A Planning Calendar for Beef Cattle Herd Health

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This calendar is designed as an aid for the beef cattle producer and his veterinarian in planning a herd disease control program. It consists of events that will take place during specific times of the reproductive year. This is the best way to start a program, as it will show the fastest return to the producer.

There is no single program for all herds. Some ranchers may expect a complete program to include reproductive examinations, vaccination and therapeutic procedures, and nutritional and selection consultation. Others may request a less sophisticated program. In any case, the consulting veterinarian should have a basic plan that is flexible enough to be applicable for any herd.

There are several constraints that must be recognized before this program can be used:

1. The calving interval must be 12 months.
2. Calves should be weaned at 6-9 months.
3. A definite breeding period must occur (80 days or less). Bulls must be put with the cows and removed from the breeding pastures on schedule. If A.I. is being used, proper facilities and heat-checking methods must be utilized.
4. Nutrition must be monitored and maintained to meet specific requirements at specific times of the year.
5. Records must be kept that at least contain breeding, calving, weaning, and disease control procedures. Individual cow records and disease incidence records are also important.
6. Every rancher should establish a good working relationship with his local veterinarian in developing the herd health program. This should include proper animal drug usage and adherence to food safety principles. Beef quality assurance is of particular importance and the producer must be a part of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship to assure violative drug residues and damaging injection site lesions do not occur.
7. The veterinarian must be able to evaluate the program and assess its impact upon the overall production and income of the cattle unit. He should be consulted for diagnostic procedures and should advise on vaccination and treatment programs. He should be aware of the nutritional requirements of reproduction and recommend the assistance of nutritional consultants for least cost rations. If these programs fail to increase production or decrease loss, they should be eliminated. He should be willing to teach the rancher or herdsman to properly perform procedures that do not require the services of a veterinarian. This should include the proper use of vaccines, parasite control products, therapeutic products, and, most important, **proper cleaning and disinfecting practices.** The veterinarian should also instruct the rancher on routine emergency procedures and when to call for professional help.

Use of the Calendar

No dates are given on this calendar. Weaning is the start and finish of each cycle. The column on the left is blank for you to insert the month you wean. Follow each month consecutively down the line; no matter which month you start with, you should end up at the same place at the end of the calendar year.

The procedures listed to the right of the month column indicate the cycle of reproduction.

The third column gives a list of procedures that may be done at specific intervals during the reproductive cycles. This includes a partial listing of surgical procedures and immunizations that are suggested. This is not a complete list and may be added to or deleted from the program based on your specific needs.

The column on the far right is left blank for you to add your own list of procedures. These could include pasture maintenance and fertilization, feeding schedules, heat synchronization, or other procedures.

Anaplasmosis and most parasite control are not included because these procedures must be initiated during specific periods of the year to correspond with insect vector activity and should be correlated with the production goals of the farm or ranch. Consult your veterinarian and design the program that fits your herd.

Throughout the year, observe the herd for sick cattle and conditions conducive to disease. Early diagnosis with prompt and adequate treatment will reduce death losses. Remember to utilize post mortem examinations and the diagnostic facilities available in the state. Refer to Extension Fact Sheet ANSI-3993, “A Guide for the Development of Preventive Medicine Program.”

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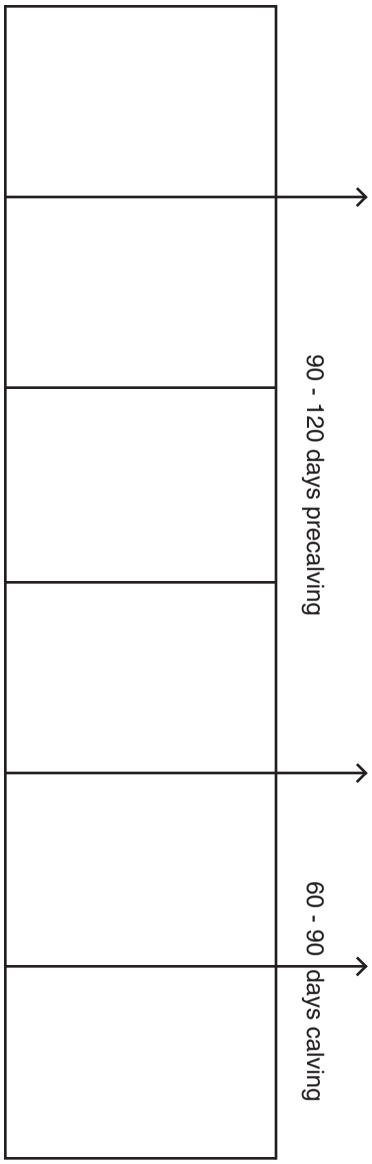

