

Mississippi Beef Cattle Management Calendar

Timely planning and implementing various management practices on Mississippi beef cattle operations is essential for cattle productivity, operational efficiency, and enterprise profitability. This publication presents general management recommendations for each month of the year.

Specific considerations for both spring- and fall-calving herds are outlined, as well. Some Mississippi herds calve during a winter season that is between traditional spring- and fall-calving seasons. Adjust monthly recommendations relative to the time of calving.

Seedstock producers need to perform additional tasks throughout the year beyond the recommendations for commercial cow-calf production. Performance data collection at birth, weaning, and yearling times is critical. Herd inventory reporting and animal registrations through breed associations are also important. For herds using artificial insemination and embryo transfer, additional management and planning must take place.

Monthly recommendations on stocker operations depend on when cattle are received and marketed, size and age of cattle stockered, growth targets, and previous management. Design stocker nutrition and health management programs based on the factors mentioned previously and time of year. Many of the recommendations presented here, such as those on forage management and heat stress management, apply to both stocker cattle and cow-calf operations.

All Year

General Recommendations

Keep good production and financial records. Enterprise budgeting and cash flow analyses are worthwhile exercises. The information from these budgets and reports can be used to make knowledgeable production and marketing decisions. Develop a plan for managing credit needs for the operation. Manage to improve unit cost of production. Small and large producers alike may benefit from forming alliances with neighbors for group cattle marketing and bulk input purchase endeavors. Take advantage of feeder calf marketing programs such as age-,

source-, and process-verified programs. Run a breakeven analysis on retained ownership options, including stocker and finishing programs, and consider risk management strategies before finalizing marketing plans.

Consider purchasing quality herd sires from a Mississippi breeder. Stocker operators should remain flexible in determining the number of head to purchase and then stock pastures according to current and projected available forage amounts. Portable electric fencing is an excellent tool for implementing rotational grazing, limit grazing, strip grazing, or creep grazing systems. Management-intensive grazing systems are essential for stretching forage supplies and associated expenses to improve profit margins.

Provide proper free-choice minerals and fresh water at all times, checking these supplies often. Group the herd into feeding groups such as mature cows with average condition, thin mature cows, and first-calf heifers. Match forage and feeding programs to the nutritional needs of each group and forage analysis results. Nutritional requirements increase about 10 to 15 percent in the last 30 to 45 days before calving. Maintain a good nutritional program targeting a body condition score of 5 (moderate condition) at calving for cows and 6 (high moderate condition) at calving for heifers. Do not underfeed females in an attempt to reduce calf birth weight. Develop replacement heifers to reach about 60 to 65 percent of expected mature weight by breeding time and 85 to 90 percent of expected mature weight by first calving. Monitor body condition closely for the entire herd, and supplement thin cows and heifers as needed. Plan for bulls to be well developed and start the breeding season in a body condition score of 6.

Maintain a complete herd health program in consultation with a veterinarian, including internal and external parasite control and vaccinations. Monitor cattle for cancer eye, foot rot, injuries, and illness at all times. Be sure the health program includes Beef Quality Assurance (BQA)-consistent practices. Mississippi offers disease monitoring and certification programs for beef cattle operations. Johne's Disease and persistently infected bovine virus diarrhea (BVD) programs are examples of animal health

programs available in Mississippi. Ask a local or state veterinarian about available state animal health programs.

Fill out a producer registration form for the farm or ranch from the Mississippi Board of Animal Health if not already completed. This form is an important step to participating in the Mississippi Animal Disease and Disaster Preparedness Program. Be ready to handle severe weather conditions. Work to develop a ranch-level disease and disaster preparedness plan.

January

General Recommendations

Continue the winter-feeding program. Watch body condition, and use winter-feeding groups according to cattle nutritional demands. Lush winter grazing may work well for stockers, heifers, and fall pairs. Manage winter annual pastures to maintain at least 4 inches of stubble height. Limit grazing can be used to stretch winter pastures and hay. Limit-graze winter annual forages for a few hours per day. Plan fertilization, weed control, and establishment for the spring pasture program. Fertilize cool-season grasses before the flush of spring growth. Use high magnesium mineral supplements for cows on lush winter pastures to prevent grass tetany. Vitamin A supplementation is an important part of the nutritional program, particularly if frosted grass, weathered hay, or coproducts are the primary feedstuffs. Monitor water sources, breaking ice at least daily on watering tanks that are not freeze-protected. Check for lice, and treat as needed. Start gathering records for tax purposes.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Continue supplementation of pregnant females, targeting good condition at calving. Have calving supplies on hand, including calving record books, ear tags, obstetric equipment, disinfectants, calf scales, and colostrum. Check expected calving dates. Observe bred cattle closely as calving approaches, giving heifers extra attention. Make sure calves dry off quickly, receive colostrum within the first 6 hours, and have some level of protection from wind and mud. Separate lactating cows from dry cows to feed more efficiently. Move pairs to clean pasture, and watch calves for scours. Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as appropriate. Maintain good calving records, including calf birth weights and information for age and source verification.

