

To move up or down one BCS number is a gain or loss of about 120 pounds for medium frame cows. For example, a cow with a body condition score 3 would need to gain about 240 pounds to be a BCS 5. If we want this change in body condition to occur in a three months, then she would need her to gain about 2.5 pounds per day. We would re-check her BCS monthly to be sure she is improving and on track to meet her goal of a BCS 5 by the end of the 3 months and adjust the diet according to her progress.

Body Condition Scoring is all done without any fancy equipment and it provides very valuable information. It really

only takes a few minutes, but be sure to record her ID number, the date, and her BCS for accurate record keeping.

I believe all cattlemen naturally observe body condition. And by using the BCS system allows cattlemen to speak a common language. Using this system, body condition can be easily monitored and tracked over time. This is a tool you can now use to evaluate your feeding program as well as be sure your animals are in “good flesh” for their particular stage of production. Although this is a simple tool, don’t underestimate its potential as a management tool that can put money in your pocket.

Hay: Buy or Sell

If you are looking for hay or wanting to sell some extra supplies, there are some resources to help:

1. Hay Directories are below for people selling hay or looking for hay to buy. It is free to list your hay for sale. North Carolina Department of Agriculture’s Hay Alert is at <http://www.ncagr.gov/hayalert/index.htm>
2. NC Hay Exchange; www.hayexchange.com/nc.php
3. Hay Country; www.haycountry.com/hay-for-sale/in/north-carolina
4. Hay Hub; www.hayhub.com/directory/united+states/north+carolina

++ Extension Cattle Call Giveaway ++

The Extension Cattle Call Team would again like to invite each of you to participate in a drawing for 2.5 liter of Dectomax Pour-on sponsored by Zoetis and Dr. Bradley Mills. It only takes a minute to enter the drawing. All you need to do is call Wilkes Extension at 651-7331 and tell them the key phrase is “Spring Deworm”. Someone will take your name and number and enter you into the drawing to be held on March 31st.

Are You Making Plans For The VFD?

Phil Rucker, Extension Agent, Yadkin and Davie County

This article is only a VERY BRIEF introduction to the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) to begin December 2016 and be fully implemented January 1, 2017. This is not something to lose sleep over, just learn about and make proper plans if you plan on using a feed-grade antibiotic for your livestock herd.

Livestock producers will notice changes in antibiotic use with the upcoming FDA changes to the veterinary feed directive (VFD), set to go into effect Jan. 1, 2017. While that may seem like a long time down the road, producers need to start working with their veterinarian now to come up with a plan of action.

A “veterinary feed directive” is a written (nonverbal) statement issued by a licensed veterinarian in the course of the veterinarian’s professional practice that orders the use of a VFD drug in or on an animal feed. This written statement authorizes the client (the owner of the animal or animals or other caretaker) to obtain and use animal feed containing a VFD drug to treat the client’s animals only in accordance with the conditions for use approved, by the FDA.

This VFD rule will shift medically important feed-grade antibiotics into the responsibility of veterinarians. On that list are Tetracycline, Chlorotetracycline, Oxytetracycline, Aminoglycosides, Potentiated sulfas and Macrolides. These items are going to become script items only, meaning that in order for a producer to use them in their herd, a licensed veterinarian will have to write an order for a specific group of livestock to receive them within a specific time period. When the VFD regulations go into effect, they will ONLY apply to antibiotics used in the feed! They will not affect other feed use products such as; ionophores, coccidia, parasite and insect control products, or reproductive control products. Antibiotics used by injection, tablet or bolus will not fall under the VFD regulations.

How can livestock producers prepare themselves for VFD? It is important for producers to start now in developing a veterinary-client-patient-relationship (VCPR), regularly communicating about production practices, animal husbandry, current animal health protocols, recurring health issues and routine visits. Because when the time hits, it is best to have a game plan already to go instead of coming up with something last minute. Contact your veterinarian or Extension Livestock Agent for more details concerning the Veterinary Feed Directive.

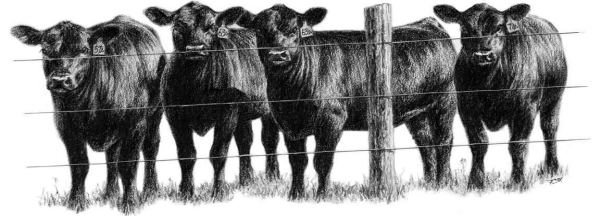
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Cattle Call



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Body Condition Scoring Cattle

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Cattle and batteries have some of the same properties. Both batteries and cattle can be charged, discharged, and the energy level (charge) can be measured too. Just like batteries, cattle can be run down (thin) or overcharged (too fat). This is important because cattle that are too thin (undercharged) or too fat (overcharged) have longer calving intervals, more calving problems, and their calves have reduced

vigor. Cattle that breed back slower are less profitable than animals that rebreed quickly. Measuring the energy status of a cow indicates the likelihood that she will be able to rebreed.

Measuring the energy status is not difficult. A voltmeter measures the energy status or charge of a lead acid - 12 volt - car battery. A battery with 12.7 volts is fully charged. A battery that measures 11.9 volts is fully discharged. The amount of charge or rather the “energy status” of beef cattle is measured through visual examination. This is a technique called Body Condition Scoring (BCS). Beef cattle are assigned a Body Condition Score (BCS) of 1 thru 9. The number indicates the amount of condition, or “fatness”, of the animal. Adipose tissue, or “fat”, is how cattle, and people, store excess energy from their diet. Animals with a Body Condition Score (BCS) of 1 are extremely thin and weak. On the other end of the scale are obese animals with a score of 9. Typically animals fall between these two extreme conditions.

To simplify the task of body condition scoring, there are a series of “yes” and “no” questions that help you arrive at the correct BCS number. Use the dichotomous flowchart above and try scoring your herd.

Animals with a Body Condition Score (BCS) of 1-4 are thin. Animals with BCS of 8-9 are over conditioned. Scores in the 5-7 range are desirable. Cows with a BCS of 5-7 have a greater than 95% chance of being pregnant within the first 90 days of breeding season. For comparison, cows with a BCS 4 are only 88% as likely to be pregnant and cows with a 3 or lower BCS are only 60% likely to be pregnant in the first 90 days. Re-breeding within 90 days of calving is important because it keeps the animals on a yearly calving cycle.

