

When should I calve?

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Calving date

- Calve when you have or others do
- Calve based on economics and resources
- Calve when you can and what will work

Calving Seasons

- Winter- Early Spring Calving (Jan-Mar)
 - Predominant amongst breeders
- Late Spring-Early Summer Calving (Apr-Jun)
 - Trend for large operations
- Fall Calving (Aug-Oct)
 - Niche under right resources

Big Decision – Affects Everything

- Weight and value of calves
- Calf health/survival
- Labor need and availability of labor
- Facilities and equipment
- Wintering feeds and rations
- Herd reproduction
- Profitability
- Easily move latter but not vice versa

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A Discussion On When To Calve!



Kris Ringwall, Ph. D., Extension Livestock Specialist
Douglas Landblom, Animal Scientist
Dickinson Research Extension Center

CHAPS



March-April vs May-June

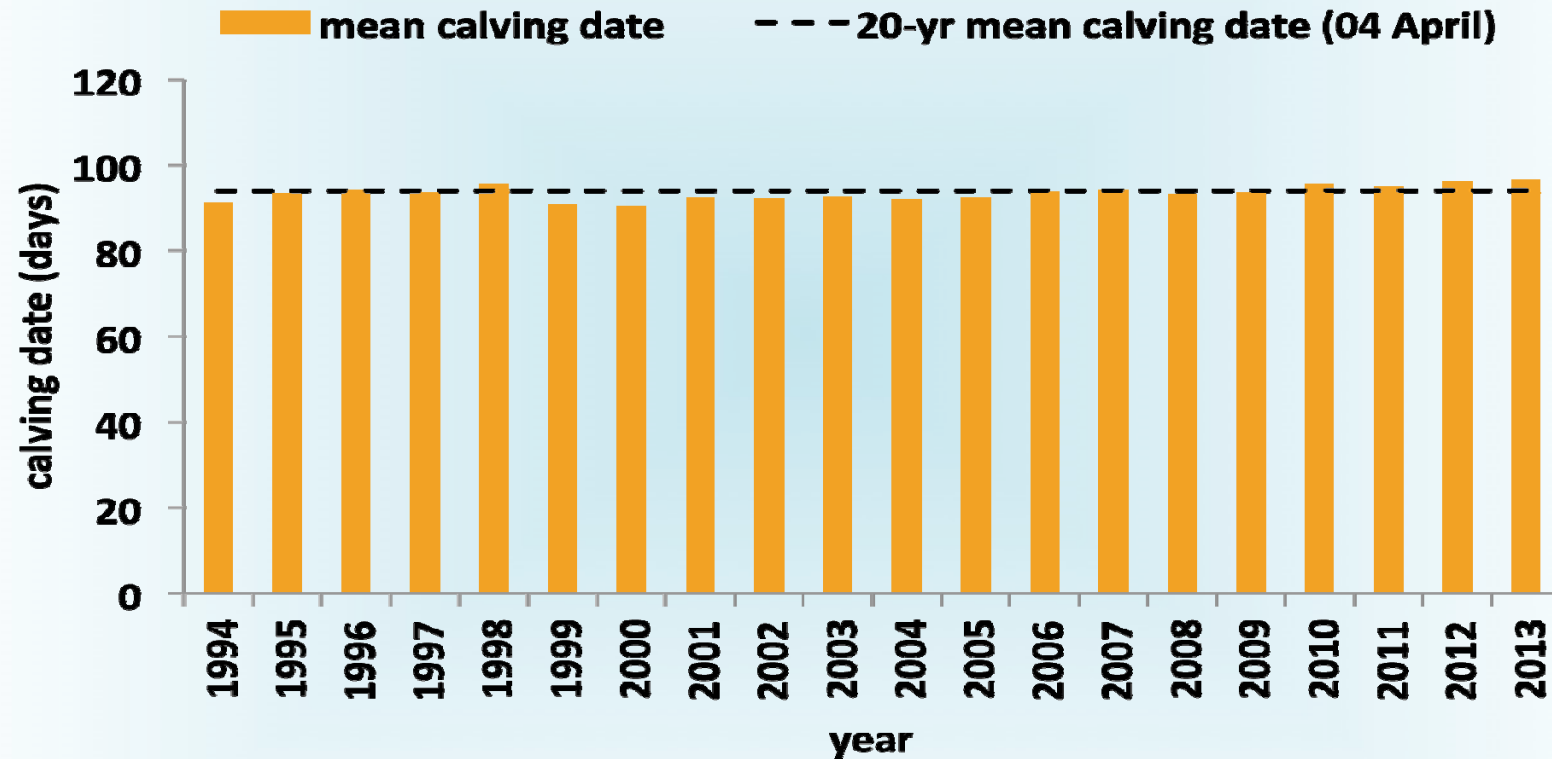
We Know What Has Worked



20-year Average Calving Date



CHAPS20Y: mean calving date over time (years)





