

## COW/CALF CORNER

**The Newsletter**  
**From the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service**  
**January 28, 2010**  
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Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

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Note to readers: This newsletter is coming one day early due to the anticipated ice storm hitting Oklahoma and other central states.

**Knowledge is Power When It Comes to Genetic Defects**  
Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

Those of us that grew up in the '50's and 60's remember "snorter dwarfism". Dwarfism was a recessive genetic defect that struck fear in commercial and purebred breeders alike. The only way a bull was tested for dwarfism was to mate him to about 20 of his own daughters. In other words bulls were several years old, before they could be absolutely be determined to be free of the genetic disorder. Over the last decade, numerous genetic defects have been documented in several cattle breeds. Today, there are testing tools available that make managing around these genetic defects quite possible. Learning about these genetic defects and testing tools should reduce the concern of producers. There are opportunities to bring yourself up-to-date on these issues coming very soon to your computer. I urge producers to take advantage of these "webinars".

The eXtension Beef Cattle Clearinghouse Community of Practice will conduct 2 webinars in February 2010. The dates for the webinars are February 11 and Feb 25; starting at noon Central time for 1 hour each. Speakers will be Dr. Bob Weaber, University of Missouri and Dr. Matt Spangler, University of Nebraska.

*Dates and associated titles:*

**February 11, 2010:** Managing genetic defects in beef cattle: practical advice for protecting your herd and investment.

Topics covered will include a review of the mode of inheritance common to many genetic defects, understanding inbreeding, the importance of pedigree analysis, common genetic defects, practical advice for selection and culling to avoid or eliminate genetic defects in your herd.

**February 25, 2010:** Mating systems to solve problems and add value to beef production systems: crossbreeding and the power of heterosis.

Topics covered will include a review of the fundamentals of heterosis (hybrid vigor), the power of crossbreeding to improve production efficiency, breed complementarity, simple and effective crossbreeding systems for large and small herds and why there's been a surge in popularity of hybrid genetics.

*Webinar Connection Instructions:*

At the meeting time, simply click on the following link or copy and paste it into your browser to enter the meeting:

<http://connect.extension.iastate.edu/beefcattle/>

When you go to that URL you will find yourself at a login page. Simply enter your name under the "Enter as a Guest" heading. Click on "Enter Room." The instructions that detail how to join the integrated phone audio conference will be on the screen when you join the meeting.

Anytime before the meeting you can visit the following URL to confirm your ability to connect to the Connect server:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/testconnect/>

This webinar is being presented by the Beef Cattle Clearinghouse eXtension Community of Practice.

These webinars will be made available on these eXtension website for later viewing after the dates of the original presentations.

**Care of the Newborn Immediately After Calving**  
Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist

Delayed passage through the birth canal in the face of a faltering placenta compromises oxygenation of the calf. Although the calf is able to breathe as soon as its nose passes the lips of the vulva, expansion of the chest is restricted by the narrow birth canal. This situation is seriously aggravated when continuous forced traction is applied. As soon as the calf's head has passed the lips of the vulva, traction should be interrupted, the nostrils cleared of mucus and cold water applied to the head.

Again, when the calf is completely delivered, primary attention is directed toward establishing respiration. Mucus and fetal fluids should be expressed from the nose and mouth by external pressure of the thumbs along the bridge of the nose and the flat fingers underneath the jaws, sliding from the level of the eyes toward the muzzle. The common practice of suspending the calf by its hindlegs to "clear the lungs", must be questioned. Most of the fluids that drain from the mouth of these calves probably come from the stomach, and the weight of the intestines on the diaphragm makes expansion of the lungs difficult. The most effective way to clear the airway is by suction.

Respiration is stimulated by many factors, but only ventilation of the lungs, allow us to render help immediately. Brisk rubbing of the skin and tickling inside the nostril with a piece of straw also has a favorable effect. The phrenic nerve can be stimulated with a sharp tap on the chest slightly above and behind where the heartbeat can be felt.

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