

# CATTLEMEN'S CORNER BEEF NEWSLETTER

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## Weaning Management

K. Scott Jensen, University of Idaho Extension Educator, Owyhee County  
Ron Torrell, Northeast Area Livestock Specialist, University of Nevada Extension

For many spring-calving herds, weaning time is just around the corner. Weaning time can be very stressful to calves. This stress can provide an opening for diseases to get a foothold in your calves. Often, calves are placed into a dry lot or corral with solid fences to keep them in for the first few days. The calves will generally mill around for several days creating dusty conditions that contribute to respiratory problems. Much of this stress and associated disease problems can be reduced with careful planning.

First, prepare calves for weaning with proper vaccinations. Calves should receive the recommended vaccinations for your area 3-4 weeks prior to weaning time. The goal here is to provide sufficient time for the animal to develop an immune response prior to weaning. Parasite control measures can also be stressful and should be done prior to weaning.

Second, provide for calves vitamin and mineral needs both prior to and during weaning. Research has shown that Vitamin A and Vitamin E play a major role in stress and disease resistance in cattle. Low levels of copper, zinc, selenium, manganese, and iron also increase the demand for vitamins A and E as well as compromise the response of the immune system. Weaning rations should be balanced to provide adequate levels of these vitamins and minerals.

Third, weaning location and method should be considered. Calves should be weaned at a site that is as dust free as possible. As for method, there are basically three methods of weaning: 1) Calves are removed from the cows and placed in a different location. 2) Cows are moved to a new location and calves are left behind in the location they had been in with their mothers. 3) Cows and calves are separated but share a common fenceline.



Weaning by moving the calves to a new location is the most stressful method of weaning. Calves are stressed not only by the separation from their mothers but also by being placed in an unfamiliar location. This is undoubtedly the most stressful weaning method. Weaning calves by moving the cows to a new location and leaving the calves behind is slightly less stressful.

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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. If you know of someone who would like to receive the newsletter, please contact us. Thank you.*

## Proper Management Improves Beef Quality

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

In the fall of 2006 the University of Idaho, in partnership with Utah State University and the University of Nevada, purchased an interactive beef quality assurance (BQA) exhibit entitled ***Beef Quality is Every Cattleman's Business***. The exhibit utilizes charts, figures, photos, preserved items (eyes, udders, teeth, legs, etc.), and a model of a carcass to help educate beef producers on ways to improve beef quality. The purchase of the exhibit was made possible through funding from the \$1-per-head beef check-off via the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA).

The BQA exhibit is divided into three sections (***Proper Management --- Enhances Beef Quality and Product Value, Targeted Breeding --- Equals Customer Satisfaction, and Responsible Culling --- Improves Herd Productivity and Efficiency***) each focusing on different avenues to make improvements in beef quality. Following is a brief discussion of the section that shows how properly administered management practices (vaccinations, implants, castration, dehorning, handling, etc.) helps to diminish, or eliminate, various beef quality shortfalls (injection-site blemishes, bruises, hide damage, etc.).

One area of management that can lead to greater beef quality centers around injection-site lesions (blemishes). Injection-site lesions are those areas of muscle mass that have been damaged by intramuscular injections. National beef quality audits have shown injection site lesions costing the beef cattle industry considerably (\$0.66 to \$7.05) for every animal (steer, heifer, cull cow, cull bull) harvested.

To assist in the reduction and elimination of injection-site blemishes, beef and dairy producers must make sure that drugs (vaccines, antibiotics, etc.) are properly administered to their animals. Good sanitation is essential in minimizing the risk of spreading infection, contaminating vaccines, or causing injection site reactions. Separate needles should be used to fill syringes and inject animals, and needles should be changed frequently. Damaged (burred, bent, etc.) needles should be changed immediately. A burred or bent needle causes greater tissue damage when entering the animal, therefore increasing the risk of scarring and entrance of foreign matter. The proposed injection site should be clean and free of mud and manure, thus preventing foreign materials from being carried under the animal's skin, or into the muscle. Producers should also choose the right needle for the job. The correct needle size (gauge and length) is important to ensure that the drug gets into the animal properly, with the least amount of tissue damage. Whenever drugs are used, producers should always observe drug withdrawal periods before marketing animals.

