

# OWYHEE COUNTY CATTLEMEN'S CORNER BEEF NEWSLETTER



MARCH, 2011

University of Idaho  
Extension

## What is Your Cattle Raising Philosophy?

K. Scott Jensen, UI Extension Educator, Owyhee County

I very recently read a book entitled "The Lasater Philosophy of Cattle Raising". It was written by Laurence Lasater in 1972 and focuses on the philosophies of his father, Tom Lasater, on raising cattle. It is a very interesting book with much or maybe all of its content applicable to today's cattle producers. Over the next few issues of this newsletter I am going to share a few of his ideas and philosophies.

The purpose is not necessarily to get you to change the way you manage cattle. The purpose is solely to make you **think** about what you do and why you do it. Why do you calve when you do? Why do you run the breed(s) of cattle that you do? Why do you graze pastures or allotments the way that you do? Why do you feed the supplements that you do? Why do you use the vaccines that you do? Why do you market your cattle the way that you do?

If the answer to any of these questions is "because that's the way dad or granddad did it", I don't think that is a very good answer. Now I am not suggesting what they did was/is wrong. I am only suggesting that you should do things because they are right for your particular location, operation, management parameters, etc. Times, circumstances, resources, technology, and other things change. You should continually be challenging your management decisions to be sure you are making the best decisions possible.

Mr. Lasater stated that "to survive in today's circumstances, the ranch operator must, like any business executive, be concerned with improvement and innovation rather than ordinary problem-solving". I think there is much truth to that statement. If we are to survive and thrive in the industry today, we must change, adapt, and improve our management strategies.

One area of focus should be a sound breeding program. Are you happy with the results of your breeding program? Are you producing a product that meets the needs or maybe even exceeds the expectations of your buyers? Tom Lasater's thoughts on the subject are that "a good manager should be in love with the results". What are the objectives of your breeding program? Whatever your objectives are, they should be "clearly defined, drastically limited, and ruthlessly executed".

According to Lasater, there are several five commandments for a sound breeding program; 1) select only for the six essentials of disposition, fertility, weight, confirmation, milk production, and

... continued on page 3

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CATTLE RAISING PHILOSOPHY	1, 3
OVERLOOKING YOUR COW-HORSE'S NUTRITION	2-3
DAM SIDE OF THE PEDIGREE	4, 8
IMPROVING BEEF QUALITY AND REDUCING PRODUCT DAMAGE THRU HEALTH MANAGEMENT - MARCH 12	5
STOCKMANSHIP & STEWARDSHIP SEMINAR - APRIL 14	6
LOST RIVERS GRAZING ACADEMY	7

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<http://extension.uidaho.edu/owyhee>  
208-896-4104



# Overlooking Your Cow-Horse's Nutrition

Shanna Smith, University of Idaho Extension Educator, Adams County

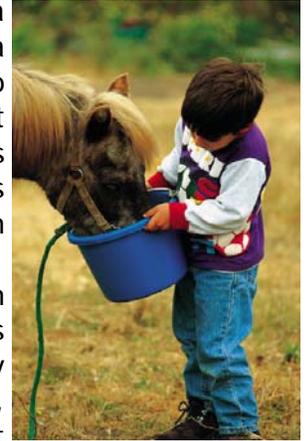
An old family photo album holds a picture of a little girl with a huge smile, holding an even bigger bag of carrots, as she stares at her new life-long adventure. I remember the day I got my first horse, Coco—a bay mare around 15 hands. For me, at the age of four, Coco was an absolute gem. Of course, I didn't know then what I know now—horses are a lot of work! I believe there's a point in life when most folks have wanted a horse. Then, reality hits and many find they can't afford it, or don't want to put forth the effort to care for these animals. Having an equine friend doesn't mean only having a corral and a few bales of hay. Managing your equine's nutrition is extremely important to ensure a long, useful life. Your horse has a job—whether cow-horse or kid's pony. Read on for basic nutrition management that is often overlooked on the ranch.

Most horses should be consuming more than just decent hay. Horses can do without supplements, but optimal performance may require supplements and/or vitamins? Supplementing can be simple as providing better quality hay or adding a nutritious pellet, or as complicated as adding vitamins, minerals, pellets, specialty grains, antihistamines, and more! At different stages in our lives, we aid our own body's performance—your equine is no different. From the mare to the foal, to the working cow horse, nutrition needs should be met. Jack Grogan, CN, chief science officer for Uckele Health & Nutrition states, "Meeting the nutritional demands of the fetal skeletal system while mares are pregnant can support stronger bone development for foals. Increasing specific trace mineral complexes during the accelerated growth period of weanlings is especially helpful in building a firm foundation, and continuing nutritional support as bone development and density increases for yearlings." Nutrition starts and ends in our hands—in the mare, fetus, foal, or seasoned equine.



