

River View Veterinary Service Newsletter

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News and Upcoming Events:

- Are you VFD ready? These rules take effect January 1, 2017. Ask us what you need to get ready!

*Welcome to the River View Veterinary Service Newsletter!
This newsletter is designed to provide cattle producers with
timely information and education on a variety of topics.*

Sarah Foust, DVM and Terry Foust, DVM

Cull the right cow

(adapted from B. Teichert, Beef Magazine Oct 2016)

Culling the right cow requires the development of a systems mindset and some good discipline. It does not require individual records on each cow and calf (although individual records can help). If you cull the right cows, your herd will be rapidly rid of problems that take your time and will slowly improve in income-generating traits. How do we cull the right cow without any paper or computerized records?

It starts with heifer calves. Sometime between weaning and breeding, you eliminate the “ugly” ones and the poor-doers. Then, expose the rest to bulls or AI for 30 days or fewer. Then eliminate those that don’t get pregnant. Yearling heifers that breed in the first cycle will produce about one more calf in a lifetime, and significantly more pounds of weaned calf, than those that conceive in the second cycle. Cull heifers that don’t breed early.

Also cull these cows:

- Opens. Replace them with a pregnant cow or heifer.
- Dries. These are expensive!
- Those that need individual attention – to pull calves, doctor, etc. Tag every replacement heifer when she is confirmed pregnant. Use a notching tool to notch tags of those you have to handle so you can find them after weaning.
- Those that raise poor calves.
- Those with poor disposition.
- “Ugly” ones by your definition (poor feet, legs, udders, etc.).

This is a simple process that takes little time for the producer that has a good mental picture of what a cow herd should look like and do. It can be done without paper records, but can be made easier with records.