



New Online Beef Reproduction Course

A new eLearning course, *Prevention Programs and Technologies to Improve Reproductive Performance*, was launched Aug. 8 on the Cattle Learning Center Web site at www.cattlelearningcenter.org. This is the third and final course in the reproduction series produced as part of the Cattle Learning Center established in 2005 through a grant from Pfizer Animal Health. The National Cattlemen's Foundation and Angus Foundation also sponsor the reproduction series.

The self-paced teaching module allows users to work step-by-step through the lessons that feature on-line tools, illustrations, and interactive calculators. The module may be purchased through the Cattle Learning Center Web site at www.cattlelearningcenter.org or by calling 1-800-525-3085. The program costs \$15 for NCBA members and \$25 for non-members. CD's also are available.

"By helping producers with educational opportunities

to improve their management skills, the industry will continue to provide consumers with quality beef products," says Dr. Tom Field, executive director of producer education for NCBA.

The course, developed by leading industry veterinarians, scientists and allied industry technical experts, focuses on tools for producers to evaluate their cow herd's reproductive performance and technologies and methods to improve their bottom line. Topics include:

- Bench marking herd performance measures
- Performance improvement strategies
- Technologies, uses and description
- Goal setting and activities planning.

The first two courses in the series, *How to Get Cows Pregnant* and *Economics of Reproduction* are available for \$15 each or NCBA members can get all three for \$30. The cost is \$45 for non-members.

Processing Stockers This Fall

Producers running stocker cattle this fall need to take their standard precautions. New cattle arriving at your operation are under considerable stress. The surroundings and herd mates are new, and it's been a little while since dinner. This makes them more susceptible to disease.

You also don't want to introduce any new diseases to your herd. The standard practice is to place new cattle in a separate holding area and observe them before turning them out with the rest of the herd.

Experts working with the Noble Foundation in Ardmore, Okla., have developed a rapid processing system where all processing such as ID, castration if needed, deworming, and a battery of veterinary procedures is completed as soon as possible. The result has been lower death loss, less sickness and animals that start gaining weight.

Ultimately, this can reduce the stress on the cowboys and the animals and allow the cattle to get on pasture as soon as possible, where they can eat forage, which is what they are used to doing. With an economic incentive to add weight on grass this

year, producers need to guard against overstocking, which can lead to overgrazing and an increased chance of picking up parasites as the forage gets eaten closer to the ground.

"Parasites reduce rumen motility, making the host animal eat less while feeling full," says Dr. James Hawkins, parasitologist and consultant for Merial Veterinary Services.

The Noble Foundation in Ardmore, Okla., has developed its own procedure for handling stocker cattle. Based on their experience, they have seen reduced death loss and sickness. The Noble Foundation recommends contacting your veterinarian for his recommendations before trying this approach because other vaccinations or procedures may be better for your situation.

Receiving Practices

(Based on a 400-pound-per-head average weight and 1999 prices)

Day 1: Purchase and rotate the stocker cattle to pasture as soon as feasible; i.e., buy on day one, process and move to pasture on day two.

Day 1 or 2: Hay and Feed: Provide free-choice high-quality

grass hay. Provide fresh, piped-in water. Concentrated feeds may be used in more protracted receiving programs.

Physical Treatments: brand, castrate (surgically or with constriction band technique; tetanus antitoxin is given if cattle are banded), dehorn, ear-tag (number tag, reusable), growth implant

Immunizations (boosters administered three to four weeks later): Seven-way blackleg with *Hemophilus somnus* IBR-BVD-P13-BRSV LEPTO (5 way).

Deworming: Treatment is sometimes repeated, depending upon fecal egg counts or a planned schedule. The receiving paddock is not used in the grazing rotation because of the parasitic larvae that are expelled in cattle's initial stools after the wormer is administered.

Antibiotic: An antibiotic should be given at the appropriate dosage for the early stages of bovine respiratory syndrome whether it is detectable or not.

After the initial metaphylactic dose is given, the cattle are observed and re-treated as necessary.