Consult a veterinarian to schedule prebreeding vaccinations or order vaccines. Keep yearling heifers gaining weight to reach two-thirds of mature weight by breeding time. Take yearling measurements, and report performance data on seedstock cattle to breed associations. Base heifer selection decisions on performance, temperament, soundness, and breeding goals.

Determine bull power needs. Make bull selection decisions for the upcoming breeding season. Gather information about bulls at central test stations and in purebred herds to locate potential herd sires. Check sale dates, and review bull performance information. Line up breeding soundness evaluations, and make sure bulls are in good condition before the breeding season.

Fall Calving Recommendations

Calculate fall calving percentage. Cow nutrient needs increase dramatically after calving, so use the highest quality hay and feeds for lactating cows. Monitor breeding activities in herds exposed for fall calving, and be prepared to remove bulls after a controlled breeding season. If a high percentage of cows return to heat after 40 days of breeding, have bulls rechecked for breeding soundness, consult with a veterinarian on possible disease problems, and re-evaluate the nutritional program.

February

General Recommendations

Continue winter feeding to ensure good rebreeding and calf performance. Evaluate the remainder of the winter feed supply. Watch body condition, and match winter-feeding groups to cattle nutritional demands and feed and forage supplies. Graze winter annual pastures, maintaining at least 4 inches of stubble height to avoid overgrazing. Limit-grazing for a few hours per day is an effective winter grazing method. Pull soil samples on summer pasture and hayfields to plan your spring fertilization and liming program. This is a good time to apply herbicide to dormant bermudagrass. Plan to fertilize annual ryegrass and tall fescue before the flush of spring growth. Continue high-magnesium mineral supplement feeding for cows on lush winter pastures to prevent grass tetany. Continue to look for lice infestation, treating as needed. Plan to service hay equipment well before hay season. Cow markets are typically favorable in the next few months compared to the rest of the year. Market cull cows in good body condition. Gather records for tax purposes.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Continue supplementation of pregnant females, targeting good condition at calving. Have calving supplies on hand, including calving record books, ear tags, obstetric equipment, disinfectants, calf scales, and colostrum. Check expected calving dates. Observe bred cattle closely as calving approaches, paying extra attention to heifers. Provide shelter for newborn calves during severe weather.

Separate lactating cows, first-calf heifers, and dry cows into groups to feed more efficiently. Move pairs to clean pasture, and watch calves for scours. Consult with a veterinarian for advice

on scours prevention and treatment. Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as appropriate. Always maintain good calving records, including calf birth weights and information for age and source verification. Schedule prebreeding vaccinations, and order vaccines. Take yearling measurements, reporting performance data on seedstock to breed associations. Make heifer selection decisions based on genetics, dam performance information, temperament, soundness, breeding goals, and progress to target breeding weights.

Determine bull power needs, and make bull selection decisions for the upcoming breeding season. Acquire quality herd sires with performance information from reputable sources. Schedule breeding soundness evaluations, and make certain bulls are in good condition and provided with exercise as the breeding season approaches. For artificial insemination programs, have ample semen and other supplies on hand and facilities prepared for breeding.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Continue using the best hay (based on forage test results) and feeds for lactating cows. Monitor breeding activities in herds exposed for fall calving. If a high percentage of cows return to heat after 40 days of breeding, have bulls rechecked for breeding soundness, consult with a veterinarian on possible reproductive disease problems, and re-evaluate the nutritional program. Check on bull condition during the breeding season, and provide supplemental feed as needed. Prepare to remove bulls after a controlled breeding season. Keep bulls in small pasture traps with effective fences.

March

General Recommendations

Maintain at least a 4-inch average stubble height on winter annual pastures to avoid overgrazing. Fertilize cool-season grasses according to soil tests if not done earlier. Plan to incorporate legumes such as white clover into forage systems to reduce nitrogen fertilizer needs and improve forage quality. Locate hybrid bermudagrass sprig supplies for planting starting next month. Spray winter annual weeds while still vegetative for better control.

Watch for grass tetany, particularly on lactating cows grazing lush pastures such as tall fescue or annual ryegrass. Feed a high-magnesium mineral supplement to cows and heifers on these pastures. Service forage harvesting equipment well before hay season. Plan summer fly control before the fly population builds in the warmer months ahead. Review options for anaplasmosis control in the coming months. Consider marketing cull cows

in good condition. Cull cow markets are typically favorable in the next few months compared to the rest of the year. Finish tax returns this month to avoid last-minute preparation stress.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Calving season is well underway. Calving supplies should be readily available. Dip navels, identify, weigh, castrate, and implant calves at birth as appropriate. Include calving ease scores, dam body condition at calving, and information for age and source verification in calving records. Acquire quality herd sires with performance information from reputable sources. Obtain detailed information on bull genetics, health programs, and customer service offerings on prospective herd sires. Take time to study this information to make informed bull selection decisions.

