

# Cattlemen's Corner Beef Newsletter

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## Feeding to Influence Calving Time

*Scott Jensen, Owyhee County Extension*

Ever wish more of your cows and heifers would calve in the daytime? There is a way to influence calving time and it involves timing of winter feeding.

One of the first ranchers to experiment with the influence that feeding time has on calving was a purebred producer from Manitoba, Canada. In the early 1980's, he divided his cowherd into two groups. One group was fed twice daily from 11:00 AM to noon and again from 9:00 to 10:00 PM. The second group was fed from 8:00 to 9:00 AM and from 3:00 to 4:00 PM. He started following this schedule one month before calving began and then recorded the time when each cow calved. The group fed later in the day had 80% of their calves born from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM compared to the second group that had only 38% of their calves born during the day.

This original report has been followed up with several university studies that have shown similar results. One of the most convincing is a study done in Iowa involving over 1,300 cows on 15 different farms (See Table 1). Cows in this study we fed once daily at dusk. The results were that 85% of calves were born between 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Cows that were part of the morning-fed group had less than 50% calve during the daytime. There were no differences reported between cows started on the evening feeding schedule 1 week prior to calving or 2-3 weeks prior to calving.



Feeding time	# of calvings	Calving time	
		6 am – 6 pm	6 pm – 6 am
Morning-fed only (before noon)	695	49.8%	50.2%
Evening-fed only (5 to 10 p.m.)	1,331	85.1%	14.9%

Reported by R.S. Stagmiller and R.A. Bellows (1981) from data by Iowa State Extension Service, C. Iverson.

If cows have unrestricted access to hay or standing forage, the best method for influencing calving time is to time that any supplement is fed. An Oklahoma State University study showed that moving supplement feeding from daytime to late afternoon or early evening resulted in 72% of the cows calving between 6 am and 6 pm. Prior to changing the supplementation feeding time calving was equally split between daytime and nighttime.

*Continued on page 2*

## University of Idaho Extension, Canyon County

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*Continued*

There are several advantages to calving during the daytime. For starters, producers can more easily observe the cattle and identify animals that might need calving assistance. Temperatures are generally higher during the daytime and newborn calves can get a better start with daytime sunshine to help warm them and have a better chance for early colostrum consumption and survival. Predators are generally more active during nighttime hours. Calving during the daytime may help reduce predation losses.

There may be some benefit to the cows also. Eating just before colder nighttime temperatures will help cattle stay warm due to the heat generated during the rumination process.

Perhaps one of the biggest drawbacks to nighttime feeding is that producers will likely be feeding in the dark. On larger ranches, there may simply not be enough time to feed all of the cowherd in the evening. If that is the case, it may be wise to prioritize which groups would benefit the most from daytime calving. This would generally be the heifers as they are also the group that are more likely to require calving assistance.

Adjusting feeding time to increase the number of cows calving during daytime hours may pay dividends, especially for cows bred to calve during the coldest winter months.

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## Calving Made Easier

*Samantha Ball, UI Extension Educator, Canyon County*

*This article is an abbreviated compilation of an article "Control of calving difficulty in beef heifers" authored by Geoff Kroker, Bendigo and Lisa Clarke, and Hamilton. This condensed version was completed by Samantha Ball.*

Difficulty calving in any beef herd can be a substantial financial loss due to calf or mother deaths, vet fees, and time. Calving difficulties can vary with seasons and ranch layout. There are upwards to 30% of mothers needing assistance in some cases. Though it is impossible to completely diminish the occurrence of calving difficulty it can be minimized.

### **Causes of difficult calving**

- ◆ Calf birth size
- ◆ Abnormal calf presentation
- ◆ Obstruction of birth canal (fat deposits)
- ◆ Constriction of the birth canal
- ◆ Weak labor or poor muscle tone of mothers

### **Age at first calving**

Heifers need to be of size and age before introducing them to a bull or artificially inseminating them. When heifers are mated at very low weights or young ages, they can have calves or small birth weights or calves that are born immature. Some producers claim that waiting too long and calving out heifers at age 3 can be just as difficult as having them calve to early.

