



Willow Creek Veterinary Services, P.C.



November/December 2008



"Bossy" the Cow New Years Wish List by Kris Nelsen

The following New Years wishes were presented to a local cow-calf producer by the herds boss cow, "Bossy."

"I have been appointed by the other cows to present our wishes to you as we enter the New Year. If you can carry out these wishes, we can produce

feeder calves that would be more profitable for you and of greater value when you market

them," Bossy said.

- Improve pastures so that we can grow more. This would make us happier and more profitable for you. We were made to convert grass into feeder cattle.
- Keep our pastures well fenced, fertilized, and weed free. By keeping the neighbors cattle out and ours very lush, it will give us more to eat, and allow both us cows and our calves to perform better throughout the season.
- Put hay up at the appropriate stage so we can get the needed protein and energy to perform more profitably. This would lower your cost of winter feeding.
- Maintain a good set of working facilities so we won't get hurt and your children can watch you work me and my herd mates and our offspring

without wondering what makes you keep yelling. And you're wife might even be more willing to help.

- Keep us in "good" body condition and supplement when needed. As you know, we don't perform well when we are "too thin" and it is not profitable for you to keep us "too fat."
- Develop a controlled, short calving season. We don't need to spend a lot of time with the bull. Sixty days, the most 90 days, are long enough for us.
- Carry a good health program that includes vaccination for both respiratory and reproductive diseases. A healthy cow herd means more profit for you.
- Check on us during calving to ensure that we make it "okay" and my calf is born with few problems, survives and does well. Do not lose the investment you have in our annual cost of maintenance.
- Process (castrate, dehorn, and ear tag) our calves at birth so that they can get off to a good start and make you money. Doing this as they get older will cause a set back in their performance.
- Mate us to a bull that

allows us to produce a high quality feeder calf that we can be proud of and will be profitable for. EID's looks and size are important.

- Before you purchase a new herd bull, consider what kind of genetics is needed to get the preceding wish done. We don't want to be mated by just any old bull.
- Control flies so that we can graze without being constantly irritated, our calves can perform well and neither of us develops eye problems.
- Take better care of our daughters that you are planning for replacements. They should be fed and cared for better than us mature cows to be profitable.
- Market our calves with their buddies on the farm and those from neighboring farms. I have heard that "lonesome calves sell for less." You will also enjoy it better when you receive a larger check.

Our wishes are basic for a successful cow-calf operation and will help us be more profitable for you!!



November

- *2nd-Daylight Saving Time
- *4th-election day
- *11th-Veteran's Day
- *27th-Thanksgiving

December

- *25th Christmas
- *31st-New Year's Eve

New!!!

Stop in and check out our new selection of scented candles. We now have room freshening sprays in addition to the candles.

One or both of these would make a great gift basket for Christmas. Or even a nice gift for the host of your Thanksgiving dinner. The pumpkin spice fits perfectly in with the season.

Stop by soon while the selection is plentiful.

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Holiday Hazards by Nicole Koehler



Between the little tykes and Christmas lights, the holidays can mean stress for your pet. Keep in mind that although your pets may be very friendly and

have never shown aggression, children have ways of getting on their nerves. Even the nicest of pets may nip when they finally have had enough of their hair and tail being pulled.

Also, keep in mind that some pets can get jealous of your family and friends due to the fact that you are spending more time with friends/family and less time with them. It's best to continue your daily routine with your pet. Feed them the same time they always have been, walk them at the usual time, and even give

them a good brushing or play with them separate from the rest of the family. Boarding them might be the best for you and your pet.

Other things to watch for are making sure they don't eat anything they are not suppose to. Such things might include: Christmas lights, tinsel, ribbon, the Christmas tree, glass décor bulbs, extension cords, wrapping paper, and the nephew's shoes. Don't let them eat "people food"! Humans tend to have a diet rich in fat, salt, and sugar. Even just one meal of



these "rich" foods can cause major digestive upset and one large mess for you to clean up. It can give them diarrhea, nausea, and

severe stomach pains.

Some helpful hints for the holidays: keep your pets confined to a kennel when you're not at home to keep them from chewing the decorations, keep your pet as comfortable as possible when large numbers of people are at your house, keep your pet in a separate room from the smaller children.



