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Transcription of Secondary culling criteria, episode 25

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BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION

00;00;16;16 - 00;00;44;19
Unknown
Welcome to Pasture to Profit. My name is Scott Stinnett, CSU extension specialist here in Kit Carson County, located in the Burlington, Colorado office. And again today, my colleague Travis Taylor from the Yuma County office located in Wray, Colorado. Travis, how are you doing today? Well, I think today it's kind of nice. Scott. We've had some tremendous wins. We've had some other things here in eastern Colorado over the last month, and it's been a nice day.

00;00;44;22 - 00;01;03;21
Unknown
It's kind of cool and cloudy, and we got a little bit of snow and rain over the weekend. So things are looking up for us. Yeah, we're kind of in that transition teaser period between is it spring or is it not? But with that thought, a lot of guys are either have started or are just about to start carving.

00;01;03;24 - 00;01;25;23
Unknown
Although we hope that everybody has a very high calf crop, we know that sometimes we're not going to have those problems. And it all comes back to looking at the cowherd, and we need to make some considerations when it comes to culling our cows out and making those market animals for us. As right now, coal cow prices are extremely high, higher than I've ever seen them.

00;01;26;00 - 00;01;50;27
Unknown
But we know the obvious things to cull off of again are open cows and bad attitudes to things we really don't need in our herd. But let's talk about some secondary considerations today, Travis. And you did your master's work on body condition scores. So let's just talk about body condition scores. You know, we talk about those cows that are easy doers versus those that are maybe hard doers.

00;01;50;27 - 00;02;17;21
Unknown

And how do we use body condition score to kind of denote that in our cowherd? Well, like you said, Scott, it's calving time. It's one of the key points where we're a lot of our producers are probably tagging calves, and they're putting them down in some kind of book somewhere. And along with that, I think it's important that we should probably evaluate body condition score, utter score and feet score at the same time when we're looking at these cows.

00;02;17;21 - 00;02;37;25
Unknown
So if we want to take body condition score, you know, there's some data out there that shows that a cow that's in a body condition score of four, as we go from calving to breeding is not going to be as fertile as a cow that's in a five or a six as we go back, because we're entering that time period.

00;02;37;25 - 00;03;07;03
Unknown
We're getting baby calves on the ground, and we've got about 80 days to get that cow bred back. And so she calves a year from now, I think it's important that maybe we pay a little bit of attention to those cows that are in thinner condition. There's some data out there from Funston and others in Nebraska that would show as a if a cows increasing in her energy in terms of her intake, she's more likely to breed as well.

00;03;07;03 - 00;03;30;15
Unknown
So it's not that we're hopeless in getting that condition score for cow bread, but we really need to be turning around to something and getting her turned around in a positive way. But at the same time, she's headed towards peak lactation here. Day 50 or 60. We're going to have some issues getting enough energy into that cow on a native range situation to really force her up.

00;03;30;15 - 00;03;52;17
Unknown
So we really want to make sure we're trying to keep those cows in fives to sixes as they can. So let's just quickly review body condition scores run from 1 to 9, one being extremely emaciated to the point that they really have no energy to even walk, no internal energy left to those nines, which I've never seen a nine.

00;03;52;17 - 00;04;11;17
Unknown
I've seen some eights, but I don't know that I want to see one that's quite a nine that's so fat and has excess amounts of energy. But we want to be somewhere right in the middle 4 or 5 and six. But there's a big difference between four, five and six. And right at calving time, if we're a five we can lose a little bit of energy, give up just a touch.

00;04;11;19 - 00;04;43;21
Unknown
But we don't want to give up too much because there's a big difference in fertilizing between 4 or 5 and six. The research I've looked at a lot of

the data puts those and there's some variation depending on which study you look at. But a cow that comes back into breeding as a four is going to breed somewhere around the 60 to 70% range, whereas those that get up in the five and six can be 80 and 90% to breed back.

00;04;43;25 - 00;05;16;14
Unknown
And that's quite a significant difference. Yeah. I think when you start looking at that, what we're really looking at is that first service conception rate, right. So when that first service, when they're ready to breed after the bulls turned out those cows that maybe aren't that condition score five. It's going to take another 21 days of that cow on good green grass or good forage to build back up enough energy to get to get that conception rate.

00;05;16;15 - 00;05;47;19
Unknown
If we start putting a cow behind every 21 days, it doesn't take long until she falls out of a 45 day breeding season pretty quickly. So when we look at those situations, I think it is definitely important, you know, to have that five cow at calving and be able to maintain her and this time of year start to get her towards green pasture as she hits peak milk production to maintain that weight.