Another concern for producers, when treating or vaccinating their animals, is choosing the best location for the injections. The best location for an injection is not necessarily the one that is most convenient. It is the site where the drug will be most beneficial without the risk of damaging expensive cuts of meat. Drugs can be administered via a number of different routes (intramuscular, subcutaneous, intravenous, oral, etc.), and drug labels provide acceptable routes of administration. Depending upon the drug, producers may have options regarding routes of administration. Whenever there is an option of injecting intramuscularly (IM) or subcutaneously (SC), the drug should be given subcutaneously. This allows any injection-site blemish to be removed from the carcass at the same time the hide is removed, as opposed to trimming blemishes out of lean tissue. All injections (IM and SC) should be given in the neck region of the animal (in the injection triangle), and should not be given in the areas of the more valuable, more expensive cuts.

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### Proper Management Improves Beef Quality . . . continued from page 2

Another beef quality shortfall that can be addressed through a change in management is bruising. Bruises are a result of tissue damage and result in losses to the beef industry. National beef quality audits have shown that bruises cost the beef cattle industry from \$0.75 to \$4.03 for every animal (steer, heifer, cull cow, cull bull,) harvested.

Since bruising can occur right up to the moment of slaughter, each beef industry segment (producer, feeder, transporter, packer, etc.) must take the necessary steps to reduce and eliminate the incidence of bruising. Studies have shown that groups of horned cattle exhibit twice as many bruises as groups of hornless cattle. Market cattle (cull beef and dairy cows) are particularly susceptible to bruising since they have less overall protective fat than fed steers and heifers. Since horns are one of the major causes of bruises, producers should include dehorning in their yearly battery of management practices, or consider raising polled cattle.

Bruising can also occur during the handling and transportation of cattle. When cattle are handled on the farm, they should be handled gently and humanely. As cattle are driven through chutes and alleys, care should be taken when movement aids (canes, whips, sorting sticks, electric prods, etc.) are used. Beating on the back of a stubborn cow, or the steer that is moving too slow, causes bruises which must be trimmed away in the harvest process. All chutes, alleys, gates, fences, troughs, and waterers should be checked for sharp edges, protruding nails and bolts, and broken boards and pipes, and all hazards should be repaired. Corners of barns, fences, gates, troughs, waterers, etc. can be padded with old tires or conveyor belts to help prevent bruises. Care should be taken in the transport of animals. Low hanging bars, floors, decks, and endgates on trucks, trailers, and loading docks can cause back bruises when cattle come in contact with them in the loading process. All low hanging elements should be moved up. Protruding gate latches and supports may also present problems. Overcrowding in trucks and trailers may cause animals to be shoved up against the sides which result in bruising.

If you are interested in having this interactive beef quality assurance (BQA) display presented at a producer event/meeting, youth event, or other setting, please contact one of the University of Idaho Extension Beef Specialists, Benton Glaze at (208) 736-3638 or Jason Ahola at (208) 454-7654, or the Idaho BQA Program at (208) 459-6365 or [beef@uidaho.edu](mailto:beef@uidaho.edu).



## Rangeland Issues

Neil Rimbey, Extension Range Economist, University of Idaho

Several items appear on the horizon that should be of interest to the range livestock industry. The first issue centers upon the State Board of Land Commissioner's Grazing Subcommittee efforts to seek input on grazing and the State's Asset Management Plan. Second is the availability of information concerning rehabilitation and management after wildfires in the Great Basin. Third, a new body will be available in the University of Idaho's Extension Range position in Twin Falls.

### **State Land Grazing Subcommittee**

In the past year, a Grazing Subcommittee was appointed by the Idaho Land Board. The goal of this group is to seek input and make recommendations on changes and enhancements to the grazing program within Idaho Department of Lands. Three public meetings have been held around Idaho in the past few weeks. These have explained the state's grazing program, potential changes to the program and unveiled the State's Asset Management Plan. Public input on these issues is currently being accepted by the subcommittee through September 12, 2008. It is imperative that grazing lessees and others provide input on these critical aspects of State Land management of grazing leases. The Asset Management Plan and other documents are available through Idaho Department of Land's website, [http://www.idl.idaho.gov/bureau/smr/range\\_crop/index.htm](http://www.idl.idaho.gov/bureau/smr/range_crop/index.htm)

State grazing lands currently comprise about 1.8 million acres and provide about 120,000 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) of livestock forage each year. Grazing leases are issued for 10 year periods and can be contested when they expire. If contested, an auction determines the lease holder for the next 10 year period. Grazing lease rates are determined each year using an indexing formula enacted by the Land Board in 1993. Lease rates have averaged about \$6/AUM over the past 5 years. Lease payments benefit state institutions such as public schools and universities, the penitentiary, and others.

