

In our previous article we explored trends that help shape the market outlook for beef cattle. We discussed how these trends can be used to help make informed decisions. For example, we evaluated a chart which showed lower cattle prices in October compared to other months. Based on this trend, we introduced the option of weaning calves in October, and waiting to sell them in November when historically, prices are increasing. We will touch more on this next time, but this week we want to discuss our recommendations for cattle management in East Texas, and the time line to follow in order to make these recommendations have a positive impact in your operation.

As cattle producers, one of the most efficient things we can do is work *with* the environment that we are in. This means to take into account everything from the seasons throughout the year, growing stages of forages, and stages of production that the cattle are in. Every cattle owner encounters these things, but the wisest and most profitable are those who have found a way to make the three overlap. We believe that this type of management is key for accomplishing this timeline. In order to “October wean, November sell”, we first need to plan our breeding and calving seasons to fall in the appropriate months. With October weaning in mind, we also take in to consideration the environment and cow production. We conclude that weaning at 8 months old is ideal, which means that the calves should be born in February and conceived in May of the previous year.

The graph below (Figure 1) shows cow protein requirements (based on her stage of production) and compares that against the protein content of the available forage during those months.

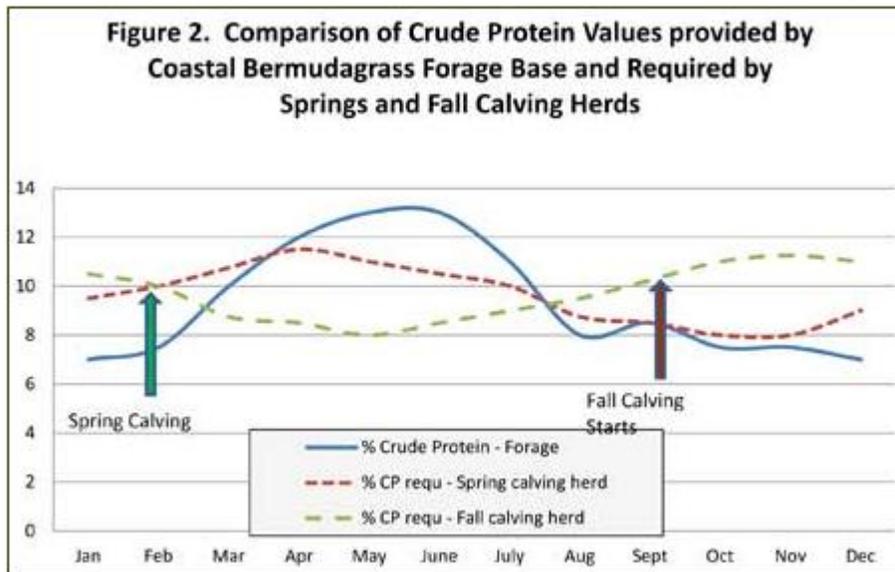


Figure 1. 2013 Blezinger

Looking at the graph, we see that protein requirements for spring calvers are highest in the spring, which is also when forage protein content is the highest. Likewise, when cow requirements are low in the fall for spring calvers, so is the forage protein content. This is beneficial in many ways, as it saves the producer time and money, and also assures that the cow requirements are met. By planning his calving season appropriately, a producer is able to use the growing season to his advantage- methodically arranging that the two overlap. Not only does this save money by keeping the producer from having to supplement his cows as much, it also saves him time as well.

We believe that it just makes sense to make the cows' nutritional requirements overlap with the environment so that you get the most out of what is available to you. In winter, cow requirements are still low because they have not begun nursing calves yet. This allows for cheaper, lower quality, and even *less* hay to be fed to the cattle. Planning the calving season to fall in February allows the cows to have the highest protein available when they need it most. This high protein content is still available in May, which is ideal because at this time cows are lactating and need to be in good enough condition to breed back. Having them ready to breed when forage quality is at its highest gives cattle the best chance to breed back in a timely matter.

Although matching the nutrient demands of cattle with the nutrient supply in forages can be tricky at times, it has a great payoff in time and money, and in the quality of the cattle. Wise cattle producers recognize the importance of using the environment to their advantage in their cattle operations, and make the changes necessary to reap those benefits. Next time, we will continue our discussion on cattle management timeline for East Texas, and talk about benefits of weaning in October and selling in November. To read the full article where Figure 1 was referenced from, visit <http://cattletoday.com/archive/2013/December/CT3032.php>

Prices for feeder steers medium and large 1 sold through the Oklahoma National Stockyards on Monday, June 6, 2016 are as follows: 480lb- \$182.10, 567lb- \$162.05, 677lb- \$157.64, 786lb- \$146.01. The price for August 2016 750lb feeder steers on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was \$116.55 on closing Monday, June 6, 2016.

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