified uniformity and palatability as two of the top 10 challenges affecting quality in 1991. These two challenges were in each of the subsequent audits with the addition of tenderness making the top ten in 1995.

In 2000 and 2005, lack of marbling ranked number one as a challenge to quality, while uniformity, tenderness and palatability remained in the top ten.

The lack of uniformity/consistency, tenderness and palatability in beef cattle carcasses is a huge problem that the industry needs to address.

The lack of marbling as the number one challenge is also a concern. Of course lack of marbling causes lower than desired quality grades and less valuable carcasses.

Table 1. Beef Industry Targets for USDA Quality Grades

QUALITY GRADE	PERCENT
Prime	7%
Upper Two-Thirds Choice	29%
Lower One-Third Choice	33%
Select	31%
Standard and Lower	0%

Let's Look At Where We Are At With Quality Grades!

The beef industry has developed targets for quality grades in slaughter cattle. Table 1. shows the targets for each grade. As you will notice, the target calls for approximately 70% of the cattle to grade low choice or better.

Compared to the quality targets above, how are the cattle grading? Well, in the 1991 audit, 55% of the cattle graded low choice or better. This dropped to 48% in 1995, back up to 51% in 2000 and up to 57% in 2005. As you can see, in 2005 we improved the percentage of cattle grading choice or better back to slightly above the level from 1991. We are trending in the right direction but are still below the target of approximately 70% grading low choice or higher. As an industry we still have a lot of work to do.

The first step towards improving quality is knowing exactly how beef carcasses are assigned a quality grade.

Let's Review How Carcasses are Quality Graded.

To quality grade a beef carcass, a grader will look at two main traits, maturity and marbling or intramuscular fat. In addition, the carcass will be evaluated for firmness of muscle, proper color and texture.

Maturity

A carcass is assigned a maturity score based on the determined age of the carcass. To determine the age, a grader will look at the cartilage ossification in the sacral and lumbar vertebrae. The shape of the rib bones are also evaluated along with lean muscle color and texture.

There are five maturity scores:

<u>Maturity</u>	<u>Age</u>
A	9-30 months
B	30-42 months
C	42-72 months
D	72-96 months
E	over 96 months

The vast majority of feedlot cattle fall into the A maturity category. Most cattle are harvested before they reach their second birthday well ahead of the 30 month cutoff for the A maturity score.

Marbling

A trained USDA grader will evaluate the amount of intramuscular flecks of fat, also known as marbling, in the longissimus dorsi muscle between the 12th and 13th ribs. The grader will assign the carcass one of the nine marbling scores recognized by the USDA. Below are the nine marbling scores and corresponding quality grades for A maturity carcasses:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Marbling Score</u>
High Prime	Abundant 00-99
Avg. Prime	Moderately Abundant 00-99
Low Prime	Slightly Abundant 00-99
High Choice	Moderate 00-99
Avg. Choice	Modest 00-99
Low Choice	Small 00-99
High Select	Slight 50-99
Low Select	Slight 00-49
High Standard	Traces 34-99
Avg. Standard	Practically Devoid 67-99, Trace 00-33
Low Standard	Practically Devoid 00-66

The numbers behind each marbling score indicates 100 subunits in each score. For instance if the grader scores a carcass SM 50, that means the carcass is squarely in the center of the Small degree of marbling.

Our goal as an industry is to have cattle at harvest

that are A maturity and have at least a small amount of marbling so they will grade low choice.

How Can I Improve Marbling In My Cattle?

Selecting breeds and bloodlines that genetically have the potential to marble will have the greatest affect on improving the ability of your cattle to grade low choice or better. Of course timing of harvest is also important. Cattle have to be of the proper age and degree of finish to have an opportunity to obtain a desirable grade. The environment can also play a role along with feeding programs and other management practices. However genetics is number one.

We have to do a better job of determining which bloodlines are genetically predisposed for marbling. There are some breeds that are known to marble more than others. However, some bloodlines within those breeds may not marble well.

We have some new tools to help us make our selections including ultrasound technology and DNA profiling. We still have a long ways to go.

So in general, to improve marbling in your cattle, select proven bulls that are known to increase marbling in their offspring.

It will be really interesting to see if there has been any improvement in the percentage of cattle grading low choice or better since 2005 when results from the new audit are released. There has definitely been an increase in the use of ultrasound and DNA profiling for selection. We'll see if it is working.

OWYHEE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 400, Marsing, ID 83639

(208) 896-4104

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 _____

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To enrich education through diversity the University of Idaho is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educational institution.

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Owyhee Cattlemen's Association
Summer Meeting
July 28 in Silver City
[Membership Form on page 9; Agenda, below]

OWYHEE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Saturday, July 28

9:00 am

Registration

9:30 am

Business Meeting

Pledge ♦ Membership Bit Drawing ♦ Introductions & President's Report, Matt Tindall

Introduce Beef Heifer Replacement Program Recipients

Owyhee Initiative Science Review Update

Noon

LUNCH BREAK (Potluck)

Reports/Updates

Sage Grouse Working Group - Donna Bennett

Fire Update - BLM

State Lands Land Swap

Resolutions

Deck o' Cards Raffle

New Business

Election of Directors - Past President, Mark Frisbie

Evening Activities

5:00 pm

Social, sponsored by OWYHEE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

6:00 pm

Dinner, catered by *Grubbin' BBQ*, \$15 for adults, \$10 youth under 12

9:00 pm

Dance, music provided by **Runnin' for Cover** \$7/person, \$12/couple

Sunday, July 29

7:00-9:00 am

Breakfast available at the historic Idaho Hotel:
\$9.50, or \$5 ages 10 and under

10:00 am

OCA Board of Directors Meeting