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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Weather Forecast – Grease the Planters

On Tuesday morning, after hearing rain hit the roof Monday night, the forecast for the next week looks like no rain and sunny. With a forecast like that, and the fact that today is April 12, I am sure there will be planters rolling by the end of the week. So, equipment will be on the roads going from farm to farm. Everyone stay safe out there.

8 Tips for Selecting Replacement Heifers

When going into the heifer pen to decide which of the calves stay in the operation and which are sold, producers are making choices that affect the profitability of their herd for years to come. A crystal ball would sure come in handy as we never really know the outcome of alternate choices.

One strategy is to sensibly develop and breed the entire group of heifers and then select those that breed early, or wait to cull until after they wean their first calf. While this would give us a better projection, it isn't practical for most to add that many females to their operation for that long.

Here are some selection tips from retired UNL professor Jim Gosey, UNL West Central Beef Reproductive Physiologist, Rick Funston, and UNL Beef Genetics specialist, Matt Spangler.

- 1 – Cull daughters of problem cows. This includes cows that needed help calving, were late calving or that had bad dispositions.
- 2 – Cull lightweights, big birth weights and 6-frame heifers. Big doesn't always mean bad. If she's big because she is older, you want to keep her.
- 3 – Along with that, select heifers that were born during the first 45 or better yet, the first 21 days of the calving season. "Cull the youngest heifers."
- 4 – Select daughters out of the oldest cows. This goes back to information that is being learned about fetal programming and the fertility in those cow lines. Cows that offer longevity will most likely produce heifers that also offer optimum pregnancy rates.
- 5 – Identify and cull the nervous or "upheaded" heifers. You don't need to knowingly add disposition problems to your herd.
- 6 – Try not to keep any feet and leg problems. Too much set to their hocks isn't good, but really straight-hocked or posty-legged heifers are a bigger problem.



7 – The value of genetic testing mainly lies with determining the heifers' sires, if they are not already known. Keep daughters from bulls that have favorable EPD's for things like stayability, lower input costs, sensible mature size, higher heifer pregnancy, moderate milk, calving ease, docility etc.

8 – If you are in a commercial setting with baldies, select heifers that have pigmented eyes and udders.

It's not likely every heifer kept will be a great cow but at least the deck can be stacked in your favor.

I thought this offered some great thoughts. I recently went through this process of selecting replacements myself and I can add another tip to this. So number 9, sort ahead of sale day. There is way too much going on to sort those you want to keep as replacements while hauling the rest of the cattle to the stockyards. You might make mistakes. Plus if you sort them off a few days prior, you have time to observe those you put in the keep pen and compare them to the rest of the group. It also allows you time to look over those in the sale pen and find that one or two that you may want to take a second look at.

GAP for Vegetables

The OSU Fruit and Vegetable Safety Team will be conducting an educational program for growers of fresh produce regarding Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). This is a very helpful program for fruit and vegetable growers of any size operation. Topics covered will include: water quality, manure and compost application, wildlife intrusion, food safety and risk assessments. Learn the best practices for producing high-quality, and safe produce.

The program will be from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Clermont Co. Extension Office on April 18. To register you can go online at Clermont.osu.edu or call 513-732-7070.