

# **Developing Heifers for Replacement**

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## **I. Keeping and selling are same program.**

- A. Keeping heifers fit our personal breeding season.
- B. Sale heifers are available in broader season for different clients.
- C. Program was started in 1967, with many changes over the years.
  - 1. At first, medium plane of nutrition—55 to 70% conception in 90 days.
  - 2. Now we are at a higher plane of nutrition with higher conception rates.
- D. Expanded from heifers for our use to include some for sale due to an increased demand.

## **Risk**

### **II.**

- A. Must be aware of investment risk on gain, breeding, and health costs.
- B. Can sell at weaning for known amount, or gamble an additional cost and sell later with no hedging, such as feeding cattle.
- C. Possibility of complications with health and weather, affecting gain and conception percentages.

## **Resources**

### **III.**

- A. Consider if you have heifers suitable in quality, weight, and breeding to work with.
- B. Pasture suitable for gains necessary to arrive at target weight for breeding.
- C. Availability of economical supplement from weaning to end of breeding season.

## **Program**

### **IV.**

- A. Some heifers are done on own property with our management—best results.
- B. Some are done on gain basis with our involvement, but outside management—variable results.
- C. Wean in August–September at 600 lb for fall calves, and 550 lb for spring calves.
  - 1. With addition of spring calves, we have lengthened breeding season to accommodate younger, lighter heifers.
  - 2. Last year 105 days—90% conception on heifers done on our ranches.
  - 3. Teach to eat; shots include: 8-way Blackleg, Virus, Trich, Lepto, Vibrio; deworm, and fly control.
  - 4. Bulls in December 1st—4 to 6 weeks before adult herd.
  - 5. Target weight over 700 lb, approximately 65% of 1100 lb cow weight; need to gain over 1 lb per head per day.
- D. Selling heifers, and keeping heifers bred to same bulls.
  - 1. Low birth E.P.D. but good growth, high wean and yearling E.P.D.'s.
  - 2. No use in breeding heifers if not going to raise a good calf.
  - 3. This kind of bull expensive.
- E. Like heifers to weigh 925 lb at calving.
  - 1. Begin supplement to maintain body condition critical to breed back early.
- F. Deliver sold heifers in June or July.