

## **Keeping It All Together**

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It is the time of year that many farm and ranch operations go directly into high gear. There are many things to think about and many, many more things to do. Everyone is busy and the days often seem to go by in a blur. Some important beef operation items to think about include:

**Bulls and herd bull management.** Do you have enough, are they conditioned properly, where will you spend your next dollars for improved genetics? It is of absolute importance that the bulls you do have can pass a semen test.

**Replacement heifer management.** Heifers must be big enough and old enough to grow into your future top producing cows. Are your heifers cycling? What percent? What do they weigh? What percentage is that of your mature cow size? Heifers are becoming increasingly more expensive to grow out. Maybe culling through them again might be in order?

**Bred cow management.** Are your bred cows and heifers getting adequate exercise? Increased calving difficulties can result from cows just not getting enough exercise. Snow, mud and other weather challenges, and dry-lotting cows can make it harder for your cattle sometimes to get enough exercise. Simple things such as moving salt and mineral, moving enough snow to make basic walk areas, etc. can often be very good management practices for bred cattle.

**Salt and mineral.** Calving, nasty weather, etc. create additional stress in both man and beast. This is not a time to scrimp on minerals. Do you know what is needed for your area? Make sure cattle can get to it and supplies do not run out. The breed-back timing and percentage on your females can depend on this! Additionally this years calf crop will be influenced by your mineral program or lack thereof.

**Watching for problems.** The very best stockmen and women always spend a few extra minutes each day just simply watching and observing for challenges and problem situations. Those few minutes may mean seeing a cow that may need help later during calving, sorting out a sick heifer, preventing major foot-rot in a herd bull, etc. Sometimes, the old adage, "The Eye of the Master Fattens His Stock" still holds very true in this day of extreme scientific knowledge and data.

**Sorting animals.** Extra time spent sorting off those problem, thin and sick cows, etc. may prevent the additional use of many dollars worth of drugs. Again, spending some time and noticing those individuals, and getting them away from the larger group can be a great

preventative for major problems later on. A few days in isolation or the sick pen and maybe some early treatment options can be a great investment for some problem individuals.

Good luck and happy Spring time wherever you may be!! Remember, Spring often is a state of mind not a state of the current weather conditions.