Conduct breeding soundness exams, and make sure bulls are in good condition ahead of spring breeding. Provide additional nutrients to bulls if needed. For artificial insemination programs, have ample semen and other needed supplies on hand and facilities in shape for breeding. Administer prebreeding vaccinations at least 30 days before breeding. Start breeding heifers about a month before the cow herd. Place cattle with the highest nutritional needs (growing cattle, lactating first-calf heifers and cows) on the highest quality grazing and hay. Supplement the cow herd as needed according to forage test results. Cows need to be in moderate to good condition to rebreed early.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Keep bulls in small pasture traps with effective fences, and manage bulls to start the next breeding season in good condition. Observe the cow herd for returns to standing heat. Schedule pregnancy checks for 45 to 60 days after the end of the breeding season or earlier if using ultrasound technology. For calves born in an early-fall season, consider whether or not early weaning in late March or April fits operational goals. Fence line weaning is a good option for reducing calf stress at weaning. Place early-weaned calves on a high plane of nutrition, and their dams on lower quality forages and feeds. Feeder calf markets are often seasonally high in March and April, so consider optimum marketing times and methods for fall-born calves.

April

General Recommendations

Keep a close eye on pasture conditions. Continue supplemental feeding as needed until forages are plentiful. Maintain at least a 4-inch average stubble height on winter annual pastures to avoid overgrazing. Continue to watch for grass tetany. It is most

likely to occur in lactating cows grazing lush pastures. Feed a high-magnesium mineral supplement to these cattle. Plant and fertilize pastures according to soil tests to ensure adequate forage supply for late spring and summer if not done earlier. Incorporate legumes such as white clover into forage systems to reduce nitrogen fertilizer needs and improve forage quality. Hybrid bermudagrass sprig supplies should be on hand for planting now.

Contact custom spriggers to get on their planting schedules early. Hay harvesting season is around the corner. Finish repairs and general maintenance to forage harvesting equipment. Plan storage for upcoming hay harvests. Start watching for horn and face flies. Consider the type of fly control chemicals used last year, and rotate chemical classes. Consider options for anaplasmosis prevention as biting insects become abundant, and plan internal parasite control practices. April 15 is the deadline for filing federal and state income tax returns. Detailed and organized ranch records make completing tax returns much easier.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Closely monitor pregnant females yet to calve. Calving records should be well-organized now. Consider marketing late-calving females that do not fit the chosen calving season. Markets for beef females are often near seasonal highs this time of year. Acquiring quality herd sires should be a top priority now. Gather and use detailed information on bull genetics, health programs, and customer service offerings on prospective herd sires. Schedule breeding soundness exams so any needed herd sire replacements can be obtained by breeding season start. Implement the prebreeding vaccination program.

Place bulls with the herd in early April for mid-January calves. For artificial insemination programs, obtain semen and other needed supplies and prepare facilities for breeding. Maintain good breeding records, including heat detection records, artificial insemination dates, dates bulls turned in and out, identification of herd females and breeding groups, dates bred, returns to heat, and expected calving dates. Make sure the mature cow herd is in moderate to good condition to rebreed early. Supplement the forage program if cows are thin or spring pastures are coming on slowly. Place cattle with the highest nutritional needs (growing cattle, lactating first-calf heifers and cows) on the highest quality forage. Make sure bulls are in good condition in advance of spring breeding. Provide additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls. Monitor condition of bulls during the breeding season.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Manage bulls to start the next breeding season in good condition. Observe the cow herd for returns to standing heat. Schedule

pregnancy checks for 45 to 60 days after the end of the breeding season, or earlier if using ultrasound. Establish permanent identification (tattoos or brands) for bred heifers that will remain in the herd. Implement a calf preweaning vaccination program as recommended by a veterinarian. Consider whether or not early weaning fits operational goals. Make sure registered cattle are weaned within weaning age windows accepted by breed associations. Fence-line weaning is a good option for reducing calf stress at weaning. Place early-weaned calves on a high plane of nutrition. Feeder calf markets are often seasonally high this month.

May

General Recommendations

Fertilize warm-season pastures according to soil test recommendations. Incorporate clovers into pastures to reduce nitrogen fertilizer needs and improve forage quality. Sprig hybrid bermudagrass before moisture becomes limiting. Plant summer-annual forages. Graze sod-seeded annual ryegrass pastures to prevent shading warm-season forages. Manage pastures to graze young growth, and harvest excess for hay.

