

COW/CALF CORNER

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In this Issue:

2013 Beef Production and Consumption

Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

Re-warming Methods for Cold-stressed Newborn Calves

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist

2013 Beef Production and Consumption

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2012 beef production decreased by a projected 1.1 percent compared to 2011 with a 3.3 percent decrease in slaughter partially offset by a 2.3 percent increase in carcass weights. In 2013, mostly steady carcass weights and a five percent or more decrease in cattle slaughter is expected to result in a 4.8 percent decrease in beef production. This would be the second largest year over year decrease in 35 years, second only to the 6.4 percent decrease in 2004. The 2013 decrease is expected to be followed by a 2014 decrease of 4.5 percent or more. These two years would represent the largest percentage decrease since the late 1970s.

The impact on consumption, however, does not always match the change in production. Domestic per capita consumption will depend on production levels but must be

adjusted for beef imports and exports. In 2013, per capita beef consumption is expected to drop 3.5 percent, less than the production decrease because beef imports will increase and beef exports will decrease. The decrease in per capita beef consumption in 2013 will be similar to the year over year decrease in 2011 compared to 2010. In 2011, domestic per capita beef consumption decreased 3.8 percent due to a sharp increase in beef exports despite a minimal decrease in beef production. Though 2004 had a sharper production decrease, per capita beef consumption that year increased nearly two percent due to the sharp drop in beef exports following the first BSE case in the U.S. Beef consumption may drop more sharply in 2014 with a five percent decrease in per capita consumption compared to the lower 2013 level.

These decreases in beef production and consumption almost certainly imply higher wholesale and retail beef prices. However, several other factors will impact the price response to lower supplies. Clearly, the sluggish macroeconomic recovery continues to limit beef demand. Choice boxed beef has been trapped in a narrow range between \$193 and \$198/cwt. for the past 3 months. Retail beef prices were flat to slightly lower through much of 2012 but did jump sharply in November. In 2011, a similar decrease in beef consumption resulted in a 15 percent increase in boxed beef prices and a nearly 10 percent increase in retail prices. Total meat consumption decreased about 2 percent in 2011 and a similar 2.1 percent decrease is expected in 2013 with both pork and broiler consumption expected to be down roughly 1.5 percent each. The pressure for higher boxed beef prices will increase significantly with an expected 4.5 percent decrease in beef production in the first quarter of 2013. Choice boxed beef should move above \$200/cwt. in the next few weeks. Beyond that, it will be a question of how much and how fast retailers can pass along the higher wholesale prices to consumers. It is not really a question of whether retail prices will go up but rather a question of how much and how fast. Beef demand remains the biggest unknown in the beef industry and will just how severe the squeeze will be on industry margins in 2013.

Re-warming Methods for Cold-stressed Newborn Calves

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist

Last winter was one of the mildest winters in recent history and so far this winter, most of Oklahoma has escaped any sub-zero temperatures. Nonetheless, before the spring calving season is over, there is a chance that some calves will be born in very cold winter

temperatures. Newborn calves that are not found for several hours after birth and have been exposed to extremely cold temperatures may become hypothermic or very cold stressed.

Years ago an Oklahoma rancher called to tell of the success he had noticed in using a warm water bath to revive new born calves that had been severely cold stressed. A quick check of the scientific data on that subject bears out his observation.

Canadian animal scientists compared methods of reviving hypothermic or cold stressed baby calves. Heat production and rectal temperature were measured in 19 newborn calves during hypothermia (cold stress) and recovery when four different means of assistance were provided. Hypothermia of 86° F rectal temperature was induced by immersion in cold water. Calves were re-warmed in a 68 to 77° F air environment where thermal assistance was provided by added thermal insulation or by supplemental heat from infrared lamps. Other calves were re-warmed by immersion in warm water (100° F), with or without a 40cc drench of 20% ethanol in water. Normal rectal temperatures before cold stress were 103° F. The time required to regain normal body temperature from a rectal temperature of 86°F was longer for calves with added insulation and those exposed to heat lamps than for the calves in the warm water and warm water plus ethanol treatments (90 and 92 minutes versus 59 and 63 minutes, respectively).

During recovery, the calves re-warmed with the added insulation and heat lamps had to use up more body heat metabolically than the calves re-warmed in warm water. Total heat production during recovery was nearly twice as great for the calves with added insulation, exposed to the heat lamps than for calves in warm water and in warm water plus an oral drench of ethanol, respectively. This body heat production leaves the calves with less energy to maintain body temperature when returned to the cold environment.

By immersion of hypothermic calves in warm (100° F) water, normal body temperature was regained most rapidly and with minimal metabolic effort; no advantage was evident from oral administration of ethanol. When immersing these baby calves, do not forget to support the head above the water to avoid drowning the calf that you are trying to save. Also make certain that they have been thoroughly dried before returning to the cold weather and the mother. With today's calf prices and high feed cost inputs, it is imperative to save as many calves as possible.

Source: Robinson and Young. Univ. of Alberta. J. Anim. Sci., 1988.

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