

April 26, 2001



NDSU Extension Service

## **BeefTalk: Successful Beef Production Involves an Artists Attention to Details**

**By Kris Ringwall, Extension Beef Specialist,**

How many beef cattle producers consider themselves artists? I would hope all of you do because that is what you are. Just as an artist fills in all the details that collectively constitute a work of art, you attend to all the details that constitute successful beef reproduction. Today the picture is bigger and the details more numerous than ever.

That's something to consider in late April and early May when those of us here at the North Dakota State University Dickinson Research Extension Center are concerned with a particularly large number of details involved with the preparation for breeding. Let me share those.

Replacement heifers have been monitored throughout the winter and were

weighed Tuesday, April 10. On Wednesday, April 11, Melengestrol Acetate (MGA) was added to the heifer ration, and was continued through the morning of Tuesday, April 24, to synchronize estrous in the heifers. MGA is a feed additive that suppresses estrus. Once MGA is removed from the diet, heifers exhibit estrous behavior. For the synchronization program to work, the heifers need to receive MGA every morning for 14 days, with no missed feedings.

Meanwhile, the mature cow/calf pairs on the west side (first-calving heifers, second-calving cows and any problem cows are kept separate on the west side for closer observation) were worked on April 11 and 12. The calves were vaccinated with a seven-way treatment, steer calves implanted and castrated and all the calves branded. The cows received a pre-breeding vaccination. The cows and calves on the east side (the mature cows) of the ranch were worked on April 18 and 19.

Cow/calf pairs were initially sorted into major pasture groups:

- Group 1 -- mature cows for turn out on native pasture in early June.
- Group 2 -- first calf heifers.
- Group 3 -- mature cows for turn out May 2 on crested wheatgrass.

Bull fertility tests were done April 25 and 26.

In preparation for breeding, groups 1 and 2 were started on 3 pounds of range cake per cow starting April 25, switching to range cake with MGA on May 1 for six days, and then returning to regular range cake (no MGA) until breeding. Group 3 won't receive any range cake.

In the next step of the synchronization process group 1 and 2 will receive a

prostaglandin (PGF) injection starting at 8 a.m. on Monday, May 7, The replacement heifers will be weighed and moved to large breeding pens on Tuesday, May 8. On Wednesday, May 9, group 3 cows will each receive a GnRH injection (a hormone that synchronizes estrous) and be exposed to bulls. On Friday, May 11, all group 1 and 2 cows will receive gonadotropin releasing hormone (GnRH) at 8 a.m. On Saturday, all heifers will receive the PGF injections at 8 am and bred 12 hours after standing heat is detected during the week of May 14. Standing heat will be detected through HeatWatch, a computerized heat detection system.

On Wednesday, May 16, group 3 cows will each receive a PGF injection and allowed to breed naturally. On Friday, May 18, at 1 p.m., group 1 and 2 cows will receive a PGF injection, and a heat mount detection device, KMARs, will be applied. Those cows with triggered KMARs on Sunday evening will be pulled and bred Monday morning and the rest of the cows bred Monday afternoon

Successful programs are filled with these kinds of details, there are no exceptions. I hope your breeding season is a masterpiece. May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at [www.BeefTalk.com](http://www.BeefTalk.com) For more information, contact the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, 1133 State Avenue, Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to [www.CHAPS2000.COM](http://www.CHAPS2000.COM) on the Internet. In correspondence about this column, refer to BT0036.

###

**Source:** Kris Ringwall, (701) 483-2045, [kringwal@ndsuent.nodak.edu](mailto:kringwal@ndsuent.nodak.edu)

**Editor:** Tom Jirik, (701) 231-9629, [tjirik@ndsuent.nodak.edu](mailto:tjirik@ndsuent.nodak.edu)

<b>Spring Breeding Herd Management</b> NDSU Dickinson Research Extension Center				
	<b>Heifers</b>	<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Group 3</b>
<b>Feed MGA</b>	April 11-24	May 1-6	May 1-6	NA
<b>PGF injection</b>	May 12 (8 am)	May 7 (8 am)	May 7 (8 am)	NA
<b>GnRH injection</b>	NA	May 11 (8 am)	May 11 (8 am)	May 9 (8 am)
<b>Repeated PGF injection</b>	NA	May 18 (1 pm)	May 18 (1 pm)	May 16 (8 am)
<b>Breeding</b>	May 14-17	May 21	May 21	May 15-17

[Click here for a printable PDF version of this graphic.](#) (5KB b&w graph)

[Click here for a printable EPS version of this graphic.](#) (76KB b&w graph)

[Click here for a EPS file of the BeefTalk logo suitable for printing.](#)

(100KB b&w logo)