



Hello Folks,

We sure had a much-welcomed rain back a couple weeks ago, on Friday night Oct 24th, a gully washer for some folks! This came after a mini dry spell, so it was just in time as grass had started to turn brown and head south on us. Decatur topped the rain chart with a little over 5 inches of rain! Everyone else in the county received anywhere from 2 to over 4 inches. It filled a lot of stock tanks up and run around including ours, my wife sure was happy about that. This year has been a great year overall. Maybe a little too much rain in April and May making it hard to get our hay crop gathered up, but no complaints. A record amount of hay was put up and the quality was all over the board depending on how many times it got rained on laying in wait. But we had a little rain in June, July and August, enough to keep the grass green and growing and it had some strength to it for the most part. Anything green in August is a rarity in Texas.

Well the calves look pretty good out there with some already weaned and shipped straight to town. Some weaned and backgrounded on a good value-added program for 45-60 days, straightened out to be sold or put on wheat or other winter pasture as grazers, or stood up in the feedlot and fed cheap corn. And then there are some still waiting to be weaned if they still have some good grass. With the high market prices everyone is sure happy and whistling dixie on their way home from the sale barn these days. High prices = happy ranchers, and with the highest price in the history of the beef cattle industry, well.....why not! How long will it continue you ask? How many cows do we really have left out there in the nation's herds? And when will folks start keeping high dollar heifers to replace the cows they culled a couple of years back at a horrible price? When will the borders be open back up for feeder cattle? Did I hear someone say that we are going to start buying beef from Argentina? How's that going to work out for the markets? A lot of questions to be answered just like every other cattle cycle in the past, OR is it like the ones in the past? What does the future hold? I guess just hang on for the ride, and see?



Wise County Pesticide Applicator Recertification

**Thursday
December 11, 2025**

5 CEU's

2 IPM, 2 General, and 1 Laws & Regulations

Topics and Speakers

**Check-In: 8:00am
Program: 8:30am - 3:00pm**

8:30 - 9:30 Update on Feral Hogs

*Adam Henry, Assistant District Supervisor
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, USDA-Texas Wildlife Services Program*

**Decatur Conference Center
2010 W. US Hwy 380
Decatur, Texas**

**9:30 - 10:30 Managing Sandburs and other
Undesirable Grasses in Pastures and Hay**

*Case Medlin, US Southern Plains Regional Stewardship and
Development Manager ENVU*

**\$50 Registration Fee
Due by December 8th**

10:30 - 10:50 Break

**Mail or Bring Fee to:
TX A&M AgriLife Extension
206 S. State Street
Decatur, Texas 76234**

10:50 - 11:50 Pesticide Laws and Regulations

Kathy Newton, Pesticide Inspector, Texas Department of Agriculture

**Make Checks Payable to:
Livestock Committee**

11:50 - 12:50 Lunch

12:50 - 1:50 Herbicides for the Tough Weeds

*Marty Morgan, CEA, Ag & Natural Resources
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Wise County*



**1:50 - 2:50 Ectoparasites of Livestock and
New World Screwworm Update**

*Dr. Sonja Swiger, Professor/Extension Specialist
Livestock/Veterinary/Medical Entomologist*

2:50 - 3:00 Evaluations and Adjourn

**For more information, call the
Wise County Extension office
at 940-627-3341.**

**Marty Morgan, CEA
Agriculture & Natural Resources
206 S. State Street
Decatur, Texas 76234
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The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting are encouraged to contact the Wise County Extension Office at 940-627-3341 prior to the meeting to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.



Trump & Cows? Huh?