If you feel your pet has eaten something they weren't suppose to-call your vet immediately, and most importantly, give them lots of love from you.

Surgical Success Story by Dr. Shane Pedersen

At Willow Creek Veterinary Service, we provide a lot of services that may not get the credit they deserve. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight one of the surgical successes to inform people what we are capable of doing as a veterinary team. The case I would like to discuss is Katie the 2 year old Blue Heeler. Katie presented to us on June 19, 2008 as an emergency. Katie got excited and was chasing a wild animal. While in pursuit of the animal, Katie accidentally ran through her owner's path who was mowing the ditch with his cycle mower. Katie had dramatically injured her back right leg nearly severing the leg just below the hock. The exposed bone was very infected and the end of the limb was cold. The right front leg had a deep laceration affecting several tendons and muscle bellies. Overnight we sta-

bilized Katie, and began to prep her for surgery the next day. Unfortunately, the back leg was not able to be reattached. The infection was too severe, and the blood supply was too disrupted to attempt a repair. The leg had to be amputated and a lot of the remaining bone had to be removed to prevent the infection from spreading through the body. Without the back right leg we had to be very aggressive on our repair of the front leg to insure survival. After copiously cleaning the area, we took each of the damaged tendons and reattached them, then wrapped the tendons and injured muscle with the surrounding tissues that normally cover these structures. After the repair, we then set the front leg in a cast so that the tendons could mend without the stress of stretching all the time. The cast stayed on for

about a week, at which time we removed it to make sure that all are repair sites were free from infection. Seeing that it was, we put on another cast for another week to aid in healing.

Unfortunately, Katie lost one leg, but because of what we can do at Willow Creek Veterinary Service, we were able to turn-around a life threatening event. Although not every case ends this way, we are very proud of what we can do when it does end well. Today Katie, is able to do everything that other dogs do and she is able to do it all with little or no pain from her injuries. We hope she continues down this path and that next time she looks before she leaps.



Decrease Winter Feeding Costs By Dr. Sherri Merrill

This winter as we face the increasing costs of production, producers need to make wise management decisions. As we look ahead to winter herd management, cutting costs just for cost-cutting sake may not be the best approach. Let's consider a few places to save money and a few places where spending money will be profitable in the end.

Places to save money:

- Cut hay waste
- Feed more crop residue
- Weigh and sort cows
- Body condition scoring
- Supplementation strategies

Cut hay waste. Minimizing hay loss begins with high quality hay in dense, well-formed bales that were harvested at the proper moisture content. Now that harvest is complete let's focus on minimizing storage losses. Deterioration at the bottom of bales stored on damp soil can be substantial. Selection of a well drained site will help minimize this loss. If possible, elevate bales by stacking on old tires, shipping pallets or railroad ties. Adding a base layer of 3 to 4 inches of crushed rock to the storage site will also help minimize losses at the bottom of bales.

If round bales are stored individually, leave at least 18 inches between bales for air circulation. Storing bales with the rounded sides touching is not recommended because this creates a trap for rain and snow.

Tightly stacking bales end to end makes better use of the storage area and protects the ends from weathering. North-south bale rows allow an equal amount of sunlight on both sides of the bale row, which results in more uniform drying after rain or snow storms. Leaving at least 3 feet between rows will allow air circulation and sunlight to reach bales and reduces the chance of snow accumulation on the bales.

Another method of storage is to turn one bale on end and then stack another on top of it. Dry matter and

quality losses are similar to those of bales stored end to end. High-density, well formed bales tied with plastic twine or net are necessary for bottom bales. Sisal twine is not recommended since it can rot and let bales fall apart.

Feed more crop residue.

Save the good alfalfa hay for when you need it most- just before, during and after the calving season. With corn stover, once the crop is harvested, half the feed energy remains in the field. Most cornfields will provide 1-2 months of grazing/cow/acre. Any time crop residues are grazed, cows should be monitored closely and body condition scores recorded, so that necessary supplementation can take place when required.

Weigh and sort your cows.