Make sure hay equipment is ready for operation. Record hay yields, forage test each cutting, and store hay to minimize storage losses. Grass tetany may occur in lactating cows grazing lush pastures. Feed a high-magnesium mineral supplement to cattle on these pastures.

Make sure adequate shade is available. Artificial shades need to allow adequate air movement. Minimum shade requirements are 18 square feet per head for 400-pound calves and 25 square feet per head for 800-pound stockers. Fly and anaplasmosis control programs need to be implemented as insect populations start to build. Rotate fly-control product chemical classes.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Continue close monitoring of pregnant females yet to calve. Calving records should be well-organized now. Submit calving information early to breed associations to take advantage of lower fees. Consider marketing late-calving females that do not fit the calving season.

Obtain supplies and prepare facilities for breeding. Implement heat synchronization protocols. Breed heifers ahead of the cow herd. Maintain breeding records, including heat detection records, artificial insemination dates, dates bulls turned in and out, herd female and breeding group identification, dates bred, returns to heat, and expected calving dates. Make sure the mature cow herd is in good condition to rebreed

early. Supplement if cows are thin. Place cattle with the highest nutritional needs on the highest quality grazing and hay. Provide additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Schedule pregnancy diagnosis. Cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness, health status, and performance. Market cows based on market conditions and cow body condition. Establish permanent identification for replacement heifers. Implement calf preconditioning programs including vaccinations, weaning strategies that minimize stress, and bunk breaking. Continue a high level of nutritional management for early-weaned calves. Make sure registered cattle are weaned within acceptable weaning age windows. Collect and report weaning performance data.

June

General Recommendations

Hurricane season begins June 1 each year. Prepare now for possible storms. Harvest bermudagrass at four- to five-week intervals for best quality. Fertilize hay fields using soil test information to optimize fertilizer investments. Record hay yields, forage test each cutting, and store hay to minimize losses. Maintain hay harvesting equipment. Observe cattle frequently, being careful to prevent heat stress. Work cattle early in the morning. Limit the time cattle spend in confined areas with limited air movement. Provide fresh, cool water for cattle confined for extended periods. Reduce cattle stress, especially for very excitable cattle. Provide adequate shade during summer.

Construct shades to allow adequate air movement. Minimum shade requirements are 18 square feet per head for 400-pound calves and 25 square feet per head for 800-pound stockers. Flies and biting insects are abundant now. Remove insecticidal fly tags as they become ineffective. Watch for pinkeye problems. Control for anaplasmosis.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Organize and review calving records. Submit calving information early to breed associations. Consider marketing late-calving females. Maintain good breeding records, including heat detection records, artificial insemination dates, dates bulls turned in and out, identification of herd females and breeding groups, dates bred, returns to heat, and expected calving dates.

Observe for returns to heat. Remove bulls from herd females after a controlled breeding season. Monitor herd body condition. Supplement the forage program if cows are thin or forage quantity or quality is limiting. Place cattle with the highest

nutritional needs on the highest quality grazing. Provide additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Manage bulls to start the next breeding season in good condition. After weaning, cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance. Manage market cows according to BQA guidelines, market conditions, and body condition. Select replacement heifers, and permanently identify them. Plan a heifer development program to reach target breeding weights. Vaccinate and booster calves based on veterinary advice. Wean calves at least 45 days before shipment and within accepted weaning age windows for registered cattle.

Make sure fences in weaning areas are in good shape. Implement weaning strategies that minimize calf stress. Train calves to eat from bunks and drink from troughs during preconditioning. Continue a high level of nutritional management for early-weaned calves. Use weaning performance reports for marketing and management decisions. Implement calf preconditioning, marketing, or retained ownership plans.

July

General Recommendations

Water requirements increase by 2.5 times as the temperature rises from 50 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Clip excess forage or harvest for hay. Control summer weeds. Watch dallisgrass pastures for ergot contamination, clipping seedheads as needed. Avoid grazing heavily nitrogen-fertilized, warm-season annual pastures during drought to prevent nitrate poisoning. Harvest bermudagrass hay at four- to five-week intervals for optimum forage quality.

Use soil test results to optimize fertilizer investments. Record hay yields, forage test each cutting, and store hay to minimize losses. Maintain forage harvesting equipment. Monitor commodity prices, and purchase supplemental feed for winter as appropriate. Be careful to prevent heat stress-related losses. Provide adequate shade for cattle.