<https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Trump-or-Cows-2025.pdf>

Screwworm Coalition of Texas

<https://screwwormtx.org/>

USDA Plan to fortify the American Beef Industry: Strengthening Ranches, Rebuilding Capacity, and Lowering Costs for Consumers

<https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/USDA-Beef-Industry-Plan-White-Paper.pdf>

Cost-Effective Supplementation for Growing Calves

<https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Cost-Effective-Supplementation-for-Growing-Calves-10-25.pdf>

Water Quality a Priority for Farmers and Ranchers

<https://www.fb.org/market-intel/water-quality-a-priority-for-farmers-and-ranchers>

<https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Hydraulic-Fracturing-and-Private-Water-Well-publication.pdf>

Farmers ask for help to survive economic challenges

<https://texasfarmbureau.org/farmers-ask-for-help-to-survive-economic-challenges/>

Factors influencing herd expansion decisions

https://www.beefmagazine.com/market-news/factors-influencing-herd-expansion-decisions?utm_rid=CPG02000003519660&utm_campaign=101487&utm_medium=email&elq2=73eb1c8c998a4ab7a5d7273157a2ddde&sp_eh=8308fcaadc83d8c4b5c4bd7affb2d52d78dc47ae85f6c2e6a243f1fa2b566135

How Corn Drives America: From Fields to Fuel Tanks

The history of corn as America's favorite crop.

<https://www.morningagclips.com/how-corn-drives-america-from-fields-to-fuel-tanks/>



Calf Weaning to-do List, According to OSU

Here is a nice little article from OK State Extension Livestock Specialist Dana Zook for those of you who haven't weaned your calves yet.

Processing and weaning plans are underway for spring calving herds. I don't have to tell you that the value of these calves is very high. Producers would benefit from some plans to minimize stress and maintain health. Research has proven that low stress cattle handling and proper vaccination help calves perform as stockers and in the feedyard. Read on for some insight on best management during weaning.

Vaccinations & Management:

The Oklahoma Quality Beef Network (OQBN) provides a research proven guide for management and vaccination of newly weaned calves. The OQBN program requires that cattle be raised from the ranch of origin, weaned a minimum of 45 days, and be bunk trained. Bull calves must be castrated, and all calves must be dehorned. All calves should be healed from these procedures and appear in good health on sale day. The OQBN vaccination guide for this program includes two rounds of a Clostridial vaccine (Blackleg), two rounds of a 5-way Respiratory vaccine, and 1 round of a Mannheimia haemolytica vaccine (Shipping Fever). All vaccines should be given according to label instructions and be complete three weeks prior to sale. In addition to vaccination, the weaning environment makes a big difference in the health status of calves. Initially putting calves in a familiar pen or trap with some shade will help smooth the weaning transition. With current temperatures above normal, ensure that newly weaned calves are not put into a hot, dusty, dry lot. Consider the guide above, but I encourage producers to work with a veterinarian to develop a weaning plan targeted to your operation. If you don't have a vet, there is no better time than the present!

Calf Nutrition should not be an afterthought.

Weaning nutrition is one of the most important times to pay attention to detail. Producers should be prepared to provide calves with familiar feeds that are palatable and provide a greater concentration of nutrition to compensate for low intake. Some producers may choose to feed a small amount of range cubes on good grass. Other producers may elect to use a complete ration. Despite the choice, feeds and forages for newly weaned calves should be highly palatable. In a ration high energy/high fiber-based commodities such as alfalfa, soybean hulls, and wheat midds are appropriate. Whole corn is also a good partner with these feeds and is often locally available. Start calves on a palatable ration at 1% of body weight and increase slowly over several weeks.



Calf Weaning to-do List, According to OSU...continued

Retaining Calves? Consider Insurance.

Recently, a producer told me he just can't bear to sell his calves at 600 pounds; he would rather put some gain on them and sell in the Spring. I totally understand this sentiment. There are a variety of situations that keep producers from selling early (taxes, wheat pasture, and forage stocks). If you have the same feeling as the producer above, I encourage you to consider Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) to ensure calves at a value that retains your profit. Also, death loss is a reality. In this market, the loss of one calf at a value of \$2000 is a real hit to the budget. In reality, it seems like the prices of calves will stay high, but markets are a funny thing and can fluctuate with the news cycle. It would be unfortunate to be caught in a dip in the market and miss out on some immense profit.

With that, Happy Fall! May all your calf-working be peaceful, your vaccinations be well placed and luck be in your favor! If you have any questions about vaccinations, nutrition, or LRP, please contact your local county OSU or AgriLife Extension office – we are all happy to help you!

