



DROVERS

135TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR 1873-2008

Meeting the Hard Times Head-on

page 18

Retain or Sell

page 22

Wean Right

page 24



#BXNKS *****CAR-RT LOT**B-003
#0197948/CB/64
JL3 DR.14 JUL08 0011 #36 #537E
SHAD COX
MANAGER
NMSU CORONA RANGE & LSTK
PO BOX 392
CORONA NM 88318-0392



READER TIP

Brenda
Whetham
SOUTH DAKOTA

Easy ID, coming or going

ANIMAL ID Identification numbers on both the front and back of ear tags have proven useful for Bieber Red Angus Ranch. Craig Bieber says a few years ago he was brainstorming ideas with Iowa State University professors Doyle Wilson and Gene Rouse, and they determined that it would be helpful for buyers during an auction if the animal's lot number was also visible on the back of the ear tag, so one could see the lot number when the animal was walking away from a potential bidder. Bieber



says, "Our cow boss, Craig Howard, took that idea and placed the dam's ID number on the back of calf tags, so when we are pairing-up cows and calves it would be easier to see when the calf was walking away. It really makes it easier for everyone when pairing-up."

Mastitis treatments benefit calves

ANIMAL HEALTH Researchers at Oklahoma State University recently conducted a trial testing the effects of antibiotic treatments for mastitis in cows and subsequent performance of nursing calves. Using 197 spring-calving Angus and Angus-Hereford cross cows, the researchers gave half the cows antibiotic infusions to each udder quarter and left the other half untreated. They collected milk samples at weaning and again eight to 14 days after calving the following spring, and analyzed the samples for somatic cell counts. They weighed each calf at birth and every 30 days until weaning in October. Treatment reduced the number of cows infected after calving, the number of cows developing new infections and the number of infected udder quarters after calving that were infected at weaning. Among dams that were infected at the prior weaning, calves from treated dams averaged 44 pounds heavier at 110 days of age but weighed the same at weaning. Among all the calves weaned at 205 days of age, the heaviest were from treated cows that were not infected at weaning the year before. The authors conclude that treatment reduced infection and improved weight gain in calves.



Backgrounding on pasture versus drylot

MANAGEMENT Holding calves in a post-weaning backgrounding program offers well-documented health benefits and can increase pay weights significantly, but production costs are critical to returns. Researchers at New Mexico State University ran trials over three years comparing 45-day post-weaning programs using either pasture or drylot feeding.

Each year the researchers weaned 250 crossbred steer and heifer calves, averaging 519 pounds, around Oct. 1. Half of the calves spent the next 42 to 45 days on central-New Mexico native range that had not been grazed the prior spring and summer. They supplemented the pasture calves with 3 pounds per head of 32 percent crude protein cubes three times each week. The drylot calves received 10 pounds of alfalfa hay and 5 pounds of 16 percent crude protein pellets consisting largely of corn and wheat middlings. They gradually increased the pellets to 10 pounds per day by day seven and reduced the hay to 1.5 to 2.5 pounds per day by day 13. They weighed the calves halfway through and at the end of the 45-day backgrounding phase, then moved them to a feedlot.

During backgrounding, the pasture calves gained more up to the midpoint, but drylot calves gained more by the end of backgrounding. Feed costs during backgrounding, however, averaged \$60.84 per head for drylot calves and \$11.01 for pasture calves, including grazing fees. Net income for pasture calves during backgrounding averaged \$15.72 compared with a loss of \$28.87 for drylot calves. Through finishing, overall gains did not differ between the two groups, but sickness and death losses were higher for drylot calves. Carcass characteristics were similar for the two groups in this study, but the net income for the pasture calves was \$103 per head higher, partly due to the differences in death loss.