### **Great Basin Wildfire Forum**

During the fall of 2007, a group of 17 scientists from around the west were convened in a two-day conference to provide a comprehensive review of wildfires in the Great Basin. The goal was to use the experience and knowledge of the panel to provide an assessment of wildfires, including vegetation and climate changes, management alternatives to reduce the danger of wildfires, as well as management and rehabilitation alternatives after a fire occurs.

A proceedings was published in April by the University of Nevada, Reno and is available on-line at: [www.cabnr.unr.edu/naes/wildfireforum.pdf](http://www.cabnr.unr.edu/naes/wildfireforum.pdf)

### **New Blood**

Dr. Kelly Crane accepted the position of Assistant Professor and Extension Range Specialist with the University of Idaho this summer. Dr. Crane will be located at the Twin Falls Research and Extension Center, when he assumes the position in September, 2008. He has operated a private rangeland consulting business in Oregon for the past five years and prior to that served as Extension Range Specialist in Wyoming. An Idaho native, Kelly has degrees from the University of Idaho and the University of Wyoming. He will be available to work with livestock producers, federal and state agencies, university faculty and others on research and educational issues related to rangeland management. His strong background in rangeland monitoring will be an asset for Idaho.



## Research . . On the Ranch?

Rikki Wilson, University of Idaho Extension Educator, Gem County

I'm sure you have had one of those days, were you are driving around checking fences, or sitting on the swather cutting hay when the light bulb in your head suddenly goes off and you start wondering about a new idea or invention that just might work in helping you reach a more effective and efficient operation.

Why not think about conducting some on-farm research and put your ideas and imagination to work. Now, I know the word "research" can send many people into a tizzy. Most think of research as a big thick-bound book full of small words or a long white coat with chemicals bubbling. While both of these research techniques are highly valuable in our society, research doesn't always have to be so technical.

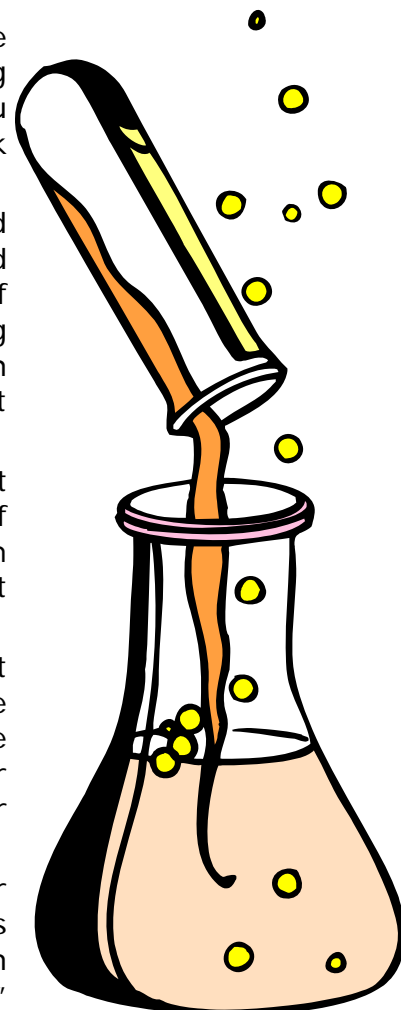
Maybe you want to determine if the protein levels of different forage crops, or you might want to look at organic methods of feeding compared to others. The first step in starting an on-farm research program is to figure out what your objective is and what some of the outcomes are that could come from it.

On-farm research allows the rancher or farmer a different avenue to evaluate information, but also provides an inexpensive way for a researcher to gather new information to spread to the community. Farmers and ranchers will then gain a greater understanding of their production and they might learn a thing or two about simple research methods that help answer questions.

If you are thinking about conducting research on your livestock there are several research methods to choose from. As stated by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) in the "How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch" article, first you could start with animal to animal comparisons, where each animal is an experimental unit or you could research pen to pen comparisons. One pen of animals is the "experiment unit" and the other pen can be your control unit. Some ideas to research could be grass fed cattle compared to grain fed cattle and the feed efficiency of each ration. Other research could be done by recording how animals perform in different seasons, or comparing different marketing techniques to make a higher profit.

