

# Add Value To Your Cull Cows

**BLUE SPRINGS, MO.**

**A**s fall arrives, cattle producers are getting ready to wean and market their calves. At the same time, producers are deciding which cows met performance expectations and which cows they will cull. Many producers sell their culls immediately, but that might not be the most profitable marketing strategy, said a University of Missouri Extension livestock specialist.

“When deciding whether to sell cows when culled or at a later date, first consider the seasonality of cow prices,” said David Hoffman. “Typically, cull cow prices are lowest during the fall and early winter and highest in late winter and early spring.”

Hoffman recommends adding weight to thin cows. “With an abundance of high-quality fall forage, cull cows can rapidly replenish their

muscle and body mass,” he said.

Adding cheap weight gains with proper supplementation will result in a greater carcass grade. Higher-yielding cows typically earn a premium – currently \$5-\$8 per hundredweight, Hoffman said.

You will want to sell cull cows before they become excessive in their body condition (BCS of 8 or higher), as they will be discounted. Plan to market cull cows at an optimum BCS of 5-6.

When adding value to cull cows, select the best candidates to retain, he said. Heavy-conditioned, unhealthy or older cows are generally poor candidates for adding value.

Consider cull cows as a valuable asset to your operation, Hoffman said. Generally, adding weight or changing marketing time will increase the value of your cull cows and result in greater return for the cow-calf producer. Δ



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