



Managing Cows In Confinement

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Cactus Feeders



# History

- Nine Commercial Feedyards
- Syracuse was in need of major capital improvement
- Same time as drought of 2010-2011
- Original idea was place cows at commercial yards





# Changes

- 45,000 head feedyard converted to 8,500 head cow yard
- Cross fences out
- Limit fed ration with no mill
- Pen stocking rate
  - 750 ft<sup>2</sup> per pair













# Goals

- Produce high quality calves that can perform at the feedyard
- Develop production protocols
- Bring the Syracuse yard back to life
- Improve genetic composition and partnerships



# Nutrition

- Ration Composition
  - Chopped corn stalks
  - Wet distillers grain
  - Whole corn
  - Silage and/or chopped alfalfa
  - Supplement pellet





# Nutrition

- All cows are limit fed— Feed is 80% of costs
- Ration composition does not change but amount fed changes
- Only two rations on the yard— cow and calf
- Rumensin is added





# Nutrition

- Production Stages and feed amounts (as fed)
  - Dry P1 cow— 26-28 lbs
  - Dry P2 cow — 30-32 lbs
  - Dry P3 cow— 32-34 lbs
  - Lactating cow— 46-48 lbs
  - Replacement heifer— 28-30 lbs





# Nutrition

- Bunk space is critical when limit feeding
- Feeding two times a day has been a good change
- The energy dense ration can pick cows up
- Be mindful of protein levels









# Creep Feeding

- 16% CTC pellet is offered to calves at 1 week
- Pellet is phased out while ration is phased in
- Simple hot wire creep areas provide bunk access and a safe space for calves
- Wire mesh is used over creep feed bunks









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# Calf Weaning

- Target is 120 days, but earlier is preferred
- Weaning at 110 days—302 lb average
- 2-3 days of bawling but no decrease in intake
- Estimate 3+ lbs per day after weaning
- Sort into large, medium, and small groups



# Breeding

- Partnership with ABS
- AI and Embryo projects
- Timed AI and clean up bulls
- Median calf age at breeding is 60 days, while sorted, calves get vaccinations
- 45 day breeding season



	<b>Feb/March</b>	<b>April/May</b>	<b>Sep/Oct</b>
<b>Breed</b>	<b>May 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>July 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Nov 28<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Preg Check</b>	<b>July 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Oct 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Feb 18<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Start Calving</b>	<b>Feb 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>April 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Sep 3<sup>rd</sup></b>
<b>End Calving</b>	<b>March 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>June 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Oct 17<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Work Calves</b>	<b>May 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>July 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Nov 28<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Wean Calves</b>	<b>July 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Sep 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Feb 2<sup>nd</sup></b>



# Breeding

- 7 day CO-synch + CIDR
  - 3 times through the chute, 3 calf sorts
- MGA is used on heifers
- I would not suggest temporary weaning to anyone





# Health

- Weather is a huge factor in calf health
- Newborn calves get Inforce 3 and Calf Guard
- 60 days old—Pentavalent and 7-way
- Weaning— Pentavalent, presponse, 7-way, injectable wormer, and white wormer



# Health

- All breeding stock get a modified live pentavalent with lepto and vibrio, a 7-way, wormed, and back poured
- Heifers get two rounds of vaccine
- Used to give scour guard but have stopped
- All heifers are PI tested





# Health

- Access to a calf ranch has improved health tremendously
- Calves that have any issues are removed immediately
- Removal of problem children allow pen riders to look deeper in the pen











# Facilities

- How to keep calves in
- Fence height off ground
- Access to water for calves
- Shade structures for calves
- Flexible processing area





# Facilities

- Maternity Areas
- Wind Breaks
- Cow shade areas
- Think about challenges of kicking pens out



# Personnel

- Calf care takes a combination of feedlot cowboy and ranch cowboy
- Maintenance takes a combination of repair and new construction
- Day labor can be used during peak times





# Challenges

- Calf health
- Breed-up %
- Feeding levels
- Replacement development
- Facility upgrades



Thank You