### **Sire breed**

Larger breeds of cattle tend to throw calves of heavier weights which may cause higher calving difficulties. Calving ease EPDs should be checked when selecting a bull to breed to your heifers. Through careful selection of sires in artificial insemination programs, calving difficulty during birth has been reduced by more than 30%. This is due to the moderately heritable characteristics of birth weights. Bulls that had a low birth weight or throw calves with low birth weights are more desirable.

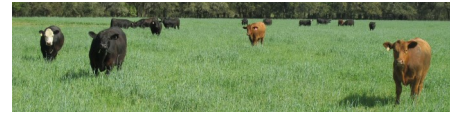
### **Body Condition**

Body conditions of mothers at calving has an influence on calving difficulties. Fat heifers and cows will have a harder time calving due to high birth weights, fat deposits in the birthing canal, and weak or low muscle tone. Though thin heifers will experience similar difficulties because of their lack of muscle.

### **Disturbance during calving**

Research has shown that heifers who are disturbed during calving will have more problems as their birth canal will fail to relax. A compromise must be made between observing heifers frequently during calving and avoiding disturbing them.

Calving time on any ranch means long hours, little sleep, and the hope for a good calf crop. Having a successful calving season starts as early as bull selection. Be mindful of the choices made to get you to a great calf crop and save you time and sleep.



## Grazing Dormant Forages

Melinda Ellison, Range Livestock Specialist

University of Idaho, Nancy M. Cummings Research, Extension and Education Center

*\*\*This article was published in the December 2019 Edition of the Idaho Cattlemen's Association Line Rider Magazine. \*\**

Many of you are lucky, or maybe crafty enough, to have late-fall and winter grazing options, which help reduce feed costs and management inputs for a few months. Here are some considerations that might help you take advantage of dormant season grazing, while ensuring that your livestock and the forages continue to be productive:

**Graze early in the growing season to increase forage availability during the dormant season.** Stockpiling a pasture all summer for fall and winter grazing is a common strategy for reducing winter feed bills. However, as forages mature and dry out in late summer, total availability and forage quality decrease substantially. To exploit this natural cycle in your favor, graze lightly or moderately (or cut) prior to plant maturation early on in the growing season. If adequate moisture is available, early season grazing/cutting will stimulate regrowth in most plants, which sets that plant maturation back, therefore, increasing dormant season forage quality and sometimes availability. Additionally, crude protein and nutrient digestibility are typically greater in less mature plants. In most improved pastures with irrigation, early grazing prior to stockpiling will provide the best forage availability and quality for your animals after the first killing frost compared with plants left to grow and mature all summer. While it is a little late to apply this strategy this year, keep this in mind for next summer. *\*\*An important consideration to keep in mind for pastures without irrigation (such as upland pastures made up of perennial bunchgrasses) is to limit them to light grazing pressure early in the year when you want to graze during the fall/winter months, especially in dry years. These kinds of pastures may not be able to withstand, or provide enough forage for, multiple grazing occurrences within a year.*

**Leave some residual for plant winter survival and spring growth.** It has been generally accepted that grazing during the dormant season is less damaging for grasses and other forages. In fact, some grasses produce more during the growing season following grazing during the dormant season. However, perennial plants are only inactive during the dormant season, not dead. They require energy stores to survive the winter and begin growing early in the spring. Some plants, like alfalfa, store their energy reserves in their root system, while others (especially grasses) store their energy in the 2-6 inches above ground, depending on the species. It is important not to graze your pasture to the ground, even in winter, for this reason. Additionally, waiting to graze until after the first killing frost will decrease risk.

**Maximize stockpiled forages by managing livestock more intensively.** Grazing animals will selectively graze, even during the dormant season. Implement a strip grazing strategy to maximize the available forage, encourage a more even graze, and decrease waste and trampling.

**Graze in snow, but make sure they are still getting what they need.** Snow will eventually be a limiting factor for winter grazing; however, cattle, sheep, and goats can all graze in snow over a foot deep. When forages are abundantly available, you may be able to push this limit, but be cautious when forage availability is getting low. It is important not to make them work harder for their feed than the energy they are able to consume can support.