Month	Reproductive cycle	Working procedure	Other Management practices
	Wean	A. Weigh calves. B. Complete calf immunizations as advised by your veterinarian. C. Pregnancy test cows and cull. D. General physical exam; do cow body condition scores (BCS) for proper nutritional management for calving. E. Immunize cows against reproductive diseases if advised by veterinarian. F. Control internal and external parasites as advised by veterinarian. G. Include coccidiostat in calves weaning ration. H. Implant stocker-feeder calves. DO NOT IMPLANT REPLACEMENTS.	
	Precalving months	A. Monitor herd for nutrition—separate herd by age and body condition; young, old, and cows less than BCS5 should be on gaining ration and good condition cows on maintenance ration. B. Parasite control—internal and external. C. Prepare for calving. D. Catch up on record. E. Vaccinate cows with calf scour vaccine as advised by veterinarian.	
	Start calving heifers	A. Adequate surveillance and assistance on heifers. B. Assure adequate colostrum intake (2 quarts in first 6 hours). C. Identify and weigh calves. D. Maternal health for heifers and cows— 1) Proper nutrition. 2) Proper calving assistance. 3) Care for after-calving complications. E. Monitor growth of replacement heifers. Heifers should be on track to weigh 65% of mature weight at the beginning of the breeding season. Identify and give booster immunizations at least 1 mo. before breeding—i.e., I.B.R., B.V.D., Lepto, Vibrio if according to veterinarians's advice, and control parasites—both external and internal. F. Breeding soundness exams on bulls.	
	Start calving cows		

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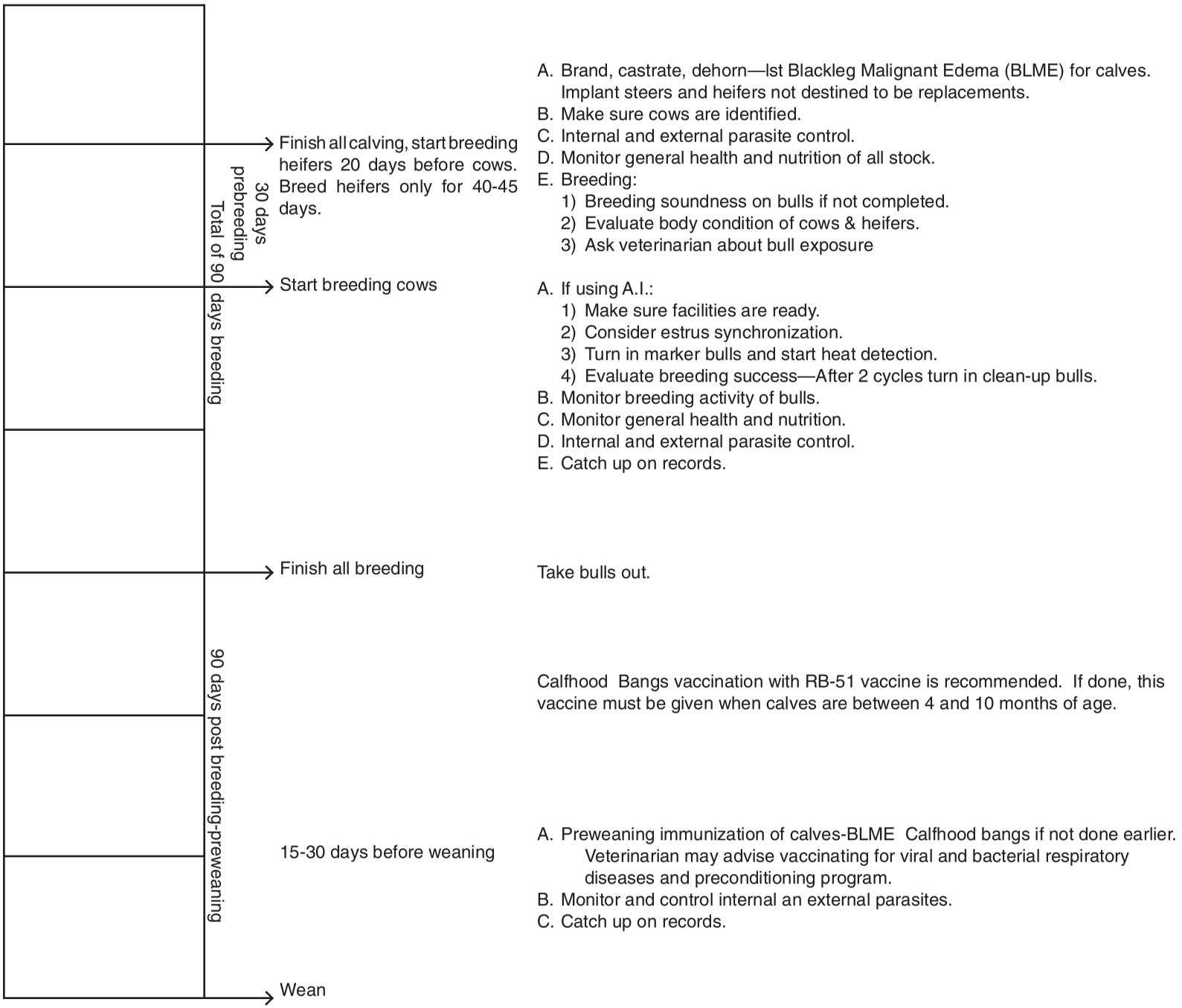

