



NEWSLETTER

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See us on the web at overtonvet.com

Looking back on the Fall...November 2010

With harvest done early this year, a lot of cows are getting worked ahead of time this year. With cows coming out of a very hard winter last year, it looks like weather did potentially have a negative effect on conception rates. Several observations have been made:

- Herds on a solid, year round trace mineral program had very successful preg rates
- Cows on a positive energy balance (didn't lose weight) through the winter had very successful preg rates

Age and Source Verification

-A marketing tool that is becoming more popular is Age and Source Verification. Current market conditions are paying a \$3-\$6/cwt premium for Age and Source Verified calves. This does entail an internal audit of calving records as well as certain other qualifications for cowherds. Companies doing this are Micro Beef, Sampson, Power Genetics, and others. OVS will take care of all paperwork, filings, audit schedules, etc for those calves worked by our clients. Stop and visit about this marketing option!!

Hydraulic Calf Chute

-We have recently purchased a portable, hydraulic calf chute, tub and alley. This will allow for calves to be processed in a more efficient and low stress manner than before, with less labor involved. This is a single, trailer mounted piece that drops to the ground and will plug into a standard 110 volt outlet. It is one solid piece that includes a tub, alley, and chute on a raised surface. We will continue to work calves at the clinic, but will now also be able to work calves off site too.

OVS Mineral Blends/ Salt/ CTC

-We have several mineral blends available to meet needs of individual producers. Not all mineral is the same!! We have specifically designed mineral for cattle on cornstalks, calving, and receiving calves, as well as products designed to be fed with distillers. Please feel free to ask about these blends and **bulk discounts are available!** OVS is now carrying bulk salt available for pickup at the clinic or delivery at **very competitive prices**. We also carry bulk CTC for both feed and water blending.

Cow and Calf Tags

-Allflex has introduced new, laser engraved tags that should eliminate the problem of fading numbers on tags. Also, they have introduced a buttonless tag that will be put in the ear with a Z-tagger. OVS will carry these tags in a variety of sizes and colors

Body Condition Scoring

Why Body Condition Score my cows? Most reproductive failures in cow herds (higher open rates, more late calvers, etc.) can be attributed to poor body condition **due to improper nutrition**. A cow's nutritional priorities are maintenance, lactation, growth (heifers and young cows) and lastly reproduction. Nutritional levels prior to and after calving affect the subsequent breeding season by delaying onset of estrus and lowering conception rates. Calves are affected by their dam's BCS also. Calves from thin cows usually have less vigor, more sickness problems and lower weaning weights. **The optimal body condition score is 5 to 7**. Each condition score is equal to about 150 pounds. Thinner cows (BCS of 1 to 4) lose reproductive and productive effectiveness while obese cows (BCS of 7 to 9) lose economic efficiency.

When to Body Condition Score? The times currently advocated to evaluate condition are: mid-summer, weaning, **60-90 days pre-calving**, calving and prior to breeding season. Scoring before and through the calving season will help separate cows into different feeding groups if necessary.

How to Body Condition Score. Anatomic areas to assess visually or by palpation are the spinous processes (backbone), transverse processes (edge of loin), ribs, hip bones (hooks and pins), shoulder and brisket. Pregnancy and gut fill can alter the cow's appearance.

<u>Body Condition Scores by "Feel"</u>	<u>BCS Score</u>	<u>Body Condition Scores by "Eyeball"</u>
No palpable fat detected over back, hip bones or ribs. Tailhead and ribs very prominent.	1	Emaciated and near death. Cow is probably on her last breath.
Backbone still is sharp to the touch. Tailhead and ribs less prominent.	2	Cow's brisket is quite a bit lower than her belly. Hooks and pins stick out, even from a great distance.
Palpable fat along spine and tailhead with some cover over the top of the ribs. Ribs individually identifiable	3	Belly and brisket even up. Cow has little fat cover but appears sleeker than a BCS 2.
Individual spines can be palpated but feel rounded not sharp. Some fat over ribs and hip bones. Individual ribs no longer obvious.	4	Cows have a rounder rump and sleeker cover. Hooks are prominent but pins have disappeared under fat cover.
Fat cover over ribs feels spongy and area on either side of tailhead has palpable fat cover.	5	Fat cover on ribs and shoulders. High tailhead and spine but no visible hooks and pins
Firm pressure is necessary to feel spinous processes. Fat is palpable over ribs and around tailhead.	6	Cows have no tailhead and no visible hooks and pins. Belly and brisket are even.
Very spongy fat cover over ribs and around tailhead. Cow appears fleshy.	7	Cows have a barrel belly and their tailhead is lower than the back line. Belly hangs lower than brisket.
Backbone almost impossible to palpate. Fat deposits over ribs and around tailhead.	8	Cows are fat, thick barrel bellied and have strained movement.
Backbone barely palpable. Tailhead and hips buried in fat cover. Cow's mobility may be impaired.	9	Extremely fat and very poor mobility.

Cow Herd Nutrition

Your nutrition program during the last trimester of gestation will impact:

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| *Trace mineral status of the calf | *Immune system development in the calf |
| *Quality of colostrum produced by the cow | *Breeding efficiency in your herd |
| *Development of replacement heifers | *Calf performance in the feedyard |

Act now ... to gain the benefit throughout the production year!

Currently, most cows are in their last trimester (or last 4 months) of gestation – **a critical time for fetal development.** Also, cows and heifers need to be in a positive energy balance going into the calving season to meet the demands of lactation and breed-back in a timely fashion.

Contact us to assist you in formulating a sound nutritional plan for your cows and heifers. Additional distillers based ration examples are also illustrated on the OVS website, www.overtonvet.com

More tips on nutrition ...

- When adding distiller's grains it is important to chop the forage. This encourages a more thorough mix to keep one animal from over consuming the distillers.
- Use feeds you have available to minimize winter feed costs.
- If ice in the fields is a problem, as the ice melts you can start to back off the supplemental feeding.
- This is a crucial time to be supplementing your cows with the **OVS Custom Calving Mineral blends.** This mineral is palatable and includes a high level of trace elements, calcium & phosphorus, magnesium, vitamin A and vitamin E.