Younger horses generally need assistance with skeletal growth and joint support. But, it should not stop as the horse grows older. There are many mixed supplements that are available with various vitamins/minerals to aid in growth. The skeletal system is made of many connected tissues such as ligaments, tendons, cartilage, and bone that need a little 'extra' help in younger equine. The length of bones and angles that they come together determine a horse's conformation (structure), thus making a clear path of the stride length and potential as a competitor, brood mare, or trail horse. (Note that too much exercise and activity at a young age can cause serious growth problems in young horses; keep training to a moderate activity level. If injured, your young horse may not heal properly and can be stunted in growth). Horses that are in training, or working hard on a regular basis, are apt to feel more stress on their bones and cartilage. This means they physically need more nutritional support to perform well.

Mature horses, not necessarily 'old' horses, frequently have pain due to past injuries or age. This stage of equine can benefit from the addition of supplements like Glucosamine and/or MSM, to their daily diet. Simply stated, aged equines need extra support. Depending on how old your horse is, you can deal with issues such as, loss of teeth, poor digestion, mobility and more. Wheat and/or rice bran can help digestion, put on weight and help the coat—one supplement can help a variety of factors! An overall supplement can be helpful when feeding all horses, regardless of age.



... continued on page 3



Cattle Raising Philosophy . . . continued from page 1

hardiness, 2) strive for reproductive efficiency, 3) performance test in a constant environment, 4) employ direct selection, and 5) utilize the adaptive powers of nature. Compare his idea of components for a sound breeding program with yours. Have you actually identified what you are breeding for? What is most important? Could it be pounds of weaned calf? Adaptability to your specific management environment? Resistance to disease or eye problems? Improved carcass traits? Others?

I challenge you to sit down and actually write out the specific objectives for your breeding program. Then evaluate how you are doing at meeting those objectives. If you are falling short, identify the areas for needed improvement. Outline a plan to move your cattle closer to the objectives you have set.



**TO SURVIVE IN TODAY'S CIRCUMSTANCES, THE RANCH OPERATOR MUST, LIKE ANY BUSINESS EXECUTIVE, BE CONCERNED WITH IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION RATHER THAN ORDINARY PROBLEM-SOLVING.**

— Laurence Lasater  
"The Lasater Philosophy of Cattle Raising"



Cow Horse Nutrition . . . continued from page 2

Past editions of the *Cattlemen's Corner Beef Newsletter* are available on our webpage at <http://extension.uidaho.edu/owyhee>

**Question:** *What is an extremely important nutrient that is easily overlooked?* **Answer:**  $H_2O!$  Make sure your equine has unlimited access to water throughout the year. Water consumption is always important, but pay close attention in the winter months to water intake. My best advice for peace of mind in those cold, freezing months, is to have a water heater. It beats breaking and scooping ice out of troughs!

Finally, don't miss the routine tasks, such as de-worming, vaccinating, hoof care and grooming. When grooming check for parasites too---ticks, lice, mites, etc. A good grooming session can stimulate follicles and can help with producing natural oils for a better coat. Hoof care is very important. As the old adage states, "No hoof, no horse!" It is important, shod or barefoot, to keep hooves cleaned out (in snowy months, check for ice balls which make it extremely hard to get around), check for punctures, cracks, thrush, and abscesses. Do not leave it only to the farrier to check!

There are a different de-wormers and vaccinations available. Do your research and figure out what works best for your horse. Talking with your local nutritionist, veterinarian, or Extension Educator can help you decide what your equine's needs are, how to meet those needs, and where to acquire them.





## Dam Side of the Pedigree

Ron Torell, Long-Standing Educator and Advocate of Agriculture

What do you look for in your quest for the perfect bull? What questions do you ask your seed stock producer when contemplating sire selection? When selecting a bull, buyers generally concentrate on the top or sire side of the pedigree relying entirely on visual appraisal and Expected Progeny Differences (EPD's). Seldom are seed stock producers asked about the bottom or dam side of the pedigree. Buyers may show little interest in viewing the young bull's mother or her life-long performance records.

An important consideration when deciding on a bull is to include the dam side of the pedigree especially if female offspring are to be kept for replacements. The brood cow factory is the foundation of a cow herd for both the registered seed stock producer and the commercial cattleman. A lot is expected of our four-legged employees. We count on their ability to produce a saleable calf every 365 days from age two to ten years by converting low quality fiber into sufficient body condition allowing them to reproductively cycle and breed back within 84 days of calving. Brood cows must have the leg and skeletal structure that permits them to travel great distances harvesting grass. They must have the gut capacity to pack away large quantities of low quality forage so the rumen bugs can do their job. Additionally, they must have all the convenience traits that factor directly in to the economics of time, facilities, vaccines, and labor. These traits include calving ease, mothering ability, well-attached udders with small, well-placed teats, good dispositions, and the propensity to be easy fleshers.