A. Brand, castrate, dehorn—lst Blackleg Malignant Edema (BLME) for calves. Implant steers and heifers not destined to be replacements.
B. Make sure cows are identified.
C. Internal and external parasite control.
D. Monitor general health and nutrition of all stock.
E. Breeding:
   1) Breeding soundness on bulls if not completed.
   2) Evaluate body condition of cows & heifers.
   3) Ask veterinarian about bull exposure

A. If using A.I.:
   1) Make sure facilities are ready.
   2) Consider estrus synchronization.
   3) Turn in marker bulls and start heat detection.
   4) Evaluate breeding success—After 2 cycles turn in clean-up bulls.
B. Monitor breeding activity of bulls.
C. Monitor general health and nutrition.
D. Internal and external parasite control.
E. Catch up on records.

Take bulls out.

Calfhood Bangs vaccination with RB-51 vaccine is recommended. If done, this vaccine must be given when calves are between 4 and 10 months of age.

A. Preweaning immunization of calves-BLME Calfhood bangs if not done earlier. Veterinarian may advise vaccinating for viral and bacterial respiratory diseases and preconditioning program.
B. Monitor and control internal an external parasites.
C. Catch up on records.

Special Procedures

Some aspects of preventative medicine do not fit into a reproductive calendar but are governed by season or climate. Some of these are internal and external parasite control and anaplasmosis control.

A. Deworming programs:

1. Due to differences in types of grasses, rainfall, and level of internal parasite infections within herds, it is recommended that you seek your local veterinarian's advice on deworming programs within your herd. Remember, new products become available and some older products are removed from distribution. Check with your veterinarian about the best product for your herd.
2. Advantages of deworming:
   a. Less feed to maintain cows.
   b. Better body condition, therefore, improved milk, production, and breeding efficiency.
   c. Improved weaning weights in calves. Oklahoma and Nebraska ranch trials showed an average weaning weight increase of 25 pounds in calves from dewormed cows when compared to controls.

B. External parasite control programs:

1. Treat for grubs in the fall. Carefully follow directions. Some pour-on products may be toxic to Brahman breeds.
2. Treat for lice in winter. Most products require two treatments. Lice suck a considerable amount of blood from cattle and damage the hair coat, thereby causing them to loose body heat and increase wintering costs.
3. Fly tags in the summer. Tags may markedly decrease the amount of hornflies, reduce face flies to some extent and help to reduce the tick population. Always use two tags per animal, and the manufacturer recommends removing tags when working cows in the fall. Flies commonly develop resistance to fly tags. Contact your veterinarian or extension entomologist for advice on the best tag to use.

C. Anaplasmosis control:

1. The equation for any anaplasmosis problem is a simple one: No controls + carriers + horseflies and ticks = OUTBREAKS.
2. In southeast Oklahoma, a control program is a must!
3. Carrier animals are generally carriers for life.
4. Control programs for anaplasmosis (to be used during the vector season). Control may be through use of vaccine or tetracycline administration. Differences in management systems, geographical areas, and disease incidence affect control procedures. Consult your veterinarian.
5. Anaplasmosis can also be spread from cow to cow with tagging equipment, dehorning and castrating equipment, and using the same needle repeatedly during vaccination procedures, etc. So practice good techniques when working cattle.

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