

Back To Basics

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Cattlemen come to the University of Florida Beef Short Course to be updated on all the new ideas and discoveries our diversified industry has to offer. Yet we also need to be reminded of the basics. Such as:

- Cows cycle every 21 days
- Gestation of a calf = 283 +/- days
- Heal up to rebreed = 45 - 60 days
- To cycle a cow must be in good body condition or gaining weight
- Florida cattlemen spend about \$383 per cow per year¹
- Each cow needs to generate enough income to support her part of the cost
- Florida has an abundance of poor quality forage - cows use poor quality forage
- Parasites and diseases flourish in heat and humidity

Facts Cattlemen Should Remember in Order to Stay in Business

- \$ It's dollars received per head not price per pound
- \$ Producing cows carry the financial load or % of calves sold from total cows exposed is what counts not pregnancy rate
- \$ It's expensive to cull a producing cow
- \$ Marketing makes a difference in the breeding season
- \$ You can control inputs (God controls the weather)
- \$ You can match your calving to your grass

Ideas to Ponder

- Can I afford a cow that makes a calf every 14 months (cost \$448) or 16 months (cost \$512) or 18 months (cost \$575)?
- Could I raise lighter calves and net more

dollars?

- I could buy fewer better bulls ~ If I had
 - 2 - 90 day seasons - replacing a 180 day season
 - 2 - 60 day seasons - replacing a 120 day season
 - 4 - 90 day seasons - replacing year round
- Why not a 60-day vs 90-day season?
- Why not use the spring or fall flush of grass to get cows bred?
- Leasing native woods? Why not lease a small tame acre pasture to flush and breed your cows?

Why I Do What I Do

Priority Information List for Cow-Calf Producers²

1. Written objectives for the ranch business, preparation of will and other legal documents.
2. Land resource inventory - including grazing capacity or stocking rate by pasture.
3. Cash accounting IRS including annual review of the depreciation schedule.
4. Inventories for cattle at the beginning of the breeding season and at the end of the fiscal year and feed use. Use data to document nutrition plan.
5. Sire data summarized to show what are the genetic and performance characteristics of the herd bulls used.
6. Written culling, control breeding season, sire selection, and herd health plans.
7. Written marketing plan by product sold and write up of the results of the plan execution by product sold during the past production year.
8. Annual business budgeting by month and for each enterprise.
9. Herd performance analysis - production part

of the Standardized Performance Analysis (SPA).

10. Accrual adjusted financial statements and cost accounting by enterprise.
 11. Integrated financial and production performance analysis by herd. Cow-Calf SPA analysis completed annually. Written list of changes to pursue.
 12. Cow herd inventory by breed and by cow age.
 13. Individual cow record for just replacement heifers and first calf cows.
 14. Individual cow records.
 15. Carcass data to use in selection of sires, replacements and to cull cows.
- Suggestion on implementation – accomplish items 1 – 7 as soon as possible. You will have down on paper where you are at and objectives written and be legal with IRS. Work on other areas. Many can be facilitated with the computer. Give a great deal of thought and talk with other producers learning what to do with individual animal data before taking on items 13 - 15.
1. Producing the Calf - How Much Does It Really Cost? by Bryan A Reiling and J. Willard Lemaster, Department of Animal Science, University of Florida
 2. Prepared by James McGrann, professor and Extension Economist, Texas A&M University and Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

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