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Survey of Northwest Kansas
Cow-Calf Producers¹

D.D. Simms,² G. Boyd, and L.R. Corah

Summary

An in-depth survey of reproductive performance and management practice was conducted on 169 cow/calf operations in Northwest Kansas.

Introduction

A survey of cow/calf management practices was conducted to gain a better knowledge of the management techniques being used by producers and to aid in extension program planning and evaluation.

Procedure

One hundred and sixty-nine cow-calf producers in northwest Kansas were surveyed by county extension agricultural agents. While we recommended that agents select a random sample of cow-calf producers, those active in extension programs were sometimes given priority in interview selection. Most of the surveys were completed "one on one" to increase the accuracy of information collected. Data represent either the 1984 or 1985 calf crop. The 169 herds surveyed had 24,359 breeding age females for an average of 144 per herd.

Results

The responses of cow-calf producers to a variety of management oriented questions is summarized below.

Reproduction

Average length of the breeding season in days	105
% of cows exposed that calved	91.0
% of cows exposed that weaned a calf	85.7
% of calves born in 1st 20 days of the calving season	38.0
% of calves born in 1st 40 days of the calving season	66.0
% of calves born in 1st 60 days of the calving season	84.0
% of heifers assisted at calving	25.2
% of cows assisted at calving	2.7
% of calves dying within 5 days of birth	3.8
% of calves dying from birth to weaning	5.8

¹Appreciation is expressed to the County Extension Agricultural Agents in northwest Kansas for their assistance in conducting this survey.

²Extension Livestock Specialist, Northeast Kansas.

Reproduction (cont.)

% of open mature cows in herds that are pregnancy checked	4.2
% of open yearling heifers in herds that are pregnancy checked	8.4
% of open 1st calf heifers in herds that are pregnancy checked	9.9
% of herds that are pregnancy checked	47.3
% of producers breeding heifers prior to cows	46.7
% breeding heifers to calve at 24 mo of age	94.0
% breeding heifers to calve at 30 mo of age	5.6
Average number of cows per bull	25.0
% semen checking bulls	59.6

Production

Average weaning weight of steer calves, lb	513.7
Average weaning weight of heifer calves, lb	473.1

Breeding and Selection

% of producers not crossbreeding	12.9
% of producers utilizing straightbred cows	21.2
% of producers with a systematic crossbreeding plan	60.3

% of producers using the following traits as the primary selection trait:

<u>Trait</u>	<u>Heifers</u>	<u>Bulls</u>
Type or Conformation	24.3	20.4
Performance of Dam	17.7	1.2
Weaning Weight	15.8	4.3
Frame	7.9	11.2
Weight-For-Age	7.9	5.6
Disposition	6.7	1.2
Size	6.1	—
Yearling Weight	6.1	5.6
Conception	1.2	—
Breeder Reputation	0.6	7.4
Performance of Sire	0.6	5.6
Pedigree	0.6	1.2
Birth Weight	—	21.7
Breeding Value	—	4.9
Individual Performance	—	6.2
Scrotal Circumference	—	1.2
Cost	—	1.2

Management

% of producers identifying calves at birth	84.0
% buying 1 year old bulls	26.6
% buying 1.5 year old bulls	22.0
% buying 2 year old bulls	51.2
Average cash costs per cow per year	\$257

Nutrition

Average summer acreage allotted per cow-calf pair	7.9
% of producers with range in poor condition	2.2
% with range in fair condition	15.5
% with range in good condition	74.8
% with range in excellent condition	7.4
% with poor grazing distribution	5.9
% with good grazing distribution	94.0
% separating pregnant cows from cows that have calves	43.3
% implanting steer calves	88.4
% implanting heifer calves	38.6
% creep feeding calves	17.6

Marketing

Average number of groups into which calves were sorted at sale	3.8
% of producers that have at one time wintered their calves	89.4
% that have finished calves at home or in a commercial feedlot	24.2
% selling calves at auction	85.8
% selling directly off the farm	11.4

Health

% of producers that vaccinate for the following items:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Heifers</u>	<u>Calves</u>
None	31.3	28.4	9.5
Vibriosis	55.6	44.4	4.1
Leptospirosis	62.1	53.2	19.5
Blackleg	5.3	23.6	85.2
Brucellosis	—	20.7	—
Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR)	11.2	19.5	32.5
Bovine Virus Diarrhea (BVD)	11.2	13.6	14.8
Parainfluenza-3 (PI ₃)	2.9	9.5	17.7
Scours	10.6	5.9	—
Hemophilus Somnus	1.2	1.2	5.3

% reporting these specific disease problems:

Scours	33.1
Respiratory Disease	17.2
Pinkeye	8.9
Footrot	6.5
Coccidiosis	1.8
Cancer eye	1.8
Blackleg	1.2
Bangs	1.2

% worming cows or calves	44.9
% treating for external parasites	85.2
% without a fly control program	11.2