A few tips to remember when conducting on-farm research with livestock is to make sure you have accurate certified scales. You will want to weigh animals before feeding them to keep accurate records. The pens will need to be similar in shape, herd number, animal ages and pen elevation. If you are going to research different rations, you will want to pre-mix the different rations first and store each of them separately to save you time later in the research project. It's important to keep in mind what it is that you want to measure throughout the research project to help keep it focused, and always if you have questions along the way, there is help at your local University of Idaho Extension office.

Give on-farm research a try, you might just find the answer you have been looking for.



**Weaning Management . . . continued from page 1**

Fenceline weaning is the least stressful method of weaning. A University of California study looked at weaning calves with only a fence separating them from their dams. These were compared to calves weaned totally separate (Separate) from dams. Calf behaviors were monitored for five days following weaning. Fenceline-weaned calves and cows spent approximately 60% and 40% of their time, respectively within 10 feet of the fence during the first two days. During the first three days, Fenceline-weaned calves bawled and walked less, and ate and rested more, but these differences disappeared by the fourth day. All calves were managed together starting 7 days after weaning. After two weeks, Fenceline-weaned calves had gained 23 pounds more than Separate calves. This difference persisted since, after 10 weeks, Fenceline-weaned calves had gained 110 pounds (1.57 lb/day), compared to 84 pounds (1.20 lb/day) for Separate calves. There was no report of any differences in sickness, but calves that eat more during the first days after weaning should stay healthier. A follow-up study demonstrated similar advantages of fenceline contact when calves were weaned under drylot conditions and their dams had access to pasture. To wean and background, even for short periods, fenceline weaning should be considered.

In the past month Ron Torell has received several calls from consigners of un-weaned calves to the recent video sales. These callers are looking for a low cost method of weaning calves that will add value to their product. Recent video sales saw fall delivered weaned calves easily fetch \$15 /cwt over un-weaned calves. Many of these callers took a no sale on their calves and stated *"we are just not set up to wean and do not have the feed to get-err-done. If we use our hay to wean calves we are short of hay to winter our cows"* Putting a pencil to it they feel they cannot wean calves for much less than \$15/cwt utilizing traditional confinement methods i.e. weaning pellets, quality hay, possibly feeding a chopped total mixed ration (TMR).

With hay priced at \$150 to \$200 per ton (what you can sell it for), grain or weaning pellets priced at \$400 per ton or more, labor, death loss etc., he would have to agree with the recent callers assessment. Why do you think buyers are paying \$15 / cwt more for the weaned calf? Answer - because utilizing the traditional high stress weaning method and given today's high input costs that is what it cost to get-err-done.

So what is the alternative? In our opinion invest some long term cash into fencing and get set up to fence line wean. Educate yourself about this excellent method which capitalizes on grass and low stress during the bawl out period. It works and it works well. You have to set yourself up for it. You have to plan ahead, build an immune system in the calf prior to weaning, save some standing quality feed in weaning areas on both sides of the fence. It takes management and advanced planning but it pays over traditional weaning.

Sources: Price and co-workers. Abstracts 2002 Western Section of American Society of Animal Science.

Pirelli and Zollinger. Weaning Management for Calves. Cow Calf Management Guide and Cattle Producers Library. University of Idaho



## Public Lands Council 2008 Annual Meeting

### Twin Falls - September 24-26

#### September 24

Grazing to Reduce Fuel Load  
Current Political Issues  
Rangeland Management Issues  
Wolves  
Sage Grouse

#### September 25

State Reports  
New PLC Issues  
Sheep Industry Report  
National Grasslands Report  
NCBA Report  
USDA Issues  
PLC Policy Resolutions

#### September 26

Range tour of  
Murphy  
Complex Fire

*[Registration form on following page]*

## MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

### Public Lands Council 2008 Annual Meeting, September 24 - 26

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Public Lands Council Meeting

September 24 – 26, 2008

Event	Date, Time	Cost	No. People
Registration	9/24-26	\$50.00	_____
Welcome Reception	9/24, 5:00pm	FREE	_____
Banquet & Speaker	9/25, 6:30pm	\$30.00	_____

#### Range Tour (Murphy Complex)

September 26, 2008

7:00am to 5:00pm

Event	Cost	No. People
Registration	\$10.00	_____

#### PAYMENT DUE

PLC \_\_\_\_\_

Range Tour \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Form of Payment:  Check  Visa  MasterCard  Am. Express

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Credit Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete form and return with payment to:*

NCBA  
P.O. Box 3469  
Englewood, CO 80155  
Fax: (303) 770-7745

**DEADLINE: September 8, 2008**

If you have questions regarding your registration please contact NCBA's Meetings & Convention Department at 303-694-0305 or e-mail at [meetings@beef.org](mailto:meetings@beef.org).