Benchmarks



Animal Performance

www.chaps2000.com/benchmarks.htm as of March 29, 2015	
Average Age at Weaning	191
Steers WWT	571
Heifers WWT	542
Bulls WWT	595
Average WWt	558
Lbs Weaned/Cow Exposed	495



Benchmarks



Animal Performance

www.chaps2000.com/benchmarks.htm as of March 29, 2015	
Average Daily Gain	2.49
Weight Per Day of Age	2.95
Birth Weight	84
Adjusted 205 Day Weight	623
Frame Score	5.6



Benchmarks



Reproductive Efficiency

www.chaps2000.com/benchmarks.htm as of March 29, 2015

% Pregnancy	93.1
% Pregnancy Loss	0.65
% Calving	92.5
% Calf Death Loss	3.4
% Weaning	89.8
% Replacement Rate	15.7



Benchmarks



Reproductive Efficiency

www.chaps2000.com/benchmarks.htm as of March 29, 2015	
% Cows Calving at 42 Days	86.4
Cow Age	5.5
Cow Weight	1418
Cow Body Condition Score	5.9

Things That Remain Constant

Nutritional requirements of cows

Things That Remain Constant



Need for calves to grow

Why look at something different?

May-June calving presents opportunities

❖ Decreased labor need

❖ Reduced facilities

❖ Matching feed to 3rd trimester needs

❖ Potential to capture profit

WEATHER IS ALWAYS A CONCERN!

Can be cold in March-April
Spring snowstorms in May-June
Cold, snowy weather in November



May-June Calving

Dickinson Research Extension Center Ranch Headquarters, Manning, ND

March-April Calving Data

2009-2011

May-June Calving Data

2012-2014

Herd H38

Management



	Mar-Apr	May-June
Bull Turnout	1-Jun	1-Aug
Official Start of Calving*	15-Mar	7-May
Average Calving Date	29-Mar	25-May
Start of Third Trimester	12-Dec	12-Feb

* = Average date when 3rd cow in herd calves

Herd H38

Animal Performance



Critical Success Factors		
	Mar-Apr 2009-2011	May-June 2012-2014
Average Age at Weaning	205	168
Steers	609	537
Heifers	587	487
Bulls	NA	NA
Average Weaning Weight	598	514

Herd H38

Animal Performance



Critical Success Factors		
	Mar-Apr 2009-2011	May-June 2012-2014
Average Daily Gain	2.51	2.52
Weight Per Day of Age	2.94	3.06
Birth Weight	86	89
Adjusted 205 Day Weight	640	639
Frame Score	5.0	5.0

Herd H38

Reproductive Efficiency



Critical Success Factors		
	Mar-Apr 2009-2011	May-June 2012-2014
% Cows Calving in 42 Days	95.2	95.2
Cow Age	4.8	5.0
Cow Weight	1307	1437
Cow Condition	5.6	5.3

Herd H38

Reproductive Efficiency



Critical Success Factors		
	Mar-Apr 2009-2011	May-June 2012-2014
% Pregnancy Loss	0.50	0.85
% of Cow Calving	98.46	97.38
% Calf Death loss	6.50	3.72
% Cows Weaning Calves	91.96	93.66

Cows Can Extend the Grazing Season



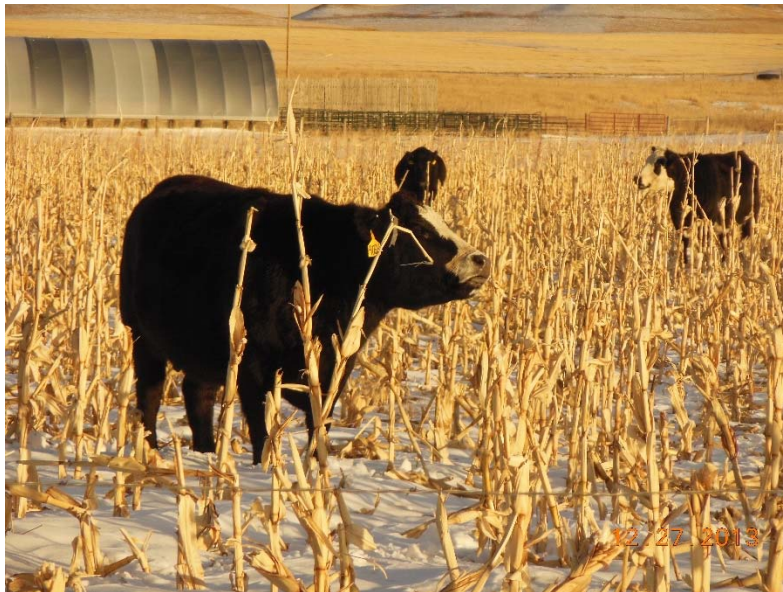
Grazing stockpiled mixed pastures of brome grass and crested wheatgrass followed by corn stalk residue