Logan Ipsen, western regional manager for the American Angus Association suggests bull buyers request and look at genomic EPDs on the dam side. "Not all seed stock producers will have this information for it is relatively new. Genomic profiles are a way to enhance our current selection tools achieving more accuracy on predictions for younger animals and to characterize genetics for traits which are extremely difficult to measure. The great thing about EPD's is the accuracy based off our database which has analyzed over 19 million records through the American Angus Association. These EPD's are now enhanced with available genomic information."

One major benefit of purchasing registered seed stock is access to known genetics with an historical record of the mother cow's performance. Production data can be viewed for each of the calves this cow has produced as well as her pedigree and EPD's for all the traits listed for the potential bull purchase. If the average calving interval for a particular cow is far outside 365 days, a red flag should be raised relative to reproductive performance. Study the cow's average birth, weaning and yearling ratios for the calves she's produced to date. A "100" would indicate average for the herd where as a "98" would indicate 2% below the herd average. Young cows are not going to have nearly the available data or accuracy as the older cows since they haven't had the opportunity to prove themselves through production. Offspring from older cows can be purchased with a greater degree of certainty than those of younger cows. The cow's pedigree will ensure that the purchase of a potential young sire is free from genetic defects. Please note that since these records are pass code protected by their respective breed associations, you will need to view them together with your seed stock producer.

One of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon an Angus cow is to be recognized as a pathfinder. The Pathfinder Angus program was started in 1978 in an effort to identify superior cows in the breed based on their records of performance from Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR). In identifying these superior cows, emphasis was placed on traits

... continued on page 8

# Improving Beef Quality and Reducing Product Damage Thru Health Management

MARCH 12th  
10 AM—12 PM  
MARSING HIGH SCHOOL



During this educational event, improvement of beef quality and reducing product damage through the proper use of animal health products will be addressed. A chronically affected feedlot calf will be necropsied to allow producers to visualize the effects of chronic pneumonia on the lungs and to see the effects of treatments on beef carcass quality. This is a hands-on opportunity for producers to identify various health issues and compromised product quality due to animal health issues and animal management practices.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jackie Owens, Idaho BQA Program Coordinator, (208) 454-7654 or  
Scott Jensen, Owyhee County Extension, (208) 896-4104

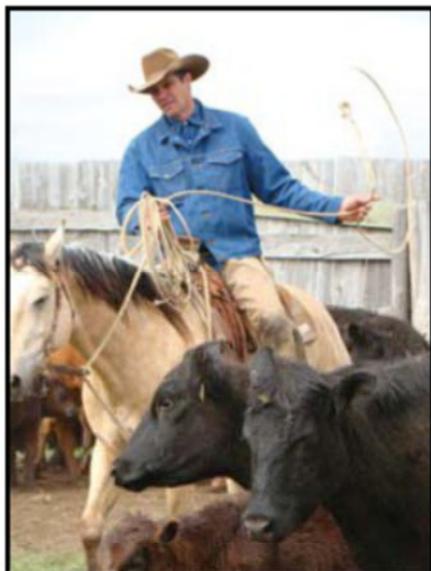


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# STOCKMANSHIP & STEWARDSHIP

## CATTLE HANDLING SEMINAR WITH CURT PATE



**April 14, 2011**

4:00—8:00 pm  
Badiola Arena  
Off Hwy 95  
Homedale, Idaho

### Highlights

- WORKING CATTLE IN CORRALS AND ALLEYS
- LOW STRESS HANDLING TECHNIQUES WHEN USING EQUIPMENT
- HORSEMANSHIP

**NO COST FOR ADMISSION  
&  
MEAL GUARANTEED IF  
REGISTERED BY  
APRIL 6TH**



This beef cattle handling seminar is brought to producers through a collaborative effort between the Idaho BQA program, University of Idaho extension educators, and allied industry. This is an educational opportunity that producers can use to identify areas of improvement within their own operations.

Curt Pate is a well-known clinician for both his horsemanship and stockmanship skills. In a time where our industry is under constant scrutiny, Curt fully understands both the economic and societal benefits of handling stock correctly. Operating his own ranch in Montana, Curt has the credibility and experiences that enable him to be a strong communicator and presenter.