## Side Bar Story: Methods of Determining Age of Cattle

Ron Torell, Northeast Area Livestock Specialist, University of Nevada

The approximate age of cattle may be determined by examining the teeth as illustrated in Diagram 1. The tooth method of aging cattle involves noting the time of appearance and the degree of wear on the temporary and permanent teeth. The temporary or milk teeth, are easily distinguished from the permanent teeth by their smaller size and whiter color. At maturity cattle have 32 teeth, 8 of which are incisors in the lower jaw. The two central incisors are known as pinchers; the third pair are called second intermediates or laterals; and the outer pair are known as the corners. There are no upper incisor teeth; only the thick, hard dental pad.

The tooth method of aging cattle is more accurate when animals are grazed for their entire life on "soft feed" (irrigated pasture). Under rough feed conditions, such as desert rangelands, teeth are worn at a much faster rate. Under rough feed conditions, accuracy of aging cattle is reduced, particularly in animals over five years of age where tooth wear is the only indicator. Adjusting the accompanying chart to match feed conditions is essential to accurately determine the age of cattle. The best way to adjust the accompanying age chart to an individual ranch is to examine teeth of individuals with known ages and adjust the scale depending on wear.

Becoming proficient at aging cattle by the tooth method requires practical experience and a lot of practice. It also requires theoretical knowledge of the information presented in Diagram 1.

A second method of aging cattle involves reading the brucellosis tattoo in the right ear of female cattle. The tattoo (if legible) will reveal the year that the cow was a weaned calf and brucellosis vaccinated. The first digit of the tattoo represents the quarter of the year that the animal was vaccinated. For example, a two would mean the animal was brucellosis vaccinated in April, May or June. The middle portion of the tattoo is a shield. The last number is the year the animal was vaccinated. For example, a 7 would mean the animal was vaccinated in 1997, as a calf. The calf could have been born in 1996 or during 1997. Brucellosis tags do not reveal the year of birth, only vaccination.

... continued on page 9



### **Thank you to all those who attended and supported the Owyhee County Junior Livestock Sale at the Owyhee County Fair!**

28 beef sold for \$51,325

86 swine sold for \$62,100

65 sheep sold for \$32,925

1 meat goat sold for \$500

In addition to a really good sale, we have received over \$40,000 in add-on donations for our 4-H and FFA youth! We couldn't do it without your faithful support!

## Thank you!

### Diagram 1. Handy guide to determining the age of cattle by the teeth<sup>1</sup>



At birth to 1 month

Two or more of the temporary incisor teeth present. Within first month, entire 8 temporary incisors appear.



2 years

As a long-yearling, the central pair of temporary incisor teeth or pinchers is replaced by the permanent pinchers. At 2 years, the central permanent incisors attain full development.



2 ½ years

Permanent first intermediates, one on each side of the pinchers, are cut. Usually these are fully developed at 3



3 ½ years

The second intermediates or laterals are cut. They are on a level with the first intermediates and begin to wear



4 ½ years

The corner teeth are replaced. At 5 years the animal usually has the full complement of incisors with the



5-6 years

The permanent pinchers are leveled, both pairs of intermediates are partially leveled, and the corner



7-10 years

At 7 or 8 years the pinchers show noticeable wear; at 8 or 9 years the middle pairs show noticeable wear; and at 10 years, the corner teeth show noticeable wear.



12 years

After the animal passed the 6<sup>th</sup> year, the arch gradually loses its rounded contour and becomes nearly straight by the 12<sup>th</sup> year. In the meantime, the teeth gradually become triangular in shape, distinctly separated, and show progressive wearing to stubs. These conditions become more marked with increasing age.

<sup>1</sup>The illustrations for this table were prepared by R.F. Johnson and published in *The Stockman's Handbook* by Ensminger 2nd Edition page 539.



