

September 2021

THE PANOLA EXTENSION

A Monthly Newsletter by the Panola County AgriLife Extension office



Panola County AgriLife Extension Service

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UP COMING EVENTS:

9/3: Annual ETX Regional Forage Conference, 8:15am, Hallsville

9/5: Walk Across Texas! Begins

9/7: 4-H Council & A.L.P.A. Meeting, 5:45pm & 6:30pm, Expo

9/10: Master Gardeners Meeting, Noon, Expo

9/23: Harrison/Panola Wildlife Informational Meeting, 5pm, Marshall

9/24: East Texas State Fair in Tyler Begins

9/28: Steer Validation for PCJLS, 6-7pm, Carthage Vet Hospital

10/3: National 4-H Week

10/4: 4-H Council & A.L.P.A. Meeting, 5:45pm & 6:30pm, Expo

10/7: Ag Industry Breakfast Meeting, 7am, Expo Hall

10/8: Master Gardeners Meeting, Noon, Expo

10/19: Heifer Validation for Major Shows, 6-7pm

10/21: Panola County Hay Show, 6pm, Expo

In This Issue:

- National Cholesterol Education Month
- Wildlife Information Meeting
- Walk Across Texas!
- September 4-H Meetings
- Getting Started with Show Broilers
- Fall Lawn Care Guide
- Diet & Exercise: Choices Today for a Healthier Tomorrow
- Fall Season Pasture Weed Control Tips
- Bull Management for Cow/Calf Producers

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



National Cholesterol Education Month

National Cholesterol Education Month is observed during the month of September to increase awareness of our cholesterol levels and to educate on ways to achieve healthy cholesterol levels. Education is important as high blood cholesterol is asymptomatic and is one of the major risk factors for heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in the United States.

Cholesterol is a waxy fat-like substance required by our bodies to make hormones. It is also a major component in cell membranes and aids in digestion. Cholesterol is produced in our bodies and can be found in some of the foods we consume. Cholesterol is carried in our bloodstream through particles called lipoproteins. There are two major types of these lipoproteins: high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein (LDL). High density lipoproteins are often called the “good” cholesterol while low-density lipoproteins are called the “bad” cholesterol. When there is too much LDL cholesterol in the bloodstream, this can build up in the artery walls and can affect heart function and increase your risk of heart disease.

Behaviors such as lack of physical activity, consuming an unhealthy diet, and smoking can contribute to negatively effect your cholesterol levels. Other factors for high blood cholesterol include:

·**Overweight or obesity**- Physical inactivity, unhealthy eating patterns, and excess weight can lead to high blood cholesterol.

·**Diabetes-Type 2 diabetes** can lead to an increase in LDL or “bad” cholesterol and a decrease in HDL or “good” cholesterol.

·**Older age**- As an individual ages, risk increases as the body is unable to get rid of cholesterol as efficiently.

·**Being male**- Men have a tendency to have higher “bad” cholesterol and lower “good” cholesterol than women. Once women reach the age of menopause (around 55 years of age), LDL levels in women have shown to increase.

·**A family history of heart disease or high blood cholesterol**- Individuals with family members that have high blood cholesterol can have a higher risk. This increased risk could be hereditary or due to similarity in lifestyles.

·**History of high cholesterol**- Having a history of high cholesterol can increase your risk of recurrence.

Since high cholesterol does not exhibit any symptoms, getting your cholesterol screened is important. According to the American Heart Association, it is recommended that adults 20 years or older with a low risk should have their cholesterol and traditional risk factors checked every four to six years. The frequency of cholesterol screens should increase for individuals that have a higher cardiovascular risk. Frequency of screenings, as well as overall treatment plans, will vary from person to person and should be provided by your doctor and care team.



While some risk factors of high cholesterol can be inherited, others can be brought about by lifestyle behaviors. While those can cause an increase in risk, there are behavior changes that can be made to help your cholesterol levels and reduce your risk, such as incorporating a healthy eating pattern, engaging in physical activity, quitting smoking, and taking medications as prescribed. A healthy well- balanced eating pattern can vary but should include fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein; it should also be limited in saturated fat, trans fats, added sugars, and sodium. According to the Center for Disease Control, it is recommended that adults should aim for 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking or biking, and include

muscle strengthening activities at least two days per week, such as lifting weights or resistance training. By quitting smoking, individuals can help to lower their LDL or “bad” cholesterol and increase their HDL or “good” cholesterol. Lifestyle modifications can help lower cholesterol levels but individuals often need assistance to lower levels with prescription medications. These medications are important in your treatment plan and should be taken as prescribed.

