

Profitability In Calf Crop Percentages

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Increasing your calf crop percentages means utilizing good managerial practices with your cow herd. To begin with, the University recommends that cattle producers manage their herd for a 95 percent calf crop. Where producers have a 500 pound weaning weight, this is only 475 pounds of calf per cow. Therefore, we need to make sure we are doing our best to keep up the numbers as well as the weight to ensure profitability. A beef cow's critical need for nutrition for reproduction is 60 days before and 90 days after calving. When you feed for a cow's maximum reproduction efficiency, their nutritional needs for production will be adequate. Cows' priorities for nutrition place maintenance first and reproduction last. This means if we aren't feeding to a certain standard, we are decreasing our calf crop percentages for the following year right off the start. For thin underfed cows, this reduces returns from two calf crops. First we decrease the calf weight that she is currently caring for and then if she doesn't become pregnant due to insufficient nutritional needs,

you affect the calf crop for next year. Open cows account for about 20 percent of lost calf crop in Missouri. If one would replace those open cows with heifers, this could increase herd pregnancy rate by 13 percent. The costs saved by not overwintering one open cow will usually pay for pregnancy checking 25 cows.

Tips for increasing calf crop percentages include conditioning the cow herd by supplying adequate energy, protein, phosphorus, and vitamin A. Preparing the bull for breeding at least 60 days before breeding. Conception rates increase if young bulls are supplied 8 to 12 pounds of grain per day during the first half of the breeding season. Also, don't forget to have a routine fertility check on the bull. Even though the bull was fertile last year, he could be partially or completely sterile this year. Research shows that on average, 15 percent of bulls are unsatisfactory in breeding. Managing your herd correctly will put money in your pocket. Ask for guide sheet 2006 for managerial tips on increasing your calf crop percentages. Δ

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