

# FEED FOR THOUGHT

News For Cattlemen From Suga-Lik® A Product Of U.S. Sugar Corp.

## Manage Replacement Heifers for Profits

Pat Whidden, PAS

The most significant factor influencing profitability is reproductive performance. Percent calf crop = number of calves weaned ÷ number of cows in the breeding herd at the start of breeding season. Another measure to consider using is pounds of calf weaned per cow in the breeding herd. Here's an example of a 100 cow herd with an 85% calf crop and an average weaning weight of 550 lbs. – (85 calves x 550 lbs./calf) ÷ 100 cows in the breeding herd = 467½ pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed. This is useful to better calculate the break-even price of calves sold. For example, if annual cow costs are \$325, then break-even is 70¢ per lb. In order to lower the break-even, the factors are lower cow costs, higher percent calf crop and heavier weaning weights. Cows calving early in the calving season improve the profitability in two ways: their calves are heavier at weaning and they tend to have better rebreeding rates. This clearly relates to heifers because good heifer management produces a uniform group of heifers that tend to conceive early in the first breeding season, will calve early in their first calving season and tend to remain early calvers the rest of their lives, weaning the heaviest calves.

### Replacement Heifer Management Outline

#### I. Selection at Weaning

- Keep heifers with heavy weaning weights.
- Keep about 15% more heifers than actually needed.
- Select heifers based on parental performance.
- Avoid heifers with structural defects.

#### II. Weaning to Breeding

- Determine desired target weight (weight at puberty). See Table 1.
- Calculate daily weight gain needed to achieve target weight.
- Work with your Suga-Lik® representative to design the best feeding program to achieve the desired daily gain. We have computer models to assist this.

Table 1. Estimated Weights for Heifers at Puberty\*

	Percent Heifers in Heat		
	50	70	90
Angus	550	600	650
Brahman	675	725	750
Brangus	600	650	700
Charolais	700	750	775
Hereford	600	650	700
Brahman x British	675	725	750
Charolais x British	675	725	775
Limousin x British	650	700	775
Simmental x British	625	675	750

\*Source: Texas A & M University

#### III. Breeding

- Cull heifers with unsoundness, illness, etc.
- Turn bulls in with heifers about 30 days before the mature cow herd.
- Use bulls with a history of calving ease.
- Remove bulls after about 70 days.

#### IV. After Breeding

- Pregnancy check about 60 days after the bulls are removed.
- Cull open heifers and market the best way.
- Keep heifers separate from the mature cow herd.
- Work with your Suga-Lik® representative to design a feeding program that will allow heifers to achieve at least 85% of their expected mature weight by calving. Heifers should have a Body Condition Score (BCS) of 5 or 6 at calving or rebreeding rates will be poor.

#### V. Calving

- Continue to keep heifers separate from the mature cow herd.
- Work with your Suga-Lik® representative to design a feeding program to maintain BCS through calving and rebreeding.

## GMP's: Good Maintenance Practices

Randy Samko

**A**nother summer is here! As you list the projects that need done, be sure you include taking care of your liquid supplement equipment. As you know, with any equipment, good maintenance can increase its longevity as well as help with product performance.

### Feeders

Clean out your feeders for storage until next fall. Lick wheel feeders should have the lids taken off (if your type has removable lids) and thoroughly washed out. The wheel assemblies should be inspected for damage to be repaired or replaced. Store feeders upside down to prevent rainwater and other debris from falling into them and contaminating that first load in the early fall.

### Storage Tanks

Storage tanks also need to be cleaned. Whether your storage tanks are metal or poly, yearly cleaning is essential. Suga-Lik® molasses-based supplements contain a lot of dry matter, over 75% in some products. When a molasses-based product sits for a period of time (i.e., over the summer) without agitation, the dry matter can settle and the small amount of moisture can evaporate, which may make the product difficult to

handle when you pump it for the first time next feeding season. The material removed from the storage tank can be fed to your cattle rather than disposing of it. Try to avoid feeding metal/rust flakes, as it can cause "hardware disease." After cleaning your storage tank, inspect it for wear or damage, then repair while the tank is empty. Check that your valves are working properly, now is the time to replace them if needed. This same process should also be applied to your delivery tanks as well.

### Pumps and Motors

Pumps and motors can be expensive to replace, and should be maintained properly. If your pump has been leaking or running slow, have it rebuilt or replaced. Check with your pump supplier for parts and help in rebuilding it. The best way to store your pump for the off season is, first, run some water through it. Then to avoid rust, while not running, pour some vegetable oil into the inlet port and turn the shaft by hand to get ample oil coating on the gears.

With just a little time invested this summer, you can save a lot of aggravation next feeding season. You can look forward to your next load of Suga-Lik® Liquid Supplement in September.

### VI. Second Breeding Season

- A. If your first calf heifers have poor BCS's and/or you are short of feed/pasture, consider early weaning their calves by 30 to 60 days of age. Try to background these little calves, they'll bring a high price per pound.
- B. Start this breeding season the same time as the mature cow herd. Remove the bulls after 70-80 days.
- C. Pregnancy check 60 days after the bulls are removed.
- D. Cull open heifers.

### STATEMENT REGARDING BSE

U. S. Sugar values and is committed to properly serving the cattle industry. Therefore, U. S. Sugar's Molasses & Liquid Feed Department does not purchase or blend "restricted use ruminant derived protein products" at its Clewiston Liquid Feed Plant. This facility complies with FDA's CFR 589.2000 Final Rule. Prohibited mammalian protein is not used at all in this facility.

**DEALERS**

**SUGA-LIK®**

**Altha**  
Altha Farmers Co-op  
850-762-3161

**Arcadia**  
Walpole Feed & Supply  
863-763-6905

**Branford**  
Mayo Fertilizer & Farm Supply  
904-294-2024

**DeFuniak Springs**  
West FL Farmers Co-op  
850-892-5522

**Lake Butler**  
Lake Butler Farm Center  
904-496-3921

**Lake Helen**  
Phil McClure's Feeds  
904-734-0095

**Lakeland**  
Kathleen Cash Feed  
941-858-3123

**Mayo**  
Mayo Fertilizer & Farm Supply  
904-294-2024

**Myakka City**  
Myakka Farm Supply  
941-322-1783

**Ocala**  
Seminole  
352-732-4143

**Okahumpka**  
Lasher Milling Co.  
352-787-4821

**Okeechobee**  
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863-763-6905

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