**Provide supplementation.** Especially with the grasses in Idaho, the nutritional value of forages during the dormant season may not meet livestock maintenance needs, and especially those additional needs for growth or gestation. Supplementation may be required to make sure they are getting enough protein or energy for maintenance and to maximize production. It is relatively simple to clip a few samples and send them out for nutritional analyses to be sure.

Please contact myself ([ellison@uidaho.edu](mailto:ellison@uidaho.edu)) or your local Extension Educator/Specialist for more information on this topic, help clipping and sending forage samples, interpreting nutrient analyses, and identifying the specific nutritional needs of your animals. We can also help with cost/benefit analysis for different feeding/grazing options and supplementation strategies.



## Artificial Insemination Training School

**Dates:** March 17 - 20, 2020  
**Times:** 1:30-5:00 PM March 17  
9:00 AM-5:00 PM March 18-19  
9:00 AM-1:00 PM March 20  
**Location:** Classroom instruction will be held at the University of Idaho, Owyhee County Extension Office, 238 8th Ave W, Marsing (across from Marsing Schools, Hwy 78); live animal practice will be at local dairies.  
**Cost:** \$300 for entire school or \$100 for "tune-up session"



**Oregon State  
University**



**University of Idaho  
Extension**

### Learning To Breed Your Own Cows Has Its Advantages!

- ◆ Inseminate when it's convenient for you.
- ◆ Have the semen you want, when you need it.
- ◆ Increase your reproductive management skills
- ◆ Eliminate technician service fees.
- ◆ Cut herd health costs by infusing your own cows.
- ◆ Have full control of your A.I. breeding program.

### Train Your Employees!

- ◆ Share the breeding responsibility with employees.
- ◆ Additional trained employees can offer you freedom to take care of other things that need your attention.
- ◆ Increase employee morale and sense of ownership in your operation by investing time and training in your employees.
- ◆ Offered simultaneously in Spanish.

Equip yourself to maximize your herd's genetic potential while taking control of your own A.I. breeding program. Learn how to establish a breeding program that is tailor-made for you and your herd. Our goal is to teach you a working understanding of dairy and beef cattle breeding, heat detection, and other herd management practices. The more knowledge you acquire, the better equipped you will be to meet your herd breeding goals.

- ◆ **Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology:** Training will start with a thorough review of the reproductive tract, plus basic physiology.
- ◆ **Semen Handling:** Proper handling is critical to ensure high conception rates. You'll be given hands on training in proper semen storage, thawing, and handling.
- ◆ **Insemination Technique:** To successfully settle cows, reduce calving intervals, and increase profit, you need practice. You will learn the easy step-by-step insemination process in the classroom. Then you'll practice on live cattle. Through practice you'll develop a good grasp of what to expect with your own cows.
- ◆ **Heat Detection:** Accurate heat detection is the key to a successful A.I. program. We'll teach you tips proven through research, to establish and maintain a successful heat detection program.
- ◆ **Sire Selection & Interpreting USDA Proofs:** We will review basic genetics and guide you in evaluating sire information. This will help you confidently select bulls that will enhance your herd's genetics in the next generation.
- ◆ **Design Your Own Breeding Program:** Once armed with the knowledge and skills to breed your own cows, we can help you set up an effective breeding program to meet your herd's genetic goals.

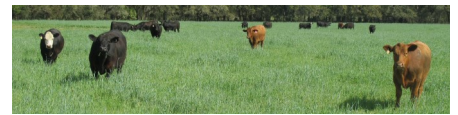
### For more information:

**Idaho:** Scott Jensen, UI Owyhee  
County Extension Educator  
896-4104; scottj@uidaho.edu  
or

**Oregon:** Sergio Arispe, OSU Livestock &  
Range Extension Agent-Malheur County  
541-881-1417;  
sergio.arispe@oregonstate.edu

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## Idaho Range Livestock Symposium

ADAPTING TO A CHANGING RANGELAND ENVIRONMENT

FREE TO ATTEND!