## Back to Basics: Timely Marketing of Cull Cows - Every Cattleman's/Dairyman's Responsibility

Ron Torell, Northeast Area Livestock Specialist, University of Nevada

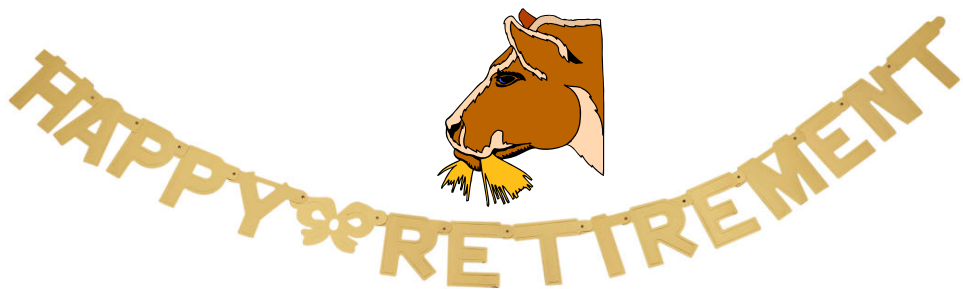
Short-term, gummer, and smooth-mouth are all terms cattlemen use to describe their older bovine employees. They have produced well for the past 10-12 years. These cows are the experienced veterans of the herd. However, due to age, lack of teeth, and an anticipated decline in production, they are forced to retire. Before issuing her "pink slip" many try to squeeze that last calf, or in the case of dairy cows, that last drop of milk out of her. Humane treatment of animals and timely marketing of these veteran employees as a means of eliminating non-ambulatory cows at sale barns and harvest facilities is every cattleman's responsibility. In this issue of *Back to Basics* let's address and rethink that last calf and that last drop of milk.

Prices for cull cows are based on their expected USDA carcass grade. The most common grades, in order of the least amount of marbling and dressing percentage to the greatest, are: canner (very thin body condition scores of 2 and 3); cutter (thin body condition score of 4); utility (moderate body condition score of 5); and commercial (fleshy body condition score 6 and above). Both price per pound and dressing percentage significantly increases with the higher body condition score animals. This economically favors marketing these cows in a timely manner prior to them losing body condition and falling into a lower grade. Most non-ambulatory animals are emaciated and would be classified in the canner, very thin body condition score category.

According to Dr. Dan Drake, Yreka, California farm advisor, "A major reason these old cows decline in production and body condition is due to their reduced ability to breakdown feed stuffs. Of course this is primarily due to the loss of the mechanical tools, the teeth. The digestive system of the ruminant is dependent on small particle sizes for proper digestion. Because the particle size of the feed stuffs consumed by these old cows is increased, passage rate is slowed, thus consumption is reduced.

Nutrient requirements of these old cows have not increased; rather her consumption and feed efficiency have both decreased. The combination of the two requires that these cows be placed on a more nutrient dense ration with smaller particle size and softer feed. We need to do more of the feed breakdown for the cow," concludes Drake.

Glenn Nader, Yuba County, California farm advisor, agrees with Drake. He also feels that many of these old cows have lost some of the villa in the lining of the digestive tract which adds to the lowered feed efficiency and digestion. Additionally, Nader feels functionality of some internal organs such as the liver and kidney is compromised in many of these old cows. Nader feels that these old cows need to be pampered if they are kept for the last calf. "They can no longer produce with the same feed and under the same conditions as the main cow herd. Rations such as chopped hay with a concentrate work well on these old smooth mouth cows. This is a nutrient dense ration which is high in protein and energy. More importantly, because it is chopped, the particle size of the feed is small. This compensates for the old cows lack of ability to break that feed stuff down herself."



**Timely Marketing of Cull Cows . . . continued from page 10**

"If you keep these old cows for one more year, you have to manage them differently than the main-cow herd," agrees Dan Gralian, manager of the TS Ranch of Battle Mountain, Nevada and current president of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association. "If you do not provide that extra feed and care, a dink calf and a shelly canner cow is the result. The shelly canner cow is what the industry is trying to avoid through timely and early marketing of these old cows. Shelly canners will dress less than 38 percent and pose a humane treatment issue to the industry. Prevention is always the best cure."

What once worked from a marketing standpoint for Rebel Creek Ranches of Orovida, Nevada may not work today with higher winter feed costs. Ron Cerri, owner/manager of Rebel Creek Ranch and President-elect of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association would calve these old cows in March and run the pairs inside on irrigated pasture in the spring and early summer. The calves would be weaned at about 170-days of age in mid to late summer with the cow being immediately sold while she still had good body condition. "By timing the marketing of these old cows for late summer the better cull-cow market was hit adding value. This added value offset the added cost of better winter feed for these short-term cows," states Cerri.