Why Early-Bred Heifers Are The Best Investment

Eric Bailey encourages us to favor older, earlier-calving bred heifers at auction this fall. These are interesting times in the beef industry, says University of Missouri Extension state beef nutritionist Eric Bailey.

Cattle prices are higher than ever, yet there is scant evidence of herd expansion in the macroeconomic data. However, enormous asking prices exist for bred heifers marketed online, Bailey says. Before you head to the sale barn, Bailey suggests a review of data that shows that early-calving bred heifers pay off many times over.

Older, earlier-calving heifers have an advantage over the long run.

A 2013 Journal of Animal Science article, "Heifer Calving Date Positively Influences Calf Weaning Weights Through Six Parturitions." is "truly impactful science" that supports the argument that older, early-calving heifers offer an advantage in the long run, Bailey says.

Datasets evaluated in the manuscript include production records from the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center and the South Dakota Integrated Resource Management Groups. First-calf heifers that calved in the first 21 days of the calving season were one year older (5 years old) when diagnosed open compared to heifers that calved (4 years old) after the first 21 days of the calving season.



Why Early-Bred Heifers Are The Best Investment...continued

“Imagine getting an extra calf out of a cow just because she calved early the first time,” Bailey says. “Furthermore, heifers that calved early as first-calf heifers weaned a heavier calf not just the first year but all the way out through the sixth calf compared to heifers that calved after the first 21 days.” The difference was approximately 50 lb. in the first year and 15 lb. in the sixth calf. Based on this data, Bailey estimates that the earlier-calving heifer produced an additional 150 lb. of weaned calf over a six-year period. “At today’s prices, there is a substantial economic advantage to buying an earlier-calving heifer,” he says.

Why does this happen and how do we take advantage of this?

A beef cow is pregnant for approximately 285 days. When a farm imposes defined calving seasons, cows that have long postpartum intervals between calving and breeding calve later each year until slipping outside of the breeding season.

It is rare for a cow to calve earlier next year than this year. Postpartum interval is generally at least six weeks, and the estrous cycle in beef cattle is 21 days. To calve on the same date each year, a beef cow must become pregnant within about 85 days of calving. If her postpartum interval is 42 days, then she has roughly two estrous cycles to become pregnant. Body condition plays an important role in this. Body condition score at calving has proven to be a strong predictor of the length of the postpartum interval. At calving, beef cows need to be at least 5 on a 1-9 scale, and heifers need to be a 6.

Age is the strongest predictor of weaning weight for beef calves. “Having a lot of cows get pregnant early in the breeding season will do wonders for the weaning weight of your calf crop,” says Bailey. “Reproductive management tools like estrus synchronization and artificial insemination can help get a bunch of cows and heifers pregnant early in the breeding season.” It is important to have them in adequate body condition and gaining weight to breed early.

How do I use the information from this article to make bred heifer buying decisions.

Bailey favors heifers that are bred to artificial insemination, based upon data from the article. “I’ll have a tight estimate of calving date and the ability to select heifers bred to calve early in my calving season,” he says. “I would even consider heifers bred to calve 30 days earlier than my mature cow breeding season to give first-calf heifers an additional chance in their second breeding season. I’m willing to pay more for this certainty. How much more is debatable.”