Handle cattle early in the morning before the temperature rises. Limit the time cattle spend confined with limited air movement. Reduce cattle stress during hot weather. Keep a close eye on fly numbers. Remove insecticidal fly tags as they become ineffective, and implement additional fly-control methods. Rotate fly-control chemical classes. Employ internal parasite, pinkeye, and anaplasmosis control measures.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Remove bulls from breeding pastures if not done already. Market bulls that will not be used again. Review breeding records, including heat detection records, artificial insemination dates, dates bulls turned in and out, herd female and breeding group identification, dates bred, returns to heat, and expected calving dates. Pregnancy check herd females about 60 days after the breeding season ends. Market open and late-calving females. Supplement the forage program if cows are thin or forage quantity or quality is limiting. Place cattle with the highest nutritional needs on the highest quality forages. Creep feed calves if marketing plans and pasture conditions justify.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

After weaning, cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance. Select replacement heifers and permanently identify them. Plan a heifer development program based on nutritional resources and gains needed to reach target breeding weights. Make sure bulls are in good condition to begin the next breeding season. Provide additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls. Wean calves in areas with good fences at least 45 days before shipment off the ranch and based on market and pasture conditions. Minimize calf stress at weaning. Wean cattle within accepted age windows. Use weaning performance results in marketing decisions. Vaccinate and booster calves based on veterinary advice. Train calves to eat from a bunk and drink from a water trough. Continue a high level of nutritional management for early-weaned calves. Consider optimum calf marketing times and methods.

August

General Recommendations

Plan winter grazing and feeding programs in advance. Monitor commodity prices, and purchase supplemental feed for winter as appropriate. Control summer weeds. Clip or harvest excess forage. Watch dallisgrass pastures for ergot contamination, clipping seedheads as needed. Avoid grazing heavily nitrogen-fertilized warm-season annual pastures during drought or cool, cloudy weather to prevent nitrate poisoning. Harvest forage for optimal forage maturity and quality. Use soil tests to optimize fertilizer investments. Record hay yields, forage test each cutting, and store hay to minimize losses. Determine if additional hay is needed. Maintain forage harvesting equipment.

Heat stress can lower forage and feed intake, reduce growth performance, depress milk production, harm reproductive performance, and even cause death. Reduce cattle stress during hot weather. Work cattle early in the morning. Limit the time

cattle spend in confined areas with limited air movement. Provide adequate shade for cattle (18 square feet per head for 400-pound calves and 25 square feet per head for 800-pound stockers). Continue monitoring fly numbers. Remove ineffective fly tags, and implement additional fly control methods. Watch for pinkeye and anaplasmosis problems as biting insects remain abundant.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Acquire supplies for weaning ahead of time. Make sure fences where weaned calves will be placed are in good repair. Consider creep feeding calves, as to marketing plans and pasture conditions or to introduce them to feeds before weaning. Avoid weaning calves during extremely hot periods if possible, and arrange for calf comfort during these times. Vaccinate and booster for respiratory and other diseases based on veterinary advice. Continue a high level of nutritional management for early-weaned calves. Allow bulls to rest and regain condition, providing additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls. Market bulls that will not be used for future breeding. Pregnancy check females about 60 days after breeding season ends. After weaning, cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness, health status, and performance records. Market cows based on market conditions and cow body condition. Establish permanent identification for herd replacements. Plan to market open heifers. Develop heifers to reach target breeding weights.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Manage bulls to start the next breeding season in good condition. Evaluate herd sire options for the next breeding season. Monitor heifer weights, and adjust nutrition to meet breeding targets. Prepare for the fall calving season. Have cows in good condition for calving. Organize calving supplies. Move fall-calving females close to handling facilities, and observe cattle frequently. Manage late-gestation females in calving pastures with adequate shade.

September

General Recommendations

Determine winter supplementation needs based on the forage situation. Evaluate cool-season pasture options and byproduct commodity alternatives. Monitor commodity prices, and purchase supplemental feed for winter as appropriate. Watch for fall armyworms in pastures and hayfields. Watch dallisgrass pastures for ergot contamination, clipping seedheads as needed. Ergot poisoning is most common in warm-season grasses in late summer or early fall as seed heads reach maturity. Avoid grazing heavily nitrogen-fertilized summer annual pastures during drought or cool, cloudy weather to prevent nitrate poisoning.

Graze or clip pastures closely before overseeding winter annuals. Plant and fertilize cool-season forages. Potassium fertilization is important for bermudagrass fields going into autumn and winter. Optimize fertilizer investments using soil tests. Apply lime as needed to make the most of fertilizer applications. Harvest remaining hay cuttings. Record forage yields, forage test each cutting, and store forages to minimize losses.

