

With fall in full swing, and winter quickly approaching, it is important for cattle producers to begin making plans for the fall/winter management of their herds. One of the best ways to make early, informed decisions on how to best manage their herd is by having the females pregnancy checked in the fall. This week we will discuss some key advantages of pregnancy diagnosis in your females at this time, and how it can be used to help you make informed decisions of how to manage your females in the coming months.

One advantage of fall pregnancy diagnosis is that it can help producers make managerial decisions in their operations concerning marketing and feeding of the females. Once the pregnancy status of the females is determined it is easier to develop a plan for how to manage them. The nutritional requirements vary from female to female, and are dependent upon her stage of gestation and body condition. Many producers may find it very effective to group these cattle based on their requirements in order to ensure that their nutritional needs are met. Producers can also use pregnancy diagnosis to determine how to market the animals based on the results of the pregnancy test. In order to create a more uniform calf crop, producers would be wise to cull females that are found to be open, and the females that would be outliers in the calving season of the herd. For example, a producer may decide to sell females that are only two months bred if a majority of the other females are four to six months bred. This will create a more narrow calving season, which may help increase productivity and profitability of the operation.

Fall pregnancy diagnosis is also advantageous because it can help the producer plan ahead for winter feed supplies and costs. Every non-pregnant female removed from the herd prior to winter may result in significant savings for the producer. This is because the producer will not be spending money feeding open cows throughout the winter. In other words, culling undesirable females prior to winter will result in less money spent on those females that will not give a return. Further, eliminating undesirable females will give the producer a better idea of how many cattle he will be feeding through the winter. This will allow him to ensure that he has enough feed and resources available to support those cattle through the winter months.

Pregnancy diagnosis can be beneficial in making herd management decisions, regardless of time of season it is performed. However, pregnancy diagnosis in the fall in spring calving herds may be most advantageous simply due to the potential savings on winter feed costs. Pregnancy diagnosis can, and *should* be used by producers to plan for the upcoming calving season, analyze overall reproductive efficiency of the herd, and make culling or other managerial decisions based on the pregnancy status of the females. If you have any questions about pregnancy diagnosis in your herd, or would like help with deciding how to manage your herd after pregnancy diagnosis is performed, please contact us.

Leann, our current receptionist, will be leaving in about one month. We are currently looking for a receptionist to take her place. If you know anyone that may be interested, please contact our office at (903)675-5613

Thanks,  
Jesse Richardson, DVM

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