

River View Veterinary Service Newsletter

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News and Upcoming Events:

- It's time to start preparing for breeding season! Let us know if you need assistance with your breeding program!
- Check out the CowCalf 5 app for your smartphone for easy, cow-side records that we can help you manage!

*Welcome to the River View Veterinary Service Newsletter,
designed to provide cattle producers with
timely information and education on a variety of topics.
Sarah Foust, DVM and Terry Foust, DVM*

Breeding Season Prep: Focus on Bull Health and Nutrition

(Adapted from VitaFerm, 2018)

Breeding season is here. You've got your cows on a good supplement program and they are in great shape ready for breeding. But what about your bulls? For optimal performance, you should start preparing a bull for turnout as soon as he is pulled from the cows the previous breeding season.

About 30-60 days before turning out, producers should assess animal condition to make sure bulls aren't too thin or too fat going into the breeding season. Bulls should have a moderate Body Condition Score (BCS) around 6. If they are too thin, increase their energy gradually. Stepping up energy too fast can induce digestive upsets. Conversely, if a bull is too fat, slowly transition them to a less energy-dense ration. Bull diets need to be balanced for nutrients, and they need to have a good water source readily available. Promoting exercise can also play a role in reproductive success. Be sure to position feed and water sources to encourage movement and improve an animal's physical fitness.

Conduct a breeding soundness exam (BSE) 30-60 days prior to turnout, regardless of your bull's age, to confirm if your bull has the ability to cover cows and get them bred. When compared to the cost of using a sterile or sub-standard bull, the money invested in a BSE is well spent.

Finally, it's essential to have a herd health protocol established with your vet to determine when to administer vaccines, help with parasite control, and test for Trichomoniasis for herd biosecurity.

Preparing your bull for breeding season happens year-round, but as turnout approaches be sure your bull is in proper condition, has sound feet and legs, has passed a BSE and is ready from a nutritional standpoint. Following a few simple steps will help ensure reproductively sound bulls that are ready to help produce your next calf crop.