### Coming to a location near you!

January 6, Marsing | American Legion Hall  
January 7, Twin Falls | CSI Herrett Center  
January 8, Pocatello | Veterans Memorial Bldg.  
January 9, Rexburg | BYU Ag Science Center

### To RSVP for FREE LUNCH

<http://www.uidaho.edu/cnr/rangeland-center/events/irls>

Or call:

208-885-6536

*Courtesy of our generous sponsors!*

#### Partners:

University of Idaho Rangeland Center  
Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission  
Idaho Department of Lands  
Idaho State Department of Agriculture  
Idaho Cattle Association  
BLM and NRCS

#### Contact:

Scott Jensen, Owyhee County Extension  
[scottj@uidaho.edu](mailto:scottj@uidaho.edu) | 208-896-4104

Benton Glaze, Beef Specialist  
[bglaze@uidaho.edu](mailto:bglaze@uidaho.edu) | 208-736-3638

**Program:** 9 AM to 3:30 PM

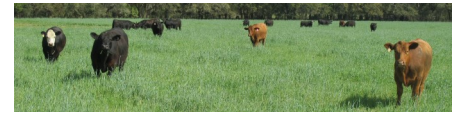
Registration, coffee, donuts, & trade show

- Grazing management. Kit Pharo, Pharo Cattle Company.
- Cooperative rangeland monitoring, Idaho State Dept. of Agriculture Range program.
- Strategic supplementation and Fitting cows to the rangeland environment. Dr. Jim Sprinkle, UI Extension Beef Specialist.
- Video snippets of current University of Idaho range livestock research.
- Grazing to manage fine fuels and fire risk. Dr. April Hulet, UI Extension Range Specialist.
- Premiums associated to BQA certification. Dr. Jason Ahola, CSA/Scott Jensen, UI Extension.
- Genetic selection. Kit Pharo, Pharo Cattle Company.

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# Cattlemen's Corner Beef Newsletter



*Empowering women in agriculture to achieve goals and manage risk.*

This conference is for women farmers and anyone who works with women farmers. If you have been farming for years, are a new & aspiring farmer, a banker, lender or in the agricultural industry, **this conference is for you!**

**Our Location: UI Canyon County Extension, 501 Main St. Caldwell, ID**

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**For information or questions: Samantha Ball [sroberts@uidaho.edu](mailto:sroberts@uidaho.edu)**

## Our 2020 Speakers!



**Brenda Mack**



**Shauna Reitmeier**



**Sue Schneider**



**Gabrielle McNally**

**Brenda Mack** and **Shauna Reitmeier** invite you to discover the connection between a Healthy You and a Healthy Farm. They will offer ideas for building and strengthening your resiliency while living a farm life, along with showing the effects stress has on your health and wellbeing. Tools will be shared to effectively cultivate healthy, mindful and intentional responses to feelings of sadness, worry and exhaustion. The ideas, suggestions and tools will lead to harvesting your own self-care plan with deliberate action plans that can be easily embedded into daily farm routines.

**Sue Schneider** will teach participants how to be calm, contented and centered. Unless people are aware of how they react to stress, they can easily be swept away by negative thoughts, emotions and judgments. Participants will explore a range of practices that can help them slow down, decrease reactivity and balance the nervous system.

**Gabrielle McNally** represents Women for the Land: American Farmland Trust's Initiative. Learn about their flagship program that engages women farmers and those who want to become farmers on the topics of conservation, farmland preservation, and land access. Learn how a partnership with this Initiative can implement peer-to-peer learning circle networks in your area.

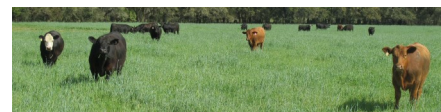
**A panel of local women farmers** will talk about how they developed their own self-care plan to deal with day-to-day events, make mindful decisions and face the challenges of being a farmer.

*Enjoy a day of inspiration, learning and networking with other women farmers. Our one-day gathering takes place simultaneously throughout Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Alaska and Hawaii!*

**Registration:** \$30 between December 10, 2019 and January 17, 2020; \$35 after January 17.

**To register, go to [WomenInAg.wsu.edu](http://WomenInAg.wsu.edu).** Check out the agenda, speaker information, sponsors and event site details.

WSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. Reasonable accommodation will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs. Contact Margaret Viebrock at Washington State University Extension, [viebrock@wsu.edu](mailto:viebrock@wsu.edu) or 509-745-8531, at least two weeks prior to the event.



## harvest and hearth

farm + heritage workshops  
with NCAP Grower's Own Conference



February 14, 2020 at the  
College of Idaho

livestock | crop production | farmstead management  
enterprise diversification | NCAP Grower's Own

**DATE:** Friday, February 14, 2020

**TIME:** 8:30-4:45 PM

**PLACE:** Held at the College of Idaho, 2112 Cleveland Blvd. Caldwell, ID 83605

**COST:** Early bird tickets are \$50. Prices go up to \$60 on January 24! [Register here](#)

Join us for the 2nd annual Harvest and Hearth! Harvest and Hearth focuses on conservation in agriculture and teaches farmers how to start or expand agricultural enterprises to adapt to the changing market.

Harvest and Hearth is excited to partner this year with [Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides](#) (NCAP.) For 11 years, NCAP has hosted the "Growers Own" conference.

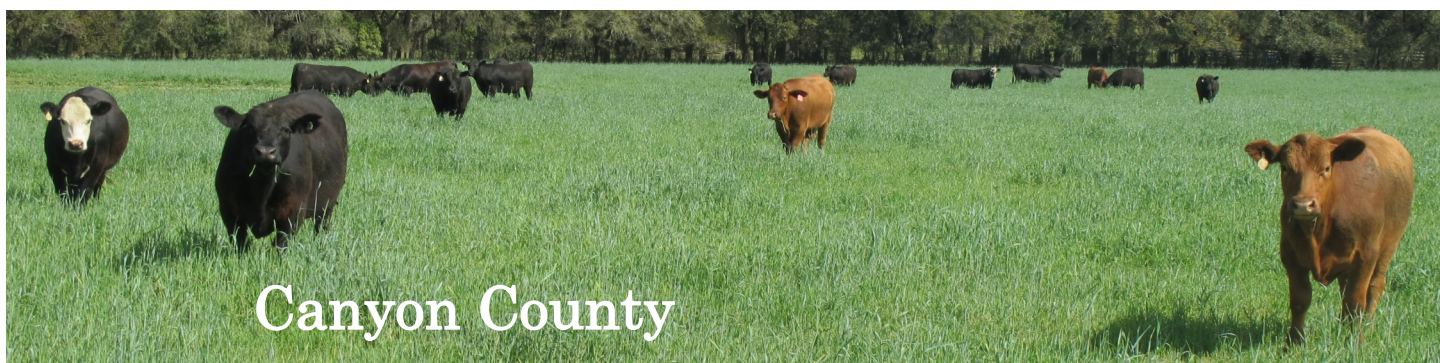
Featuring a wide variety of workshops and panels, Harvest and Hearth is a wonderful farmer-to-farmer educational opportunity. Select courses from five tracks: farmstead management, crop and field production, livestock management, enterprise diversification, and NCAP "Growers Own." Harvest and Hearth includes a keynote from our guest speakers, lunch, and wraps up with an informal networking session! The second day is optional, and is composed of hands-on courses that teach new skills that can be turned into farm enterprises.

We will gather together in the morning at the College of Idaho in Caldwell for a key-note address by molecular biologist Dr. David Johnson and his wife Hui-Chen Su about their cutting edge regenerative soil work. You will then be able to choose from various sessions happening concurrently throughout the day. Our sessions are listed below, and [you can see the full schedule here](#). Lunch is included in your registration, with featured local ingredients. Before you journey home, plan to come together once again during a casual social hour.

NCAP has a limited amount of conference scholarships available; to learn more about scholarships, contact Christina Stucker-Gassi at [cstuckergassi@pesticide.org](mailto:cstuckergassi@pesticide.org) or 541-344-5044, ext. 33.

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