Determine if additional stored forage is needed. Maintain forage harvesting equipment. Reduce cattle stress during hot weather. Work cattle early in the morning before the temperature rises. Limit the time cattle spend in confined areas with limited air movement. Supply confined cattle with access to fresh, cool water. Provide adequate shade for cattle. Fly season continues in many areas of the region. Monitor fly numbers to determine if additional fly control measures are needed. Remove insecticidal fly tags as they become ineffective. Watch for pinkeye.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Determine vaccination, deworming, and implant needs. Acquire supplies ahead of fall cattle working. Repair working facilities and fences where needed. Wean calves based on market and pasture conditions and weaning age windows, using weaning strategies that minimize calf stress. Avoid weaning calves during extremely hot periods. Arrange for calf comfort during these times. Wean calves at least 45 days before shipment. Vaccinate for respiratory and other diseases based on veterinary advice. Report weaning data to breed associations in a timely manner. Use weaning performance reports in cattle marketing decisions and to assess herd performance and nutritional status. Implement calf preconditioning, marketing, or retained ownership plans, considering seasonal price risks and breakevens on calves.

Train calves to eat from a bunk and drink from a water trough. Continue a high level of nutritional management for early-weaned calves. Continue heifer development programs to reach target breeding weights, adjusting nutritional programs for declining forage quality. Provide additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls. Implement a nutritional program to get thin cows in proper body condition before next calving.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Fall calving is underway for many Mississippi herds. Complete any remaining preparations for calving. Purchase or assemble calving supplies, including calf identification tags and obstetric equipment. Maintain good calving records, including birth weights and information for age and source verification. Move fall-calving heifers and cows close to handling facilities, and observe cattle frequently. Separate the herd into calving and

nutritional management groups. Manage late-gestation females in calving pastures with adequate shade. After calving, plan to move cow-calf pairs to clean pasture to minimize calf health risk. Review yearling data collection age windows.

Collect yearling performance data, including weights, hip heights, scrotal circumference measurements, and ultrasound body composition scans. Use yearling performance reports to make further culls. Reserve higher quality forages and feedstuffs for these growing cattle. Schedule prebreeding vaccination needs. Manage bulls to start the next breeding season in good condition. Evaluate herd sire options for the next breeding season. Request information on upcoming bull sales. Check heifer weights, and adjust nutrition to meet breeding targets.

October

General Recommendations

Purchase supplemental feed. Harvest remaining hay cuttings. Ensure that hay harvesting equipment goes into the off-season in good repair. Summer pasture quality and availability rapidly decline this time of year. Watch nutrition closely when grazing crop residues. Take precautions to prevent prussic acid and nitrate poisoning. Potassium fertilization is critical for bermudagrass going into winter. Monitor for fall armyworms in forages. Observe annual ryegrass for blast. Warm, humid conditions increase blast likelihood.

Follow up on cool-season forage program implementation. Watch body condition, and group the herd into winter-feeding groups. Match forage and feeding programs to the nutritional needs of each group. Heat stress conditions are still possible in some areas, so manage cattle appropriately. Horn and face fly season is ending in most areas. Remove remaining insecticidal fly tags. This is still hurricane season.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Finish weaning late calves using weaning strategies that minimize calf stress. Use weaning performance reports to determine which cattle to retain. Identify and cull bulls that have sired calf groups well below herd performance averages. Vaccinate cattle based on veterinary advice. Train calves to eat from a bunk and drink from a water trough. Continue a high level of nutritional management for early-weaned calves. After weaning, cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance. Permanently identify replacement heifers, and implement a heifer development plan. Separate bred heifers from cows, and provide adequate nutrition as fall forage quality declines.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Fall calving is well underway for many Mississippi herds.

Assemble calving supplies. Separate the cow herd into calving and nutritional management groups. Cows need to be in moderately good condition before calving. Maintain good calving records including birth weights and information for age and source verification. Move fall calvers close to handling facilities and observe frequently. Manage late-gestation females in pastures with adequate shade. Move pairs to clean pasture to minimize calf health risk. Collect yearling data in proper age windows. Schedule an ultrasound field technician in advance. Use performance reports to cull yearlings. Reserve higher quality forages and feedstuffs for growing cattle. Schedule pre-breeding vaccinations. Breeding is now 1 to 2 months away for most herds. Check heifer weights, and adjust nutrition to meet breeding targets. Provide good nutrition for lactating cattle approaching breeding.

November

General Recommendations

Modify winter supplementation needs based on forage availability and quality. Watch body condition, and group cattle into winter-feeding groups. Service feeding equipment. Supplementation may be needed on residual summer grazing. Offer hay before forage availability becomes limiting. Implement management intensive grazing systems. Examine annual ryegrass for blast, particularly after warm, humid conditions.

Watch for lice, and treat cattle as needed. Remove any remaining insecticidal ear tags. Follow up on internal parasite control practices. This is the last month of hurricane season for the region. Stay vigilant. Make any final plans for ranch expenditures and marketings this tax year.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Check weaned calves regularly for health problems, and make sure the nutritional program is providing adequate gains. If culling is not complete, finish it this month. Implement calf preconditioning, marketing, or retained ownership plans. This time of year is often ideal for marketing cows and bulls. Calving may begin in December in some herds. Order calving supplies.

