

# **COW/CALF CORNER**

**The Newsletter**

**From the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service**

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## **COOL is Back...Again**

Derrell S. Peel, OSU Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

Now that the Farm Bill process is finally over, cattle producers should be ready for the long delayed implementation of Country of Origin Labeling (COOL). The new Farm Bill has some language that modifies the previous COOL legislation and that has a couple of implications for producers.

First, the new language simplifies the meat labels and the records requirements for COOL. This should make it easier for some producers to meet COOL requirements although the legislation applies to the requirements for meat retailers and it will be up to them to decide exactly what records to request from packers, feedlots, stocker and cow-calf producers. The second implication is that the legislative changes mean that the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) must change the implementation rules to conform to the new language. This means that the final rules are not yet spelled out and there is some uncertainty about the dates of implementation. It is anticipated that AMS will move quickly to implement interim rules while going through the process of finalizing the rules.

The new language emphasizes the use of existing business records whenever possible to minimize the burden on producers. For many cow-calf producers, existing business records are likely sufficient and producers may simply have to offer an affidavit that they have the records to document the origin of the calves they sell. Documenting cull breeding animals could be problematic and producers should give some thought to keeping records for later

years when cull animals are sold. Current animals will likely be grandfathered in as of a date to be determined.

For many stocker producers, COOL may require some new recordkeeping efforts. Producers will likely need to request affidavits of origin for cattle they buy and maintain records sufficient to link those buying groups to commingled and sorted selling groups. It is not necessarily the case that producers must use individual animal ID to meet COOL requirements. It may be possible to verify multiple purchase groups of animals that all have the same origin (i.e. born and raised in the USA) which are subsequently sorted and commingled into different selling groups but can be shown to all be covered by the same label, for which the stocker producer can offer an affidavit as seller. In other cases, it may well be that the easiest and least costly way for the stocker producer to meet COOL requirements is to use individual animal ID to track animals through the stocker operation.

Producers should watch for additional information as the details are finalized in the coming weeks and months.

## **Common Sense is the Key to Hot Weather Cattle Handling**

Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

Summer is rapidly approaching!! The breeding season is underway. Producers that are engaged in artificial insemination as a method of breeding cows and heifers need to be aware of the impact that handling cattle in summertime temperatures and humidity can have on reproductive success. Research, at OSU in the 1980's, found that cattle heat stressed shortly after breeding had substantially higher embryo loss than cattle that were left in more pleasant environments. In those experiments, the average core body temperature of the heat stressed cows was increased by a mere 1.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Rough handling of excitable cattle in hot weather can further impact body temperature and therefore reproductive performance.

Recent data has been reported by Dr. Mader at the University of Nebraska research station near Concord, Nebraska. He found that moving yearling cattle just a small distance (2000 feet) during mild summer temperatures (80 degrees F.) could change the core body temperature by as much as 1.4 degrees F. This indicates that body temperatures of excited, stressed cattle being worked in hotter temperatures could rise to important levels. This is where common sense enters the equation.

During hot weather, cattle should be worked before 8:00 am, if possible. Certainly all cattle working must be complete by about 10:00 am. While it may seem to make sense to work cattle near sun down, they may need at least 6 hours of night cooling before enough heat is dissipated to cool down from an extremely hot day.

Cattle that must be handled during hot weather should spend less than 30 minutes in the working facility. Drylot pens and corrals loaded with cattle will have very little if any air

movement. Cattle will gain heat constantly while they are in these areas. Therefore a time limit of one-half hour in the confined cattle working area should limit the heat gain and therefore the heat stress. Work efficiently, but do not create unnecessary stress by “hurrying”.

Make every effort to see that cool, fresh, water is available to cattle in close confined areas for any length of time. During very hot weather conditions tightly confined cattle may drink more than 1% of their body weight per hour. Producers need to be certain that the water supply lines are capable of keeping up with demand, if working cattle during hot weather.

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