



Getting the Most from Your Breeding Program *with Ron Gordon, QualiTech, Inc.*

Cost of Reproduction

As the seasons change it's time to start think about your breeding program for next year and what you might do to produce the next champion. The first thing you should think about is the money you invest in reproduction. Think about how much money you spend on straws of semen, how much money you spend on embryo transfers and what you have riding on the results.

Body Condition Scores

With the amount of money being spent on reproduction, your first goal should be about nutrition. This is how you ensure you are giving your cows their best shot at conception. Your goal should be getting your cows in a Body Condition Score (BCS) of 5.5 to 6 at rebreeding time. BCS is based on a system of 1 to 9. A cow with a BCS of 1 is on the verge of death due to malnutrition and a cow with a BCS of 9 is eating you out of house and home. (See table 1 for complete BCS chart)

BCS

- 1 Emaciated** Little muscle left
- 2 Very Thin** No fat, bones visible
- 3 Thin** Foreribs visible
- 4 Borderline** Forerib not visible. 12th & 13th ribs visible
- 5 Moderate** Neither fat nor thin
- 6 Good** Smooth appearance
- 7 Very Good** Smooth with fat over back and tail head
- 8 Fat** Blocky, bone over back not visible
- 9 Very Fat** Tail buried and in fat

The best time to effectively change BCS in your cows is after you wean your calves, 60 to 90 days prior to calving. At this time, the cow's nutritional requirements are less than any other time of the year. If you have cows that need to increase their BCS, the best way to do this is to group the cows that need to increase their BCS and feed them separately. This will allow you to change their BCS and maintain the BCS of the rest of the herd with less feed. One thing to keep in mind is the cows that need to improve their BCS are often some of your best cows as they tend to milk heavier and raise bigger calves.

Forage

When feeding cows, the basis of the ration should be forage. The forage should consist of your grass and hay. In order to use forage as your

basis you should know what is in your grass and hay. The best way to do this is to have your forage analyzed and build your supplementation program around your forage. Think of your forage in terms of Excellent, Good, Medium and Poor. This rating system is developed by looking at the Crude Protein, Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) and Relative Feed Value (RFV). (See table 2) Once you know the quality of your forage you can best match the type of supplementation program to meet your herd's nutritional requirements. (See table 3)

FORAGE QUALITY

Excellent

14% CP, 62% TDN, 2.8% BW Intake 170 – 185 RFV

Matching Supplements: Free Choice Mineral or Mineral Tub and Salt.

Good

12% CP, 58% TDN, 2.6% BW Intake 150 – 170 RFV

Matching Supplements: Free Choice Mineral or Mineral Tub and Salt.

Medium

8% CP, 51% TDN, 2.25% BW Intake 130 – 150 RFV

Matching Supplements: Protein and Energy Tubs, Cubes, Protein Mineral Mix and/or Free Choice Minerals and Salt.

Poor

4% CP, 38% TDN, 1.75% BW Intake Under 130 RFV

Matching Supplements: Protein and Energy Tubs, Cubes, Protein Mineral Mix and/or Free Choice Minerals and Salt.

With Excellent and Good quality forage you can most likely get by with supplementing a good mineral and salt. With Medium and Poor quality forage you will need to supplement protein and energy along with mineral and salt. The reason why a mineral should always be supplemented is due to the fact that the minerals found in forage can be highly variable in their bioavailability to the animal. The cost of supplementing mineral is a small cost in the big scheme of your breeding program.

Trace Minerals

Using an organic or protected source of the trace minerals Zinc, Copper and Manganese, like SQM™, can pay big dividends in your breeding program. Reproduction is a function of each of these traces minerals. Research has shown that with SQM™ you can have fewer services per conception, higher first service conception rates and improved BCS. (See table 4)

PRO BULL NUTRITION

FEEDING **32%** OF THE *In The Money* BULLS LAS VEGAS 2011
& CONTINUING TO PLACE MORE BULLS *In The Money*
THAN ANY OTHER FEEDING PROGRAM.

WE APPRECIATE OUR CUSTOMERS
AND EXTEND A BIG

Thank You To All!

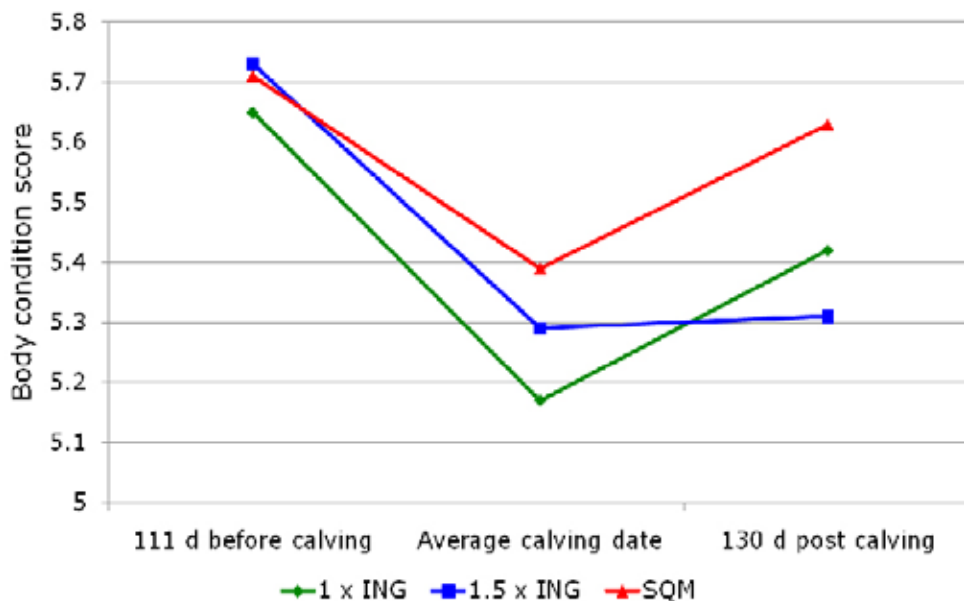
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AND DISTRIBUTORS NEAR YOU;
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WWW.MANNSVILLEAGCENTER.COM
OR CALL OUR OFFICES AT 580-371-9588

Conclusion

Looking at your breeding program could help you produce the next ABBI futurity champion. The goal of a BCS of 5.5 to 6 at breeding time has to be based around your forage program to be the most cost efficient. Have your forage tested so you know what you're dealing with. After you know what your forage deficiencies are get on a supplementation program so you can meet your cow's nutrition requirements. A well balanced mineral program, with SQM Protected Trace Minerals, may mean the difference between success and failure in your breeding program. Here's hoping your next calf crop brings you the 23 point calf you're looking for to be the next champion.



Burns and Aznarez, 2005