To discuss your risk and ensure your cholesterol levels are within normal ranges contact your health care provider. For more information on National Cholesterol Education Month, contact your Panola county extension agent Clarissa Moon at Clarissa.moon@ag.tamu.edu. CDC.Gov and heart.org are also great sources of information.



Panola / Harrison Counties

WILDLIFE INFORMATION MEETING

September 23 | Marshall Civic Center | 5:00pm

The Panola County Forestry and Natural Resources Committee will be hosting the Annual Panola/Harrison Wildlife Information Meeting on the evening of Thursday September 23, 2021, at the Marshall Civic Center. This year’s program is sponsored by the Panola and Harrison County AgriLife Extension offices in partnership with Panola and Harrison County Natural Resource Conservation Services and Soil and water conservation Districts. The Wildlife Information Meeting will begin at 5:00 p.m. with Vendor and Exhibitors booths along with a meal sponsored by the Panola and Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District at 6 pm. Presentations from our speakers will start promptly at the conclusion of the meal.

I thank former President Theodore Roosevelt said it best, “To waste, to destroy our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in an undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed.” It is with those thought in mind we have the following topics to be presented during the annual Wildlife Meeting which will

cover Feral Hog Management strategies, utilizing multiple approaches for the control of population numbers. Additionally, we will have topics covering management of our local deer populations as well as hearing from local game wardens about changes to different hunting regulations.

When you walk out of the civic center on the night of September 23rd, we want you to walk away feeling confident in your knowledge of the requirements and qualification for controlling our feral hog populations. Speakers scheduled for the evening are Dr. Aaron Sumrall, County Extension Agent Matagorda County and Game Warden Darrin Peebles.

Throughout the evening, there will be several opportunities to win door prizes which are donated by area businesses. For more information call Lee Dudley in the Panola County AgriLife Extension office at (903) 693-0300 Ext 161. We do ask if you are planning on attending this program to RSVP by September 20, 2021, by calling (903) 693-0300 Ext 161.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WALK ACROSS TEXAS!

CLICK HERE
TO REGISTER!!!

Sept. 5 - Oct. 30

WORK AS A TEAM TO MAKE YOUR WAY ACROSS THE STATE OF TEXAS!

8 weeks | 832 Miles

Teams can consist of 3-8 people. Don't have a team?
Don't worry. Send Clarissa an email and she'll assign you one!

HERE ARE SOME FAQ'S ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Visit HowdyHealth.org to create a profile and do a short pre-program survey.

IS THERE A COST?

NO, it's FREE!

DO I HAVE TO WALK?

You can do **any** sort of physical activity! You can count minutes you've spent **gardening, biking, push-mowing, etc.** Any activity that **raises your heart rate** counts.

WHO IS THE WAT! PROGRAM FOR?

Anyone who wants a **fun, motivational team** approach to being **more active**. There are adult and youth versions of the program.

HOW DO I JOIN A TEAM?

Team captains will create a team in Howdy health. They can invite members to the team via email within the system OR they can give you a team code that you will put in when you register.



Panola County 2021 League Code (for anyone in the community): watL-210803-06362

Panola County CIVIC GROUPS League Code (if members of a civic group want to compete against other groups): watL-210811-84293

Panola County 2021 YOUTH League Code: watLY-210817-74666

Stay tuned for Walk Across Texas! updates on our website and [Facebook page](#). If you want more information on the program, visit <https://panola.agrilife.org/family-and-consumer-health/walk-across-texas/>

September 4-H MEETINGS!