Henry Smith, of Brownsville, California makes a living from buying small bunches of bred, short-term cows. "You have to be careful which cows you buy," warns Smith. "Some cows are worn out. They will not produce under any circumstances. We tried the younger cull cows paying as much as \$75 per head premium over rail price. Only 50 percent of them worked out. We were always purchasing someone else's problem cows. We now buy old, sound cows and are able to purchase them just over rail price. We have access to by-product feeds here in central California. These old cows do well during the winter. We calve them out, place the pairs on grass until mid to late summer, wean the calf and sell the open cow. We do not run bulls with these old cows and we do not vaccinate for any of the reproductive diseases. We do vaccinate with 7-way and for the respiratory diseases. Our costs are reduced," concludes Smith.

A University of Nevada economic evaluation on heifer development shows that on average, most cows have paid for themselves by age six showing that the longer a cow stays in the herd, the more profitable she becomes. Her production may decline after eleven years of age, so we need to recognize the impact of longevity on the total cost of production. Anything beyond those six years certainly has economic significance. This supports keeping a cow in the herd as long as she is productive and breeds back provided the added cost of winter feed for these aged cows is reasonable, which is currently not the case.

Jon Griggs, manager of Maggie Creek Ranch of Elko, Nevada and Second Vice President of Nevada Cattlemen's Association also sees a need for timely marketing of other age and classes of cattle. "Lump jaw, permanent lameness, bad eyes, poor bags -- catching these ailments early and marketing these cows in a timely manner before these conditions pose a health or humane treatment issue is paramount to our industry's survival," concludes Griggs.

Gralian, Cerri and Griggs, speaking on behalf of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association urge cattlemen and dairymen to practice timely marketing of cull cows. It is every cattleman's responsibility and it is the right thing to do. In light of all the publicity concerning weak and downer cows we need to be especially vigilant of the condition of the cull cows we send to the sale barn or packing plant. The cull cows we ship to market are a reflection on all of us in the industry.

If you are unwilling to harvest these cows for home consumption by family and friends; do not send them to market! The take home message of this article is timely and smart marketing of all cull cows. The days are over of hauling canner spent cows to the sale yard and hoping to retrieve enough cash for gas. Prevent the canner cow; it is the right thing to do.



University of Idaho  
Cooperative Extension System  
Canyon County  
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Caldwell, ID 83606

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**Lost Rivers Grazing Academy September 16-19** - The next session of the Lost Rivers Grazing Academy will be held September 16-19, at the University of Idaho's Nancy M. Cummings Research Extension and Education Center. This national award winning program is a "boots-on-the-ground workshop" for livestock and pasture operators who want to increase forage production, animal performance and net income by letting their livestock harvest the sun's energy for them. The grant for scholarships for Idaho farmers and ranchers has been extended, and they can obtain full scholarships to attend the academy through the Alternative Careers for Idaho Farmers Program. Contact Brad at 208-301-3832 or 208-885-9707 or [jahnbrad@uidaho.edu](mailto:jahnbrad@uidaho.edu) for more information and an application.

Joe Miller of Salmon said, "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 are paying off debt." In fact, Joe has paid off hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt after applying principles learned at the Academy.

Participants will learn to: Enhance grazing management skills; reduce input costs for fertilizer; Reduce the need to make and feed hay; improve deteriorated pastures; design grazing cells and livestock watering systems; and stockpile and allocate forage to reduce winter feeding costs.

The workshop was developed and is taught by University of Idaho faculty Scott Jensen, Jim Hawkins, Shannon Williams, and Chad Cheyney. U of I Extension specialist Glenn Shewmaker and Tom Griggs from Utah State are with the program as well. Jim Gerrish, formerly of the University of Missouri's Forage Systems Research Center and now a private consult is part of the instruction team.

The cost of the 4-day program which includes continental breakfasts, hearty lunches and suppers plus evening presentations is \$450 per person. Farm/ranch teams may bring additional members for \$225. Single day and alumni registrations are also available.

For more information or to register, contact Scott Jensen at 208-896-4104, [scottj@uidaho.edu](mailto:scottj@uidaho.edu), or Chad Cheyney 208-527-8587, [ccheyney@uidaho.edu](mailto:ccheyney@uidaho.edu), or check out the website at: <http://extension.ag.uidaho.edu/owyhee/AgLostRiversGrazingAcademy.htm>.

