

COW/CALF CORNER

The Newsletter
From the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
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Fed cattle markets continue to struggle with lackluster boxed beef holding fed cattle prices in check. Live and feeder cattle futures dropped late in the week along with boxed beef prices. Friday's Cattle on Feed report is not likely to change the situation much. Placements were slightly higher than expected but so were marketings. The on-feed inventory for September 1 was close to pre-report expectations at 99 percent of last year's level.

Most of the increase in placements was in the 800-plus pound weight category. Forage conditions in key summer stocker regions, such as the Oklahoma Osage country and Kansas Flint Hills were quite good and cattle came off later and heavier than in many years. There was also an increase in the lightest placement category, under 600 pounds, but that increase was entirely due to increases in Texas that were no doubt drought-induced movement of lightweight feeders.

Much of the state of Oklahoma continued to receive rain this past week further delaying wheat planting. Wheat planting is expected to jump sharply if and when field conditions improve and this will likely be followed by an increase in stocker cattle demand for winter grazing and a chance for modestly higher stocker prices in the next two to three weeks.

2009 OQBN Vac-45 Sales Are Scheduled

By Doug McKinney, OSU Beef Cattle Value Enhancement Specialist and Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

This weekend is the time when calves must be weaned in order to qualify for the first 2009 [Oklahoma Quality Beef Network \(OQBN\)](#) Vac-45 sale. At this printing, four OQBN sales are scheduled. Below is a table with sale dates and the corresponding latest weaning dates. Also included are the locations of the sales as well as the contact information for those sales.

Location	Contact	Phone	Sale Date	Wean Date
OKC West	Bill Barnhart	800-778-9378	November 4	September 20
Blackwell Livestock Auction	Gary or Grady Potter	580-363-9941	November 30	October 16
OKC West	Bill Barnhart	800-778-9378	December 2	October 18
Red River Livestock	Leroy or Vanessa Mauldin	580-226-6933	December 9	October 25

Additional health and management requirements must be met for calves to be eligible for these OQBN sales. For additional information about the [Oklahoma Quality Beef Network](#) contact: Doug McKinney, 201 Animal Science, Stillwater, OK 74078; Phone: 405-744-6060; Fax: 405-744-7390; email: doug.mckinney@okstate.edu .

Fenceline Low Stress Weaning

By Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

Spring calving herds across the Midwest and Southwest will soon be planning to wean the calves. Some producers may wean the calves from young or thin cows during September in order to regain some body condition before winter adds to the nutrient requirements. However, many herds will wean at the more traditional times of late October to early November.

Methods to reduce stress on the calves have become of great interest to producers. Therefore, weaning strategies have been studied in recent years. California researchers weaned calves with only a fence (Fenceline) separating them from their dams. These were compared to calves weaned totally separate (Separate) from dams. The Separate Calves could not see or hear their dams. Calf behaviors were monitored for five days following weaning. Fenceline calves and cows spent approximately 60% and 40% of their time, respectively within 10 feet of the fence during the first two days. During the first three days, Fenceline calves bawled and walked less, and ate and rested more, but these differences disappeared by the fourth day. All calves were managed together starting 7 days after weaning. After two weeks, Fenceline calves had gained 23 pounds more than Separate calves. This difference persisted since, after 10 weeks, Fenceline calves had gained 110 pounds (1.57 lb/day), compared to 84 pounds (1.20 lb/day) for Separate calves. There was no report of any differences in sickness, but calves that eat more during the first days after weaning should stay healthier. An Ohio State University study indicated that Fenceline calves had a lower incidence of respiratory diseases.

Producers that have tried Fenceline weaning will remind us that it takes good, well maintained fences and adequate water supplies for both sides of the fence. Remember, a large number of cattle are going to be congregated in a small area for several days. Therefore water availability for both cows and calves is critical. To wean and background, even for short periods, fenceline weaning should be considered. Source: Price, et al. 2003. Fenceline contact of beef calves with their dams at weaning reduced the negative effects of separation on behavior and growth rate. *J Anim Sci* 81: 116-121.

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