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REGISTRATION NO COST



INDIVIDUALS WHO REGISTER BY APRIL 6TH WILL BE GUARANTEED A MEAL FOR THE EVENT

Register online at [www.uidaho.edu/extension/beef](http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/beef) or call Scott Jensen, Owyhee County Extension (208) 896-4104 or

Detach and mail information below to: Idaho BQA, 1904 E. Chicago Ave, Suite AB, Caldwell, ID 83605

NAME (S) \_\_\_\_\_ ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY, ST \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER ATTENDING \_\_\_\_\_

EVENT LOCATION REGISTERING FOR (circle one)      LEWISTON      HOMEDALE      TWIN FALLS      BLACKFOOT

The University of Idaho does not discriminate in education or employment on the basis of human differences, as required by state and federal laws. Anyone attending this program that requires auxiliary aids or services should contact Jackie Owens at [jackieo@uidaho.edu](mailto:jackieo@uidaho.edu) or (208) 454-7654 at least two weeks prior to the event. University of Idaho, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Idaho Counties Cooperating. Funded in part by Idaho's beef producers through the \$1.50 Beef Checkoff

### Who Should Attend:

- Producers of beef and dairy cattle, sheep, horses, and other domesticated grazing animals
- Professionals working in livestock-related industries

### How You Can Benefit:

- Enhance your grazing-management skills and improve your forage and livestock production
- Reduce the dollars and hours you spend fertilizing, harvesting, and feeding hay
- Increase your animal units and net income
- Improve deteriorating pastures
- Gain a foundation of knowledge from which to launch a new livestock operation
- Learn sustainable practices that will maintain and improve the productivity of your ranch

### Learn How to:

- Design grazing cells and determine appropriate stocking rates
- Design water systems
- Design and build permanent and portable electric fences for use under center-pivots and wheel lines
- Minimize animal stress during handling
- Stockpile standing forage and draw on animals' "fat banks" to reduce winter feed costs
- Devise custom-grazing leases
- Develop a ranch economic plan



## LOST RIVERS

## GRAZING ACADEMY

June 14-17, 2011

Salmon, Idaho



A boots-on-the-ground workshop for livestock operators who want to increase their forage production, stocking rates, animal performance, and net income by letting their livestock harvest the sun's energy through their feed.

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### What Our Graduates Say:

"It opened my eyes to how productive I had better be as a rancher. I will never look at a blade of grass the same way again." **Todd Holbrook, Bancroft, Idaho**

"It was as good of a school as I've been to. You can take what you've learned back to your own place. It makes a big difference. We're probably feeding a third to a half more cows under our pivot and it's brought in at least a fourth more income." **VerNon Roche, Mackay, Idaho**

"People are amazed by how much grass I can grow on the ground that I've got. I run 300 cow-calf pairs on 11 paddocks and I can keep them on grass until the middle of November before they have to be supplemented with hay." **Nancy Chester, Challis, Idaho**

"I enjoy ranching a lot more now. It's less stress, you get the animals doing the work instead of having to use machinery and fuel, and you don't have to fight the weather. It's a lot more interesting, too—and we're paying off debt." **Joe Miller, Salmon, Idaho**

### Additional Comments...

- Much more detail on info that I need — especially on pasture management, good hands-on, excellent resources and presentations!
- Learned a great deal about M/G; matching animal needs with forages; matching stocking rate with carrying capacity!
- This program is great. It should be mandatory for every person that has livestock that graze.
- The program went beyond my expectations. The material was very high-quality. The reference materials provided were unexpected. Time was balanced well between field and class. I had fun, and the food was great. Very organized, polished, highly valuable class.

**OWYHEE COUNTY**

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**Dam Side of the Pedigree . . . continued from page 4**

such as early puberty, breeding and early calving, followed by regularity of calving and above-average performance of the offspring. While outstanding cows can be identified after their first or second calves, the Pathfinder Report requires a minimum of three calves from a cow to determine her regularity of calving and ability to produce superior calves for weaning weight year after year. An important part of the report is the list of bulls that have sired five or more qualifying females. Other associations have similar programs for female distinction.

When contemplating the purchase of a bull, hold the seed stock producer to their word. Visit their operation. Look at the conditions under which their registered herd is produced. Are these conditions anywhere similar to those you ask your commercial cows to produce in? Check weigh or visually appraise a few of the producing mother cows. Is the producer's definition of "moderate frame" the same as yours? Ask questions. Do they collect chute scores for disposition or monitor udders with an accepted scoring system? Visually appraise flesh, leg structure and general physical characteristic of the dam in question. Are the ranch's working facilities and infrastructure adequate and appear to be paid solely by revenues generated by cattle sales? Inquire about management practices of the cow herd such as feed resources, supplementation strategies and general management philosophies. Determine if the managers and owners are good stewards of the land.

It is not the intent of this article to down play the importance of utilizing EPD's and visual appraisal during the selection process of purchasing a bull. Rather it is to suggest you include the mother side of the pedigree in that very important sire selection decision, especially if you are retaining replacement females for your farm or ranch. The future of your cow herd's production may depend on it.