Check bred heifers frequently. Allow bulls to rest and regain condition. Provide additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls. Market bulls that will not be used in future breeding seasons. Start identifying needs for herd sire replacements, and consider purchasing bulls at upcoming sales. Replacement heifers likely need to grow at a rate of 1 to 1.5 pounds per day to meet target breeding weights. Separate bred heifers from the cows, and provide adequate nutrition. Monitor body condition closely,

and supplement thin cattle. Feed lower quality forages to dry, pregnant cows, saving the best forages for calving season.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Fall calving is wrapping up for many herds. Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as appropriate. Keep good calving records, including calf birth weights and information for age and source verification. Continue frequent observation of late-gestation fall calvers. Manage them in calving pastures near cattle-handling facilities. After calving, move cow-calf pairs to clean pasture to minimize calf health risk. Restock calving supplies, including calf identification tags as needed.

Cow nutrient needs increase dramatically after calving. Provide good nutrition for lactating cattle approaching breeding. Start feeding a high-magnesium mineral supplement about 30 days before lactating cattle are turned out onto lush winter pastures. Cattle may be nearing the end of yearling data collection age windows. Collect and report yearling data. Reserve higher quality feedstuffs for growing cattle, such as yearlings.

December

General Recommendations

Modify winter supplementation based on the forage situation. Offer hay before forage availability becomes limiting. Protein and Vitamin A supplementation may be needed on remaining summer grazing. Manage winter annual pastures to maintain at least 4 inches of stubble height.

Limit-grazing for a few hours per day is a good way to use winter forages efficiently. Stockers and fall cow-calf pairs are good groups to use lush winter grazing. Service feeding equipment. Group the herd into winter-feeding groups, such as average condition cows, thin cows, and first-calf heifers. Match forage and feeding programs to the nutritional needs of each group. Cold, wet conditions increase cattle energy requirements. Provide high-magnesium supplementation on lush winter grazing. Watch for signs of grass tetany. Monitor cattle for lice. Make end-of-year plans, considering impacts on upcoming income taxes. Plan a holiday labor schedule.

Spring-Calving Recommendations

Check breeding records for expected calving dates. Make sure calving supplies are on hand. Observe cattle closely as calving approaches, particularly bred heifers. Nutritional requirements increase about 10 to 15 percent in the last 30 to 45 days of gestation. Do not underfeed in an attempt to reduce calf birth weight. Develop heifers to reach two-thirds of mature weight by breeding time in early spring. Supplement thin cows and heifers

as needed. Feed lower quality hay to dry cows, saving the best hay for calving season. Add weight and condition to cows identified as culls before marketing them. This is often an ideal time of year to market cows and bulls. Allow bulls to rest and regain condition in small pasture traps. Provide additional nutrients to thin or growing bulls. Identify herd sire replacement needs. Purchase bulls with performance information.

Fall-Calving Recommendations

Fall calving is wrapping up or completed for most herds. Calculate fall calving percentage. Observe any remaining late-gestation cattle frequently. Manage these females in calving pastures near cattle handling facilities. Move cow-calf pairs

to clean pasture to minimize calf health risk. Watch calves for scours. Restock calving supplies as needed. Complete prebreeding vaccinations. Have breeding supplies and herd sires on hand. Breeding is already underway in some herds and begins this month in other herds. Breed heifers ahead of the cow herd. Heifers should be of sufficient weight and on an increasing plane of nutrition at breeding. Provide excellent nutrition to lactating cows. Feed the best quality forages now. Turn out fertile, sound, well-conditioned bulls that complement herd females and marketing objectives. Watch for returns to heat. Rotate herd sires if needed. Keep accurate breeding records. Cattle may be nearing the end of yearling data collection age windows. Yearling cattle are still growing and need high-quality forages and feeds.

January

General

- ▶ Control lice
- ▶ Supplement as needed (energy, protein, vitamin A)
- ▶ Prevent grass tetany
- ▶ Gather income tax records
- ▶ Set yearly goals

Spring-calving

- ▶ Monitor calving
- ▶ Acquire herd sires, semen, and breeding supplies
- ▶ Collect yearling data

Fall-calving

- ▶ End breeding

February

General

- ▶ Control lice
- ▶ Supplement as needed (energy, protein, vitamin A)
- ▶ Prevent grass tetany
- ▶ Fertilize cool-season forages
- ▶ Control weeds
- ▶ Collect soil samples
- ▶ Gather income tax records

Spring-calving

- ▶ Monitor calving
- ▶ Acquire herd sires, semen, and breeding supplies
- ▶ Collect yearling data

Fall-calving

- ▶ Diagnose pregnancy
- ▶ Cull non-pregnant females

March

General

- ▶ Control lice
- ▶ Prevent grass tetany
- ▶ Control weeds
- ▶ Service forage harvesting equipment
- ▶ Prepare income taxes