4-H Council

Sept. 7 | 5:45pm | Expo Hall

ALPA Meeting

Adult Leaders & Parents Association
Sept. 7 | 6:30pm | Expo Hall

Beckville 4-H:

Sept. 27 | 6pm | Beckville Sunset Elementary
Brandy Dudley (903) 690-1108

Carthage 4-H:

Sept. 28 | 6pm | Expo Hall
Tara Harris (903) 754-4245

Fairplay 4-H:

Sept. 13 | 6pm | Allison Chapel in Fairplay
Eric Pellham (903) 754-2582

Gary 4-H:

Sept. 20 | 6pm | Gary ISD Cafeteria
Jennifer Whitby (903) 692-1729

Shooting Sports 4-H:

Sept. 27 | 6:30pm | Expo Hall
Sabrina Scott (903) 930-9836

Stillwaters 4-H

Sept. 20 | 6:30pm | Stillwaters Church
Corie Young (903) 692-7737





Getting Started with SHOW BROILERS

By: Morgan Farnell and Craig Coufal

A broiler is a chicken bred specifically to grow muscle efficiently and be eaten. Raising broiler chickens is an excellent youth project for beginners to livestock exhibiting. Chickens are considerably easier to handle, require less space, and are less expensive than other species.

Advantages of starting with show broilers

- **Project is short term:** It typically takes only 6 weeks to raise a broiler to market weight.
- **Less feed:** A broiler chicken eats less than 2 pounds of feed for every pound of body weight gain. Therefore, a 6-pound broiler requires only 12 pounds of feed to complete its 6 weeks grow- out cycle.
- **Equal chance to succeed:** All chicks that students receive for a show are provided by a single hatchery. The chicks are the same breed and hatched on the same day. The birds are wing banded and randomly assigned to each student. This removes all bias in the selection of chicks and their assignment to the participants.
- **Chickens are easy to handle:** The birds are not intimidating, and most youngsters can easily handle a 6-to-8-pound broiler.
- **Relatively low cost:** The chicks typically cost less than \$2 each. The cost of the project will depend on the number of birds that a student can house and care for, starting with 25 chicks costs less than \$50. Housing can also be simple and inexpensive, especially if you keep the birds in an existing structure.

- **Requires little room:** Show birds can be raised in a backyard or a garage; they do not need a large amount of land.
- **Pen is lightweight:** Simple, inexpensive materials such as PVC pipe, nylon cable ties, and poultry netting can be used to construct a 10 foot by 10 foot broiler pen (Table 1). The pen must be housed in a shed or garage to protect the broilers from the elements.
- **Can be raised in town:** Broilers can often be raised in urban areas where larger animals would be impractical. In fact, it is recommended that broilers be raised indoors to maximize growth and prevent attack by predators. Many city ordinances and homeowners' associations allow chickens for youth projects to be raised in town. Be sure to check with local laws and regulations before ordering chicks.
- **Provides meat:** Most livestock show require entrants to bring a pen of three broilers, and most exhibitors also bring one or two alternates to the show. The remaining birds can be processed and eaten.
- **Cost benefit ratio:** A broiler chicken project costs little compared to the prize money a student can win. The investment and risk involved in a broiler project are much lower than for other animals.

For help with raising broilers for show, contact the local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service County agent or an Agriculture science teacher.

Additional information is available at:

[Texas A&M Poultry Science](#)

[AgriLife Bookstore](#)

Table 1. Estimated cost of feed and materials for raising 25 broiler chicks for 6 weeks.

Description	Unit cost	Units	Total cost
Chicks	\$2 per chick	25	\$50.00
Feed	\$0.30 per lb	300	\$90.00
Hanging tube feeder	\$25 ea	2	\$50.00
Hanging waterer	\$25 ea	2	\$50.00
Infrared heat lamp	\$15 ea	2	\$30.00
Poultry netting	\$0.15 per sq ft	300	\$45.00
1 in. PVC tubing (Sch 40)	\$3.22 per 10 ft section	10	\$32.20
1 in. PVC tees (Sch 40)	\$0.56 each	8	\$4.48
1 in. PVC elbows (Sch 40)	\$0.44 each	16	\$7.04
Pipe glue	\$4.44 per 8 oz bottle	1	\$4.44
Nylon wire ties – 14 in.	\$12.09 per bag of 100	1	\$12.09
Nylon wire ties – 8 in.	\$13.46 per bag of 500	1	\$13.46
Box fans	\$15.96 per fan	2	\$31.92
Pine shavings	\$4.49 per bag	4	\$17.96
Plastic sheeting	\$9.98 per 10 ft x 25 ft roll	1	\$9.98
Total cost			\$448.57

Fall Lawn Care Guide

FOR PANOLA COUNTY

By Lee Dudley

Many homeowners are too involved in mowing grass to think about fertilizing turf in the fall and if the truth be known, most are ready for the grass to go dormant. However, should the gardener have to choose one time to feed the lawn during the year, the fall application is the most important application.

