

COW/CALF CORNER

The Newsletter

From the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
June 15, 2015

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Using "Oklahoma Gold" or "Oklahoma Super Gold" for Replacement Heifers in Mid to Late Summer

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Fall born replacement heifers have been (or soon will be) weaned and will be at a very critical growing period. It is important that they grow at about 1.5 pounds per day from weaning until the start of the breeding season. Oklahoma has been fortunate to receive spring rains and in most cases will produce adequate forage quantity for the cow herd and the replacement heifers. Currently summer pastures are green, growing, and adequate in protein content. However, warm season pastures such as native grass or bermudagrass can be expected to be declining in forage quality in the hot, dry days of July, August, and September. Also these grasses will be reaching plant maturity which accelerates the decline in protein content.

Therefore, the young heifers must receive supplemental protein to continue to grow at the necessary pace of 1.5 pounds per head per day going into their first breeding season. An economical solution would be to give these heifers 1.5 to 2 pounds per head per day of the protein supplement called Oklahoma Gold. This is an OSU-developed protein supplement scheme that consists of a high protein (38% - 45%) pellet that contains the label-recommended dosage of one of the ionophores. Ionophores are feed additives (monensin or lasalocid) that improve feed utilization, inhibit coccidiosis, and enhance the onset of puberty in growing heifers. Research from Texas A&M in the 1970's indicated that heifers receiving an ionophore reached puberty about 2 weeks earlier than counterparts that did not receive an ionophore. Inclusion of the ionophore in the growing program should cause a few more heifers to be cycling early in the breeding season.

The protein supplement will allow microbial digestion of the average quality late summer forage which in turn provides the energy needed to support the desired amount of gain. If forage quantity is very limited, the protein supplement alone will not produce adequate gains. In this scenario, a rancher first needs to decide if keeping more replacement heifers is really in his or her best interest.

Light-weight or young, weaned heifers that need an added boost while still on late summer pasture may benefit more from the Oklahoma Super Gold supplementation program. "Super Gold" consists of feeding 3 pounds per head per day of a 25% crude protein pellet. Once again, an ionophore is included at the proper dosage and will be beneficial to these young growing heifers. Plan ahead for late summer supplementation of fall-born replacement heifers. More information about the [Oklahoma Gold](http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2042/ANSI-3032web.pdf) (<http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2042/ANSI-3032web.pdf>) and [Oklahoma Supergold](http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2026/ANSI-3033web.pdf) supplementation programs (<http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2026/ANSI-3033web.pdf>) is available on line.

Oklahoma cattle market summary, June 2015

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

The removal of drought gives many Oklahoma cattle producers the first opportunity in several years to implement production plans that have been on hold during the drought. Cattle prices advanced dramatically through 2014 resulting in the near record prices levels observed currently.

Oklahoma auction prices for 500-500 lb. Medium and Large, Number 1 steers averaged \$280.53/cwt. in mid-June, up nearly 19 percent from the same time last year. The value is roughly \$1475/head, up about \$230/head year over year. Comparable heifers are priced at \$256.08/cwt., up a similar percentage as steers from one year ago and valued at \$1330/head. Medium and Large, Number 1 Steers at 750-800 lbs. currently are priced at \$226.04/cwt., up 13 percent year over year, with value of \$1745/hd., adding about \$210/head over year ago values.

There have been numerous examples of auction heifers identified in market reports as sold for replacements. This has been occurring since the fall of 2013 but has become more frequent in the Southern Plains recently as forage conditions have improved. Open replacement heifers often bring \$5-\$15 cwt. more than comparable feeder heifers resulting in higher values of \$50 to \$150/head. For example, the most recent Oklahoma auction summary included 850-900 pound M/L, Number 1 open replacement heifers valued at \$1830/head, some \$105/head more than comparable feeder heifers. The same auction summary reports bred heifers in the western part of Oklahoma, described as average quality black heifers, priced at \$1700-\$2075/head.

Bred cow and cow-calf pair values are sharply higher now compared to one year ago. In western Oklahoma, young bred cows described as average quality black are listed in a range from \$1800-\$2375/hd., compared to one year ago at \$1250-1475/hd. High quality, young black cows are currently quoted at \$2350-\$2600/hd. compared to \$1625-\$1800/hd. last year. Young, average

quality cow-calf pairs are valued at \$2050-\$2650/pair, up from \$1525-\$1900/pair one year ago. Young, high quality black pairs are priced today at \$2925-\$3550/pair compared to \$2150-\$2285/pair last year.

In eastern Oklahoma, average quality young black bred cows are priced currently at \$2150-\$2400/hd., up from a range of \$1400-\$1675/hd. last year. Middle-aged average quality black cows are quoted in a range from \$1750-\$2075/hd., compared to \$1450-\$1525 one year ago. Average quality, young pairs are listed in a range from \$2600-\$3150/pair, compared to 1500-\$2000/pair last year.

Cattle prices will remain strong in 2015 and through most, if not all, of 2016. I expect it will be 2017, at the earliest, before significant supply pressure may weigh on cattle prices. In the meantime, the market incentives for herd expansion remain firmly in place.

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