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 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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More Calving Season Reminders

This information recently showed up in the Beef Blog, written by Heather Smith Thomas, and I thought the timing was perfect. Some helpful tips to help make decisions.

It pays to know when you can safely pull a calf or when you need to call for a C-section. Sometimes the calf is too large to come through the pelvis and birth canal without injuring the cow and calf, but luckily, there are some clues. If the calf's feet are showing and the head is there (maybe the nose showing) but the cow or heifer isn't progressing, check to see if there is room.

If, when you reach into the birth canal, you cannot fit your fingers between the calf's head and the cow's pelvis, it's probably too tight. If the feet are in the birth canal but not the head, and the head keeps turning back when you try to bring it around and pull the calf, this may mean there isn't enough room.

"One of the things I was taught [called the Utrecht guidelines] is that if one person, pulling on one leg at a time, can get the fetlocks a hand's breadth past the vulva outside the cow [with the head coming], this should be a successful vaginal delivery," says George Barrington, professor of food animal medicine at the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine. This is when you'd pause and stretch the tissues.

"If it's a posterior presentation and you are pulling each leg alternately, if you can get the calf out past the hocks it should also be a successful vaginal delivery," says Barrington. The widest part of the calf is already coming through.

"Once I determine that it's likely going to be a vaginal delivery, I stop pulling and put ample lubrication into the cow. I don't add lube until I have decided the calf will fit through. If we have to do a C-section, it can be a problem to have some contaminated lube in the uterus," he says. Some types of lubrication can be a serious problem for the cow if it contaminates the abdominal cavity during a C-section.

When to call the vet?

"If you have examined the vaginal tract and found that the cervix is dilated, but there's no further progression in 30 minutes, it is time to call for help, or intervene—depending upon your knowledge and experience," says Robert Callan, head of the Livestock Medicine and Surgery Service and chief of staff for the Large Animal Hospital at the Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

"If the cervix is dilated and you reach through and feel the calf's feet but they are not coming up into the cervix, this is another indication of a problem. Maybe the head is turned back. If you can't feel any feet—just the bulk of the calf—it may be breech. Another situation that will hold up parturition is a _____ torsion; you reach into the birth canal and it seems



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like there is a twist, with membrane between you and the calf,” says Callan. So when to make that call? Some say, depending experience, the earlier the better.

“If the producer is inexperienced, an early call to the veterinarian will maximize the chance for a live calf, and opportunity to assist the cow before things get really difficult,” says Bethany Funnell, a clinical veterinarian at the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine.

There are tools veterinarians may use, to make it easier. “One is to give the cow an epidural injection to stop her from straining, so she’s not pushing against you. We can also administer epinephrine, which makes the uterus relax. This makes it easier to correct a problem,” she says.

“You can learn how to deal with many problems yourself; the veterinarian can teach you how to handle certain problems, and may not need to come out every time you have a question,” says Barrington. “With a phone call, the veterinarian may be able to instruct you on what to do, or determine that it’s a problem that needs professional assistance.”

Breech is bad

A breech presentation, with the rump and tail coming first, is a serious problem because the calf can’t be born without assistance. Since nothing can enter the birth canal, the cow may not show signs of active labor. “The first problem with a breech calf is that the cow may fail to fully dilate and the second problem is that the calf can’t fit through the birth canal. This is why you need to check the cow,” Barrington says. You can save those calves if you check in time.

To deliver a breech calf, you first have to bring the hind feet into the birth canal, and must be very clean and very careful when doing those manipulations. “The cervix and vagina are fairly tough, but the uterus is not. You can put a calf’s foot through the uterus fairly easily,” says Funnell. When bringing a foot around to get the leg in position, be careful to not tear the uterus.

GAP for Tobacco Growers

The dates that I have confirmed are: Monday February 27 at 1:00 p.m. at the West Union Frisch’s; Wednesday March 15 at 1:00 p.m. at the West Union Frisch’s; Wednesday March 15 at 6:30 p.m. at North Adams HS in the Round Room; Tuesday March 21 at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday March 22 at 1:00 p.m. at the Board Office of Southern Hills Career Center in Georgetown.

As in the past, seating is limited at some sites so we offer several dates for training. Please pre-register for this training by calling Barbie at the Adams Co. Extension Office to reserve a seat for the date and location that works best for you. Barbie can be reached by phone Monday – Friday from 8:30 until noon and 12:30 until 4:00 p.m. at 544-2339 or by e-mail at rowe.316@osu.edu

Dates to Remember

February 4	Brown Co. Cattlemen Annual Banquet.
February 7	Beef School
February 8	Two-hour Fertilizer Certification and three-hour Pesticide Re-certification at North Adams HS with Fertilizer starting at 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. meal, then Pesticide Re-certification 7:30 until 10:30 p.m. Pre-registration is REQUIRED.

- February 9 Call Cindy at the OSU Extension Office at 937-378-6716.
Two-hour Fertilizer Certification and three-hour Pesticide Re-certification at Southern Hills Board Office in Georgetown with Fertilizer starting at 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. meal, then Pesticide Re-certification 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. Pre-registration is REQUIRED. Call Cindy at the OSU Extension Office at 937-378-6716.
- February 14 Start of Grain Marketing School at the Southern Hills Board Office in Georgetown on five Tuesdays. (Feb. 14, 21, 28, March 7 and 21) The classes will begin at 1:00 p.m. and go until approximately 4:00 p.m. Charge is \$25 and the same class will be offered on Wednesday evenings (the next day) in Chillicothe.
- February 15 Two-hour Fertilizer Certification and three-hour Pesticide Re-certification at Southern State Community College in Hillsboro with Fertilizer starting at 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. meal, then Pesticide Re-certification 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. Pre-registration is REQUIRED and space is limited at this location. Call Cindy at the OSU Extension Office at 937-378-6716.
- February 27 GAP for Tobacco at 1:00 p.m. at West Union Frisch's.
Feb. 28 Beef School.
- March 3 Agriculture is Everyone's Business at SSCC in Hillsboro.
- March 7 Farm and Family Night at Maysville Community and Technical College.
- March 10-11 Southern Ohio Small Farm Conference at Wilmington College. This will include another 3-hour Fertilizer Training.
- March 15 GAP for Tobacco at 1:00 p.m. at West Union Frisch's and at 6:30 p.m. at North Adams HS.
- March 21 GAP for Tobacco at Southern Hills Board Office at 6:30 p.m.
- March 22 GAP for Tobacco at Southern Hills Board Office at 1:00 p.m.
- April 8 Ohio Tobacco Museum Fundraiser/Reverse Raffle at Ripley Elem.
- April 8 Highland County OSU Extension's Dinner and Auction at the Highland Co. Fairgrounds in the evening.