Traditionally, fall application of nitrogen was avoided because it was thought to reduce cold hardiness. Contrary to this early belief, high nitrogen content in the foliage will increase the cold hardiness of our area turf grasses. Nitrogen levels show little effect on winterkill but have a great influence on the uptake of phosphorus and potassium. Also, it is not so much the nitrogen content at the ratio between nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium that affect cold hardiness. Thus, a fertilizer high in nitrogen and potassium and low in phosphorus should be used for the fall application. A 3-1-2 slow-release formula such as 15-5-10 is recommended.

Fall Application of a properly balanced fertilizer will not only prolong color retention and extend the usefulness of the turf but also it will increase root growth and energy reserves heading into the winter months. These stored up energy reserves allow our turf grasses to resume growth earlier in the spring than grass not receiving a late application of fertilizer. In addition, the timing of the spring fertilizer is not as critical when a late fall application is made, allowing the spring application to be delayed even until late April, keeping it in line with warmer temperatures and best grass growth responses.

Other fall lawn tips include checking for brown patch fungus on St. Augustine and Centipede lawns. Moist, cool conditions encourage the disease which appears as yellowing and browning, irregular, circular patterns. A good "rule of thumb" to follow on warm-season grasses is to initiate fungicide sprays when nighttime low temperatures reach 70° F. Stop applications when nighttime lows are forecast to be below 70° F for five consecutive days. Typically, applications are made at 14-day intervals. Alternating fungicides from one treatment to the next will help prevent buildup and resistance to the chemical. Slightly better control may be obtained by a liquid fungicide application rather than by granular application.





JUNIOR MASTER Photographer

Grades 7-12 | \$30 per workshop

Workshop 1: Dallas, Sept. 25

Register Aug. 20 - Sept. 20

Workshop 2: TBD, Dec. 4

Register Nov. 1 - Dec. 1

D5 4-H Junior LEADERSHIP LAB

October 22-23

Pineywoods Camp | Woodlake, TX

\$80 per youth camper | Grades 3-8

REGISTRATION SEPTEMBER 3 - OCTOBER 1

Entomology | Archery | Food & Nutrition

Outdoor Leadership | Zip Lining



Livestock Validation Dates

*Denotes Animal must be present at the time of Validation.

PANOLA CO. JR. LIVESTOCK SHOW:

Steers*: Sept. 28, 6-7 pm @ Carthage Veterinary Hospital

Market Barrow*, Lamb*, and Goat*: November 21, 2-3 pm, Location Panola Expo Center

Pen of Heifers*: November 28, 2-3 pm, Location TBA

Breeding Heifers, Gilts, and Rabbits: All Entries turned into the office by November 30.

Market Broilers: All entries due into the Extension office by December 15

Market Rabbits*: Entry forms due at Validation February 3, 6-7pm at Panola County Expo Center

Animals attending a Texas Major Stock show:

Registered Heifer*: Oct. 19, 6-7pm @ Carthage Veterinary Hospital

Market Barrow* & Breeding Gilts*: November 21, 2-3 pm, Location: Panola County Expo Center

Market & Breeding Lamb* and Goat*: TBA Beckville FFA Lead Contact

Houston, San Antonio & Austin Broiler Order Date: TBA



Diet and Exercise

Choices **Today** for a Healthier **Tomorrow**

September is Healthy Aging month! The choices we make on a daily basis can lead to a brighter, healthier future. We've all heard that a healthy diet and exercise make us healthier now, but they're also important for giving us health in our later years. In fact, these lifestyle choices can often control or delay health issues associated with aging such as high blood pressure and diabetes. Set short-term goals, celebrate the small wins and make these 5 behaviors a priority each day.

Be physically active for at least 30 minutes a day most or all days of the week.

Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables

Choose foods that are low in added sugars, saturated fats and sodium

Pick whole grains and consume dairy and proteins that are lower in fat.

Practice all four types of exercise= endurance, strength, balance and flexibility.

For more information, visit nia.nih.gov or panola.agrilife.org
Diet and Exercise: Choices Today for a Healthier Tomorrow

HAY SHOW!

Oct. 21 | 6:00pm | Expo Hall

FORAGE SAMPLES ARE BEING COLLECTED!