Spring-calving

- ▶ Monitor calving
- ▶ Administer pre-breeding vaccinations and deworming
- ▶ Acquire herd sires, semen, and breeding supplies
- ▶ Perform BSEs on herd sires
- ▶ Collect yearling data

Fall-calving

- ▶ Diagnose pregnancy
- ▶ Cull non-pregnant females
- ▶ Plan pre-weaning vaccinations

April

General

- ▶ Prevent grass tetany
- ▶ Start fly control as needed
- ▶ Deworm cattle
- ▶ Plant warm-season forages
- ▶ Fertilize warm-season forages
- ▶ Meet income tax deadline

Spring-calving

- ▶ Begin breeding

Fall-calving

- ▶ Wean calves (deworm and vaccinate)
- ▶ Precondition calves
- ▶ Cull herd for performance and health
- ▶ Select replacements
- ▶ Deworm adults at weaning

May

General

- ▶ Provide adequate shade
- ▶ Reduce cattle heat stress
- ▶ Control flies
- ▶ Plant warm-season forages
- ▶ Fertilize warm-season forages

Spring-calving

- ▶ Continue breeding

Fall-calving

- ▶ Wean calves (deworm and vaccinate)
- ▶ Precondition calves
- ▶ Cull herd for performance and health
- ▶ Select replacements
- ▶ Deworm adults at weaning

June

General

- ▶ Provide adequate shade
- ▶ Reduce cattle heat stress
- ▶ Control flies
- ▶ Test stored forage for quality
- ▶ Monitor feed prices
- ▶ Be prepared as hurricane season begins

Spring-calving

- ▶ End breeding season

Fall-calving

- ▶ Precondition calves

July

General

- ▶ Provide adequate shade
- ▶ Reduce cattle heat stress
- ▶ Control flies
- ▶ Deworm adults and yearlings
- ▶ Test stored forage for quality
- ▶ Monitor feed prices
- ▶ Be prepared as hurricane season continues

Spring-calving

- ▶ Diagnose pregnancy
- ▶ Cull non-pregnant females

Fall-calving

- ▶ Prepare for calving

August

General

- ▶ Provide adequate shade
- ▶ Reduce cattle heat stress
- ▶ Control flies
- ▶ Test stored forage for quality
- ▶ Monitor feed prices
- ▶ Be prepared as hurricane season continues

Spring-calving

- ▶ Diagnose pregnancy
- ▶ Cull non-pregnant females
- ▶ Plan pre-weaning vaccinations

Fall-calving

- ▶ Prepare for calving

September

General

- ▶ Provide adequate shade
- ▶ Reduce cattle heat stress
- ▶ Control flies
- ▶ Plant cool-season forages
- ▶ Fertilize cool-season forages
- ▶ Test stored forage for quality
- ▶ Monitor feed prices
- ▶ Be prepared as hurricane season continues

Spring-calving

- ▶ Wean calves (deworm and vaccinate)
- ▶ Precondition calves
- ▶ Cull herd for performance and health
- ▶ Select replacements
- ▶ Deworm adults at weaning

Fall-calving

- ▶ Monitor calving
- ▶ Acquire herd sires, semen, and breeding supplies
- ▶ Collect yearling data

October

General

- ▶ Monitor feed prices
- ▶ Supplement as needed (energy, protein, vitamin A)
- ▶ Plant cool-season forages
- ▶ Fertilize cool-season forages
- ▶ Be prepared as hurricane season continues

Spring-calving

- ▶ Wean calves (deworm and vaccinate)
- ▶ Precondition calves
- ▶ Cull herd for performance and health
- ▶ Select replacements
- ▶ Deworm adults at weaning

Fall-calving

- ▶ Monitor calving
- ▶ Administer pre-breeding vaccinations and deworming
- ▶ Acquire herd sires, semen, and breeding supplies
- ▶ Perform BSEs on herd sires
- ▶ Collect yearling data

November

General

- ▶ Control lice
- ▶ Monitor feed prices
- ▶ Supplement as needed (energy, protein, vitamin A)
- ▶ Be prepared as hurricane season continues
- ▶ Plan holiday labor

Spring-calving

- ▶ Prepare for calving
- ▶ Precondition calves

Fall-calving

- ▶ Monitor calving
- ▶ Begin breeding
- ▶ Acquire herd sires, semen, and breeding supplies
- ▶ Collect yearling data

December

General

- ▶ Control lice
- ▶ Supplement as needed (energy, protein, vitamin A)
- ▶ Prevent grass tetany
- ▶ Plan holiday labor
- ▶ Make end-of-year tax purchases and sales

Spring-calving

- ▶ Prepare for calving

Fall-calving

- ▶ Continue breeding



Publication 2613 (POD-05-23)

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Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. ANGUS L. CATCHOT JR., Director