00;05;47;22 - 00;06;13;00
Unknown
You know, the research that we compiled through our beef Quality Assurance a while ago said that a cow from a body condition score to a body condition score five in eastern Colorado, that's about 100 pounds of weight. So, you know, we we have a very hard time in the wintertime putting on 100 pounds of actual weight if she was thin last fall.

00;06;13;03 - 00;06;48;05
Unknown
Plus, we're going to have to put on over 100 pounds of calf and fluids in utero. Most of our cows don't come in to calving season, weighing 200 pounds more than they did to fall before. That's a lot of energy to get those cows in the correct condition if she falls behind. So I think it's important to manage those body condition scores during the winter, at calving, at breeding, at weaning time, to make sure we don't have one of those cows that just loses too much.

00;06;48;08 - 00;07;16;23
Unknown
Right? Because we've got really a without supplemental feeding, we've got a very narrow window to gain to put a body condition score and add an extra 100 pounds to a cow, and that's after they've kind of reached that peak lactation before we wean. So my suggestion would be we want to look at these cows right before the calf, see what body condition we're in, check them at weaning time and then see right before we go into winter.

00;07;16;27 - 00;07;35;19
Unknown

Where are they able to gain that body score to the point that we want from a little bit of loss during lactation? I think that's spot on, Scott. And I think the other thing we need to start thinking about is what are the things that are causing that cow to maybe not be the body condition score we want?

00;07;35;26 - 00;07;59;09
Unknown
Is it our supplementation program? Is it a very low quality forage that doesn't have anything in there? Is it the fact that she has mobility issues and can't get around in graze? Or is it the fact that she maybe has some issues with her mouth and teeth and, she's just not capable to grind the feed and utilize it the way that a cow needs to?

00;07;59;11 - 00;08;19;28
Unknown
I think it's more than just knowing the body condition scores. It's now going beyond that to find what's causing that decrease in body condition score. I agree, and one of the big things you just touched on is the mouth. You know, mouthing cows. We can we can guess their age, but age and mouth where is two different things.

00;08;20;01 - 00;08;42;00
Unknown
We can see some cattle that are relatively young, that wear their teeth down relatively quickly, and others who are older, who are in great shape. And we use three kind of basic terms, especially when we go to like the sale barn, these terms will be thrown around. We'll talk about solid mouth, broke mouth, and smooth mouth and solid mouth are usually our younger cows.

00;08;42;01 - 00;09;00;29
Unknown
They're mature, they have all their mature teeth, and we see that if we open up their mouth, get them in the head gate, open their mouth up. And of course, cows only have bottom teeth. They're on the front, so it's easy to look at. And if all their teeth are present and all of them seem to be relatively level, we'd call that cow solid mouth cow.

00;09;01;01 - 00;09;43;01
Unknown
If we see she's had some damages, you know, some broken teeth or some missing teeth or some extreme where, you know, uneven where we're going to call her broken mouth. And yes, that can have some significant disadvantages for her during grazing. But the ones we really want to watch out for, the old what we call the smooth mouth, those cows that have worn their teeth down from multiple years of grazing due to their age as well, that the amount of tooth that is left in their mouth in the front teeth is very low, very limited, and their ability to graze may be very significantly disadvantaged.

00;09;43;04 - 00;10;14;05
Unknown

Well, and I think there's some other things in eastern Colorado and I've experienced them. I'll give you a, for instance, because that's always fun to have. I had a set of cows for my particular year. There were yearlings during a very dry drought season and kept those cow heifers and bred them, and those heifers lost their teeth. That whole set of heifers on that year lost their teeth about two years earlier than expected.

00;10;14;10 - 00;10;46;19
Unknown
So it's not always the fact that what we're doing right now, it may have been how we handle those cattle three or 4 or 5 years earlier, and we've come through some dry periods in the early 2020s that you may have some cows that just maybe their teeth aren't holding the way they should for their age. And particularly for those of us, the Grays and some of this sandy or soils in this country, or go to corn stalks on some of these sandy fields, we can wear down teeth a lot faster than we think.

00;10;46;19 - 00;11;10;16
Unknown
Scott. Yeah, so it's not about the age of the cow as much as it is. Let's look at our mouth now along with that. Another problem. And you touched on it just a little bit. There might be mobility. And one of the things we're looking at, and a lot of the purebred associations are really taking into consideration, is foot angle and claw set.

00;11;10;19 - 00;11;35;20
Unknown
How all that ties right back into the cows mobility and her structure and her ability to get around, and her want to get around without pain or other problems to graze. Yeah. Scott, I think it's it's a huge deal. Right. And a lot of that we're finding out is genetics. So it's not just important that we pay attention on the cows.