First two samples are paid for by the SWCD,
\$5 for each additional sample. **Due Sept. 3**



FALL SEASON PASTURE WEED CONTROL TIPS

By Lee Dudley

As we slowly begin to cool down during the nights, it is an appropriate time to make a decision to manage certain weeds utilizing a systemic and/or pre-emergent herbicide in grass hay and pastures that have been mowed or grazed. Biennials such as bull and musk thistles are much easier to kill while they are in the rosette stage of growth and prior to surviving a winter. The same is true of the dandelions in your lawn. Once these weeds awake in the spring, they grow rapidly with the goal of reproducing, and it becomes more difficult to control them. Left untreated, thistles can produce numerous seeds that can be blown in the wind making the population for next year even bigger.

Controlling weeds before they emerge is often more effective than controlling them once they have been germinated. Utilizing pre-emergence herbicides in a timely manner can result in a long-lasting residual compound that provides extended weed control throughout the winter and into the spring months. Getting a jump start on weed control practices over the winter months translates into increased quality and production from the fields you and your animals rely on.

Now is the time to scout pastures and begin looking for thistles growing in the low, wetter areas. Thus, September-October can provide favorable conditions for applying weed control herbicide. But keep in mind that with both biennial and perennial species, adequate leaf tissue must be present, and it should be reasonably healthy to absorb the herbicide. In light infestations, a garden hoe or shovel can easily remove these from pastures. Herbicides are another option. The more active the weeds are growing, the better the herbicide performance. In general, the warmer the better, cold nights and cool, cloudy days reduce and slow the effectiveness of the applications.

Chemical Suggestions

2-4D	-----1 qt/acre
Grazon Next HL	-----2 pt/acre
Pasture Gard HL	-----1-1.5 pt/acre
Surmount	-----2 - 2.5 pt/acre
Rezilon	-----5 oz/acre single application or 3 oz/acre split fall and spring

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES TO KEEP IN MIND

1: Inventory your pastures for weedy trouble spots. Determine if overstocking is contributing to the problem and consider adjusting your grazing management plan to match available forage.

2: Identify the weeds of concern – then what will control them. Which herbicides you choose, and the recommended application rates, will vary by weed species and timing.

3: Spray the right rate at the right time. Annual weeds in pastures are generally most susceptible early in the season, when they're about 2" tall and actively growing, and when soil moisture is adequate. The lowest labeled rates will be effective then. A broad-spectrum herbicide with residual control at higher labeled rates will control weeds that germinate after spraying. Keep in mind that you'll need to increase herbicide rates as the plants advance in their life cycle.

4: Consider mowing – not spraying – drought-stressed or mature weeds. Weeds without adequate moisture that aren't actively growing will be difficult to control with herbicides. Don't spray unless you're willing to accept less control. Mowing biennial and perennial plants will set them up for fall treatment when they generate regrowth.

5: Follow label directions for application and mixing. For ground broadcast, apply the recommended herbicide rate in 10-20 gallons of total spray mixture per acre. For brush control, use at least 20 gallons/acre to ensure thorough coverage.

6: Use herbicides with good soil residual activity carefully. Herbicide-treated grasses may, for a time, carry a residue that can be transferred to the soil by hay, livestock manure or urine.

Quarterly **Ag Industry Breakfast** *Meeting*

October 7 | 7:00am | Expo Hall

Making plans for **Spring 2022 Herbicide applications**

TOPICS TO COVER: Winterizing Sprayers
Cool Season Herbicide Management Options
1 General C.E.U.



JOIN OUR AGRICULTURE MAILING LIST!!!

- *Upcoming Event Reminders*
- *Information on Various Topics in the Agriculture Industry*

FILL OUT THE FORM ON OUR WEBSITE UNDER THE AGRICULTURE TAB!

[OR CLICK HERE!](#)

BULL MANAGEMENT

for Cow/Calf Producers



By L.R. Sprott, B.B. Carpenter and T.A. Thrift

It is often said that a bull contributes half the production in a calf crop. This may be true for an average bull, but probably exaggerates contributions from a poor-quality bull and dramatically underestimates those from a good bull. A good bull offers both high fertility and high genetic breeding value for one or more economically important characteristics, such as growth, calving ease, maternal value and carcass quality.

