

When thinking of ways to improve their cow-calf operation, many producers tend to direct their focus to the cows of the herd. Though the females play a very important role in every cow-calf operation, the herd sire should not be forgotten, as he plays an equally important role. Last week we focused our discussion on important traits that we believe each adult female in your herd should possess. This week we will continue this discussion and present what we have named our "Job Description for Bulls".

For every bull intended for breeding in a typical cow-calf operation, we believe the following criteria should be met to maximize production and productivity. To achieve this, we believe each breeding bull in your operation should:

- * Have a good temperament
 - be easy to handle
 - does not tear up the fences to get to the neighbor's cattle
- * Have a strong immune system
- * Be feed efficient
 - have low nutritional requirements (doesn't require high amounts of forage/feed to maintain production)
 - utilize available forage thoroughly and effectively
- * Be physically sound
 - have good feet, legs, and overall structure
 - be athletic, and physically able to service the females
- * Fertile
 - successfully pass a Breeding Soundness Exam prior to start of breeding season
 - settle a majority of the females in the first 21 days of the breeding season
 - successfully breed at least 15 females at 18 months of age; can successfully breed at least 25 females at 24 months of age and older
- * Maintain body weight and condition throughout the breeding season
- * Contribute genetics that will promote desirable performance in his offspring
 - produce calves that are low birth weight and/or don't cause dystocia in females at calving

As with last week, if you think of any traits that we did not include on our list, please let us know. Our discussion will continue next week when we cover a job description for replacement females. What traits do you consider most important in the replacement females of your operation?

Prices for feeder steers medium and large 1 sold through the Oklahoma National Stockyards on Tuesday, January 20, 2015, are as follows: 461lb- \$298.6, 576lb- \$258.77, 676lb- \$228.9, and 778lb- \$211.06. The price for March 2015 750lb feeder steers on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was \$203 on closing Tuesday, January 20, 2015.

Thanks,
Dr. Jesse Richardson, DVM

Henderson County Veterinary Hospital
903-675-5613
hcvethospital.com
hcvethosp@me.com