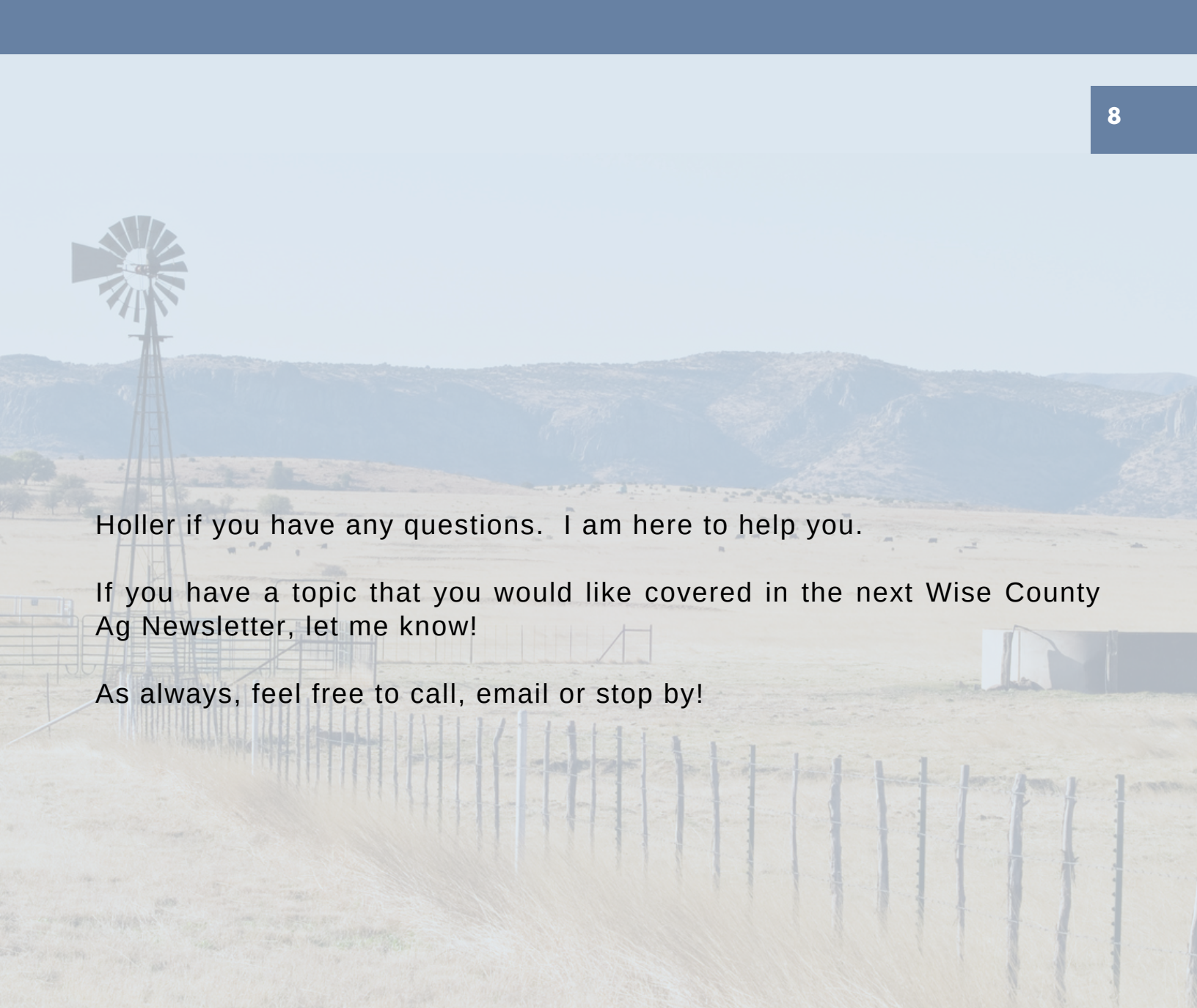


Why Early-Bred Heifers Are The Best Investment...continued

From the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center dataset, it appears that the early-calving heifer produced about 150 lb. additional weaned calf over heifers that calve later. Right now, the market value of gain (NOT sale price) says that the value of gain in the 400–600 lb. range is about \$3 per lb. Of course, that's just a snapshot of the current market, Bailey explains.

“Buyers should factor in that market dynamics could, and will, change dramatically in the next six years, which is what we would be projecting out,” he says. Bailey uses a concept called “net present value” to make this decision. The net present value of \$450 (revenue from the additional 150 lb. of weaning weight) delivered over the next six years at an 8% discount rate is \$346.72. He says he would be willing to pay an additional \$200-\$300 for a heifer bred to artificial insemination over one bred via natural service using today's market prices.

“The sticker shock of bred heifer prices may make it difficult to raise your hand at auctions this fall, but there is data available to help make more informed decisions,” Bailey summarizes.



Holler if you have any questions. I am here to help you.

If you have a topic that you would like covered in the next Wise County Ag Newsletter, let me know!

As always, feel free to call, email or stop by!



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