Fertility in a bull is generally defined as the ability to impregnate females. Certainly, that is a minimum requirement, but a bull with high fertility can impregnate more than the expected number of cows in a short breeding season. Such a bull has greater economic value than one of lesser fertility (1). If the bull also has a desirable genetic background, it could contribute more than just half the production in a calf crop. Properly managing bulls from weaning through maturity will boost their contributions to herd productivity.

When selecting bull calves at or before weaning, breeders must carefully consider future genetic goals for the herd and base their decisions on economically important characteristics. After bull calves are chosen, whether for retention as replacements or for eventual sale, their growth and well-being depend mainly on disease prevention and adequate nutrition.

Whether in young or mature bulls, a fertility assessment is required before breeding performance can be predicted. For a bull to impregnate females, the requirements are more complicated than expected. Bulls should, of course, be essentially disease-free and in overall good health.

They then must have enough libido to pursue, mount and serve an estrus female. This involves travel over short or long distances in varying terrain, requiring sound feet and legs. Copulation requires functional genitalia free of abnormalities. Finally, quality sperm must be deposited.

No single test can assess each characteristic described above, but a breeding soundness exam (BSE) should be the minimum test performed annually on all breeding-age bulls. Examinations should be conducted about 60 days before breeding season starts. This not only allows time to replace bulls, if necessary, but also minimizes the time between examination and start of breeding. A BSE performed at the end of breeding can determine whether a bull has undergone any changes that may have compromised his expected performance during the breeding season. Veterinarians familiar with semen collection and evaluation can perform a BSE, which includes:

- Visual assessment of eyes, teeth, feet, legs, and external genitalia.
- Internal palpation of accessory sex organs (seminal vesicles and prostate);
- Electroejaculation for semen sample collection and sperm evaluation.
- Scrotal measurement; and
- Physical exposure and examination of genitalia.



Both functionality and longevity should be considered when evaluating bulls for structural correctness. The mouth, teeth and eyes are examined. Research has shown that good vision (7) is the most important sense a bull uses to detect estrus, though sense of smell may also contribute.

Typically, a bull-to-cow ratio of 1:25 is recommended. This ratio is normally adequate, but research shows that it can be wasteful, particularly for highly fertile bulls and in situations where bulls do not have to travel long distances to find cows. With proper management most breeds of bulls will reach puberty at 12-16 months of age and can be capable of breeding females. Not all yearling bulls will pass a BSE and some may be “borderline” pubertal and may be classified as “deferred”. They may be re-tested later if desired. For these reasons, it is especially important to do BSEs on yearling bulls. A lighter breeding ratio is usually appropriate for yearlings as well; usually around 1:15. To reduce the risk of injury to yearling bulls, they should not be grouped with older bulls.

Some producers prefer to separate and use younger bulls from older bulls which are usually dominant, especially if the younger bulls are genetically valuable and need more opportunity to breed females.

In multiple-sire pastures, dominant bulls may have access to more females than submissive bulls do. This is probably acceptable if the dominant bulls are indeed fertile, but dominant bulls with low semen quality or low serving capacity clearly impede good reproduction. Producers should remember that bull fertility has many components, making a complete fertility assessment complex.

A bull's degree of dominance may also be influenced by its weight. It may be beneficial to separate bulls by weight, but separation by age is likely to circumvent any dominance associated with size.

The following management techniques are recommended to ensure that bulls are given the best opportunity to contribute their fullest production potential and to reduce the chances of low fertility:

- Use bulls with acceptable genetic potential for economically important traits such as growth, carcass quality, maternal value and calving ease.
- Control disease with appropriate vaccinations (consult a veterinarian).
- Provide adequate nutrition from weaning age through maturity. Undernourished bulls are likely to have low fertility.
- An annual breeding soundness exam (BSE) should be conducted on all breeding-age bulls about six to eight weeks before the start of breeding. Do not use bulls that fail a BSE.
- Avoid bulls with small scrotal circumferences and extremely pendulous sheaths.
- Have bulls tested at least once for their fertility associated antigen (FAA) profile. Highest fertility can be expected from bulls with FAA on sperm.
- Observe bulls throughout breeding for their ability to mate. Perform serving-capacity tests when feasible. Bulls with low serving capacity settle fewer cows than high-serving-capacity bulls.
- Use separate breeding pastures for bulls less than 4 years old. Running them with older bulls may cause dominance problems, affording fewer chances for young bulls to mate.
- Cull bulls with poor vision, low semen quality, lack of desirable conformation and those producing inferior calves.



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