00;11;35;20 - 00;11;56;14
Unknown
It is bull buying season as well. So when you're looking at those bulls that are coming out of soft lots and you see those front toes that kind of curl or cross, you want to make sure that you pay attention to that because that claws we say on each toe, if it curls in, it rubs an asset abscess on the other toe.

00;11;56;16 - 00;12;22;21
Unknown
When those bulls are out chasing, so set to the heel, having enough heel on a cow, making sure the toes aren't extremely long, and then both toes are shaped evenly. I think those are things that happen and you hit on it earlier. Scott. The price that cool cows are now that we have never seen. If you have those cows that sometimes just come, I'm claimed during the summer.

00;12;22;26 - 00;12;49;03
Unknown
Not sure why. Take a look at their feet, make sure that maybe those. Maybe now's the time to be able to sell that $2,000 Cole cow and replace

her with an extra heifer that you're retaining in the fall. So I think it's important to pay attention to feet and legs, particularly if you're buying genetics in terms of bulls this time of season.

00;12;49;06 - 00;13;14;12
Unknown
A lot of the research that's out there puts the range of about a 20%. So 1 in 5 chance of heredity. So that's that's pretty high on compared to a lot of our genetics that are out there. So if you got a cow that's got bad feet you've got a bull. It's got bad feet. It's a pretty, pretty good chance that that offspring is going to have some bad feet and claws.

00;13;14;14 - 00;13;40;23
Unknown
Yeah, I think I think it's important. It truly has some genetic influence and then it has some environmental influence. If we have a soft winter, if we have to put these cows in because we don't have forage and they've been held in a dry lot situation where we've got some weather and we've got some mud for a significant period of time, it can exaggerate those genetic issues that we see.

00;13;40;23 - 00;14;03;16
Unknown
So it's another something to pay attention to. And like I said, when you're out there at that calving book, make sure that you're giving her a underscore and make sure you're giving her a feat and leg score. Right. And let's touch on that underscore one more time and why having an utter score and evaluating udders is important. Well, Scott, I don't like to milk a cow.

00;14;03;18 - 00;14;22;04
Unknown
And if we have the right size teeth that a calf can get Ahold of and make sure that they can get up and nurse, that's great. I've seen some old cows that maybe the calf has to be a month old before he can finally open and get to the back quarter on an old cow. It's got a huge utter.

00;14;22;09 - 00;14;54;18
Unknown
And I'm from that generation where I remember putting cows in the chute and having to milk down the first couple teats so that those calves can go, just not economically feasible for everybody to spend time and money and effort doing that. So if we can get rid of those and pay attention to them. And for sure, when you go back through that book in the fall, if her mother had a bad utter, you probably don't want to keep her and perpetuate those time consuming activities.

00;14;54;18 - 00;15;20;12
Unknown
So I think all that can really be justified in terms of a short, quick couple extra seconds when you're writing that calf tag in the book. There's two more columns in those little red books or in any sheet you've got, or you can give her a 1 to 5 score on an utter with one being great and five being poor, and maybe help us manage our replacements.

00;15;20;14 - 00;15;48;18
Unknown
If not, just get rid of some cows that are causing us some trouble. I mean, all these things we've talked about today can be quantitative, can be it just a number beaks 1 to 9ft in closet 1 to 9 and then other scores 1 to 5. So quantitatively, if they add up and they've got a lot of numbers that don't work in their favor, it makes it pretty easy to put them over in the need to be called need to be marketed Pin.

00;15;48;21 - 00;16;16;05
Unknown
Well, I think it has, particularly if you think you're going to have a dry season and you've got to adjust stocking rates. Let's get rid of the ones that are the problem. Secondly, every one of us has a short term memory because we get on to doing something else. So sometimes when that cow comes in in the fall, even though she's raised a calf, we forget that we spent two days with her, putting her in the chute every day to milk those teats down to get a calf started.

00;16;16;07 - 00;16;39;24
Unknown
That's not on the top of our mind when we're trying to get calves weaned, preconditioned, and sent down the road for a paycheck, we forget about those things, and records is only as good as the utilization we get out of them. So if you do keep these things, make sure you go back and look at them and those that could be a problem.

00;16;39;26 - 00;17;11;16
Unknown
Well, Travis, I hope what we've discussed today here will be beneficial to our producers. Obviously. Yes, we're right in the middle of calving season. We're not necessarily thinking about culling, but if we can start making documentation of these issues and it may make our culling decisions a lot easier come this fall. I agree, Scott, and if anybody has any questions about what we've talked about today, they can reach me at the Yuma County office at (970)332-4151.

00;17;11;19 - 00;17;24;11
Unknown
And I'm here in the Kit Carson County office, and I can be reached at (719)346-5571. So again, thanks for listening to Pasture to Profit. We'll hope you'll listen next time.

END TRANSCRIPTION