

# COW/CALF CORNER

## The Newsletter

From the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

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Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Professor Emeritus

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Damona Doye, Oklahoma State University Extension Economist

## Hot Weather in Late Pregnancy Affects Gestation Length

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Professor Emeritus

Oklahoma State University physiologists studied early fall (August) and late fall (October) calving cows. Data from two successive years were combined for 60 Angus X Hereford crossbred cows. The “early” and “late” fall calving cows had been artificially inseminated in early November or early January, respectively. Semen from the same sire was used for all cows. All cows were exposed to a single cleanup bull for 35 days starting at 4 days after the AI season. The weather prior to calving was significantly different for late pregnancy in the two groups. The average maximum temperature the week before calving was 94.6 degrees F. for the “early” fall group. The average maximum temperature the week before parturition in the “late” calving group was 72.0 degrees F. There was a 100% survival rate for calves in both groups and both groups of cows had very high re-breeding rates (90.8% and 92.5%, respectively).

The average gestation length for the “early” cows was 5 days shorter (278.5 days) as compared to the “late” cows (283.8 days). Producers with early fall-calving cows should expect calves to start coming several days ahead of the “textbook gestation table” dates. **They should begin their routine heifer and**

cow checks at least a week ahead of the expected first calving date. [Source: Kastner and co-workers. 2004 Oklahoma State University Animal Science Research Report](#) .

## OSU Beef Cattle Manuals Available

Damona Doye, Oklahoma State University Extension Economist

Here is what producers say about the OSU Beef Manual: “One of the best manuals I have.” “Fantastic learning tool for anyone.” Why are producers so high on it? The manual includes 41 chapters that cover a wealth of topics from herd health to beef nutrition to marketing in an easy-to-read format. Objective, research based information is the basis for recommendations. Full-color pictures add depth to the discussion of topics such as Body Condition Score. Tables and graphs also add detail, for instance, providing quick references to nutrient requirements of beef cattle of different sizes and genders. At the end of each chapter, references to research are provided along with website links where available.

The Beef Cattle Manual is a key information resource for not only beef cattle producers, but also agriculture students, Extension professionals, veterinarians, and many others associated with the beef cattle industry. Participants in the Master Cattleman Program use the manual as their educational curriculum and for the producer certification process (see [agecon.okstate.edu/cattleman](http://agecon.okstate.edu/cattleman) for more information). And, the Manual is being used as a textbook in classes in Oklahoma and surrounding states.

This comprehensive *Beef Cattle Manual* was developed by an interdisciplinary team of state specialists, area specialists and other professionals from agricultural economics, animal science, biosystems and agricultural engineering, entomology and plant pathology, natural resource ecology and management, plant and soil sciences and veterinary medicine. It includes information on the demographics of the Oklahoma beef industry, economics, marketing and risk management, leasing arrangements, livestock insurance, forage production, grazing management, drought management, beef quality assurance, waste management and biosecurity.

Order the manual online at: <http://agecon.okstate.edu/cattleman/order.asp>. You will be invoiced for the cost of the manual (a bargain at \$17) plus shipping which will be done at the library rate unless otherwise specified.

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