Sorting your cows into feeding groups will allow more efficient use of feed. This will allow rations to be formulated to meet the specific needs of each group, doing this will ensure that you meet their needs without over feeding. Dry beef cows will need a diet that is 8% protein in the middle third of pregnancy and 9% protein in the last third. Pregnant yearling heifers require at least an 11-12% protein diet, while heifers and cows nursing calves need a diet that contains at least 12% protein.

Over feeding heifers costs money. In most instances, heifers need to gain 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds/day from weaning to the start of the breeding season. They only need to be 60% of mature body weight going into the breeding season and 85% of mature weight when they calve as a two-year old.

Cows need to consume forage at the rate of 2-3% of their body weight to maintain performance. An accurate body weight is needed in order to ensure that you are feeding enough. Cull cow weights are a place to start but keep in mind that most cull cows either weigh less than your average cow due to illness or more than average if they were fed a high concentrate diet prior to shipment.

Body condition scoring.

Learn how to body condition score (BCS) your cows. Body condition should be evaluated and recorded three times annually: at weaning, 60-90 days before calving and at calving. By assigning BCS scores at the time of weaning, the cows can be sorted for appropriate feeding.

Manage nutrition to prevent middle-aged cows from dropping below BCS 4.5 during the production cycle. Younger cows should be held at BCS 5-5.5. Money can be saved, especially during drought, by culling thin cows early and allowing the rest of the herd to maintain body condition on standing forage.

Altering body condition takes time. One body condition score is equal to about 75lbs. of bodyweight in small to moderate framed cows. Large-frame cows require 100-150 lbs. of body weight to change a single condition score.

Supplementation Strategies.

High concentrate protein supplements that are natural protein sources don't need to be fed every day. Understand the nutrient requirements of your animals to get a feel for what you need to supplement with and when. Underestimating forage nutritive value will lead to over-supplementation.

The benefits from supplementation can be enhanced when supplemental feeding is started before the onset of cold weather. It is easier to alter cow BCS during mild, fall weather than during harsh, winter weather. Consult your nutritionist or call us for help formulating a winter feeding ration/supplementation plan.

Places to spend money:


- Mineral supplementation
- Forage Analysis
- Pregnancy Testing

Mineral Supplementation.

Mineral supplementation should be considered an investment in herd productivity. Calcium, phosphorus and salt are likely to be the most limiting macro minerals in cattle diets. Phosphorus

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has a major impact on reproductive performance. Cattle are more likely to be phosphorus-deficient during the winter, when they often subsist on dry forages. While there may be times of the year when protein or energy supplements may not be necessary, there is seldom a time when mineral supplementation isn't necessary.

Forage Analysis. One of the most important places to spend money is on forage analysis by a commercial laboratory. This should include evaluation of the protein, energy and mineral composition of forages-whether from range, pastures or hay. The most useful analysis reports for hay supplies should be based on a representative sample from each "lot" of hay- hay from one field that has been cut, handled, baled and stored under uniform conditions.

Interpreting forage analysis reports is a two-part process, the first is understanding the basic terminology and meaning of the report. The next is to evaluate each lot's ability to produce a desired level of animal performance.

It is also important to know the true feed weight of the bales you are feeding. You're headed for a wreck if you think your bales weigh 1,000lbs. and they really weigh 800.

Pregnancy Testing. If you haven't already had your herd tested it's not too late to take advantage of this management tool. The cost of wintering an open cow or heifer or even an extremely late-calving cow will substantially increase wintering costs.

Doreen Mausbach

New to our staff is Doreen Mausbach. She moved to the Pierce area about a month ago. Doreen's duties will be focused on the clinic cleanliness, especially the kennel area and walking dogs. She will be seen helping the Doctor's working cattle or wherever she is needed.

Doreen has 2 grown sons; Bill, who is enrolled at Wayne State College with a zoologist minor and Phillip, who is scheduled to go to Afghanistan after he completes his National Guard training.

Her free time will find her riding horses. She has 1 cat, 2 dogs, and several horses. Doreen has worked with 4-H'ers to teach them the fundamentals of showing and training their own horses.

We are happy to have her here and hope you will stop in to meet her.