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Plan ahead for your cow-calf operation

Spring is flying by and summer will be upon us soon. Now is good time to plan the health and production processes for the rest of the year. Now that spring calving is wrapping up evaluate how everything went.

Were at least 2/3 of your calves born in the first 21 days of the calving season? Calving frequency is a good indication of the fertility of your herd and breeding season. If some of your herd calved behind then it may be beneficial to try and move them up in the breeding season. One simple way to move females up is synchronize their estrus cycle. Even if you are not going AI your cows, synchronization prior to bull turn out can improve your calving distribution next year. Make sure your bulls are ready for the breeding season by hav-

ing a Breeding Soundness Exam conducted on each bull. After synchronizing your cows consider having your veterinarian ultra-sound them in August so that you can take advantage of planning their nutritional needs throughout the gestation and cull any open cows before prices decline in the fall.

Prior to the breeding season make sure that any vaccinations or other procedures are completed at least 30 days prior to bull turn out to minimize any impact on fertility. If you are planning on green tagging your calves they need to be at least 4 months of age for the initial round of vaccines. Determine now when the best time to vaccinate your calves is and get it penciled in on the calendar. Other things to consider would be deworming

calves and placing fly tags in midsummer when they can have the most benefit.

Lastly, start thinking about weaning and fall health programs. It seems a long way off now but it is easy to let urgency of other things put the weaning program on the back burner. Look ahead to what the price projection is for the fall. Would early weaning or retained ownership work better for you this year than selling at weaning? Do you have feed resources to accomplish all your cow herd needs or should you be actively looking for an alternative? Careful planning now with your veterinarian, extension specialist and other resources can help you have an uneventful and profitable year.

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