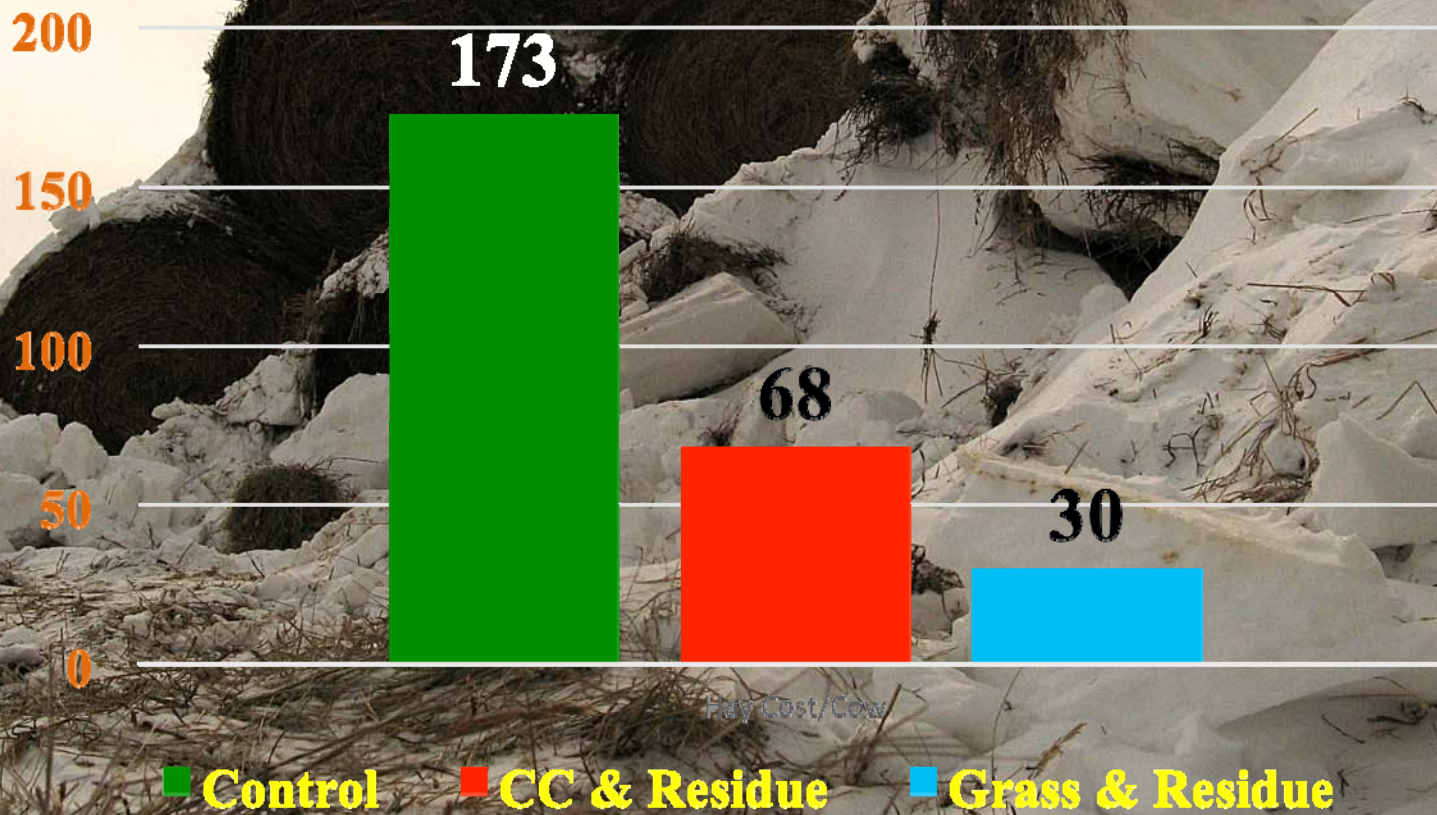
Cows Can Extend the Grazing Season



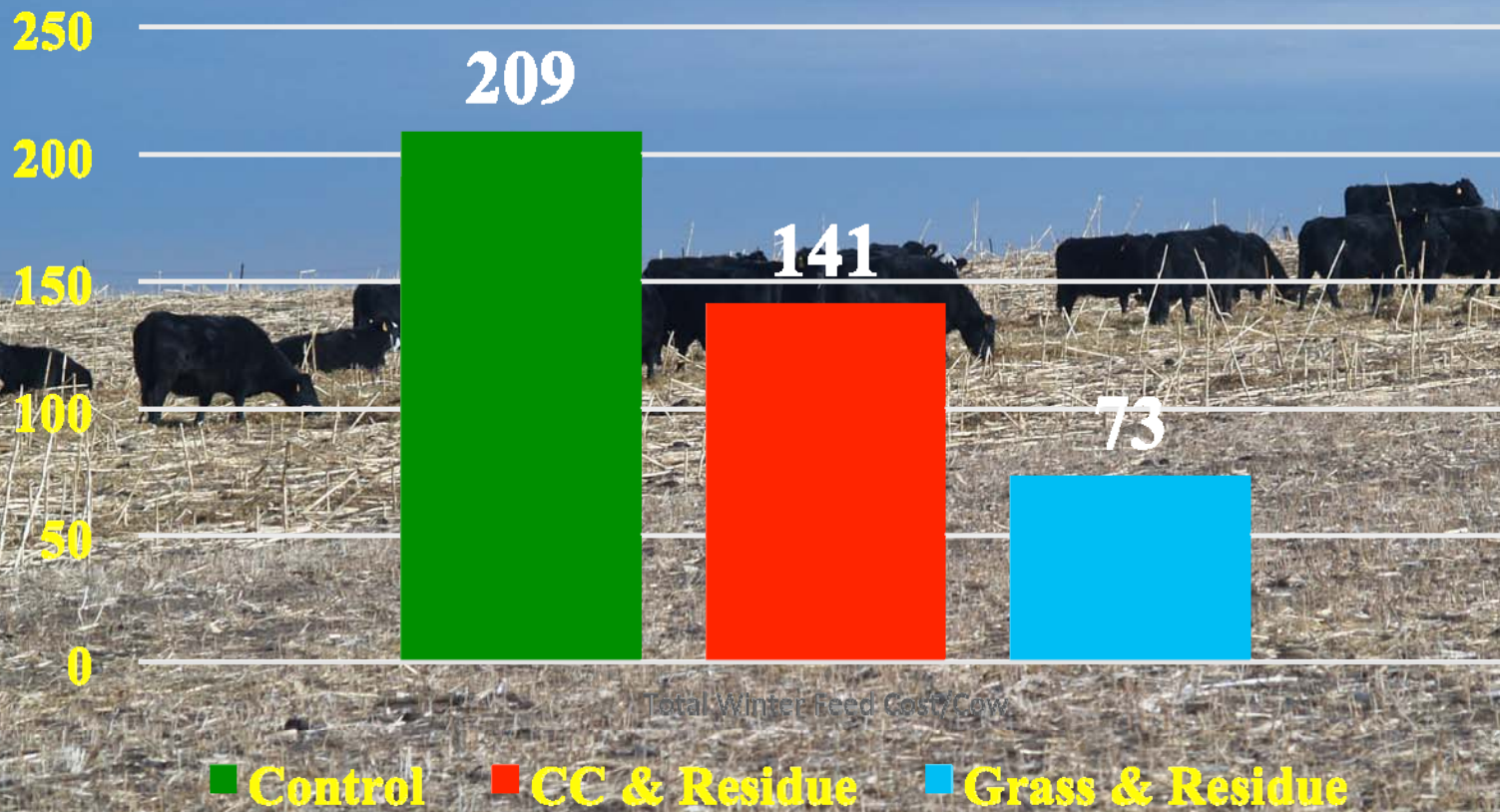
**By Utilizing
Cover Crops
Crop Residue**



Hay Cost/Cow, \$



Total Winter Feed Cost/Cow



Average Daily Gain

March-April Calves	=	2.50
May-June Calves	=	2.50



Calf Growth

(Early November weaning; no birthweight included)

March-April Calves (205 days @ 2.50) = 512.5

May-June Calves (168 days @ 2.50)= 420.0

The BIG Question:



**HOW DO WE MAKE UP FOR
92.5 POUNDS OF LOST GAIN?**

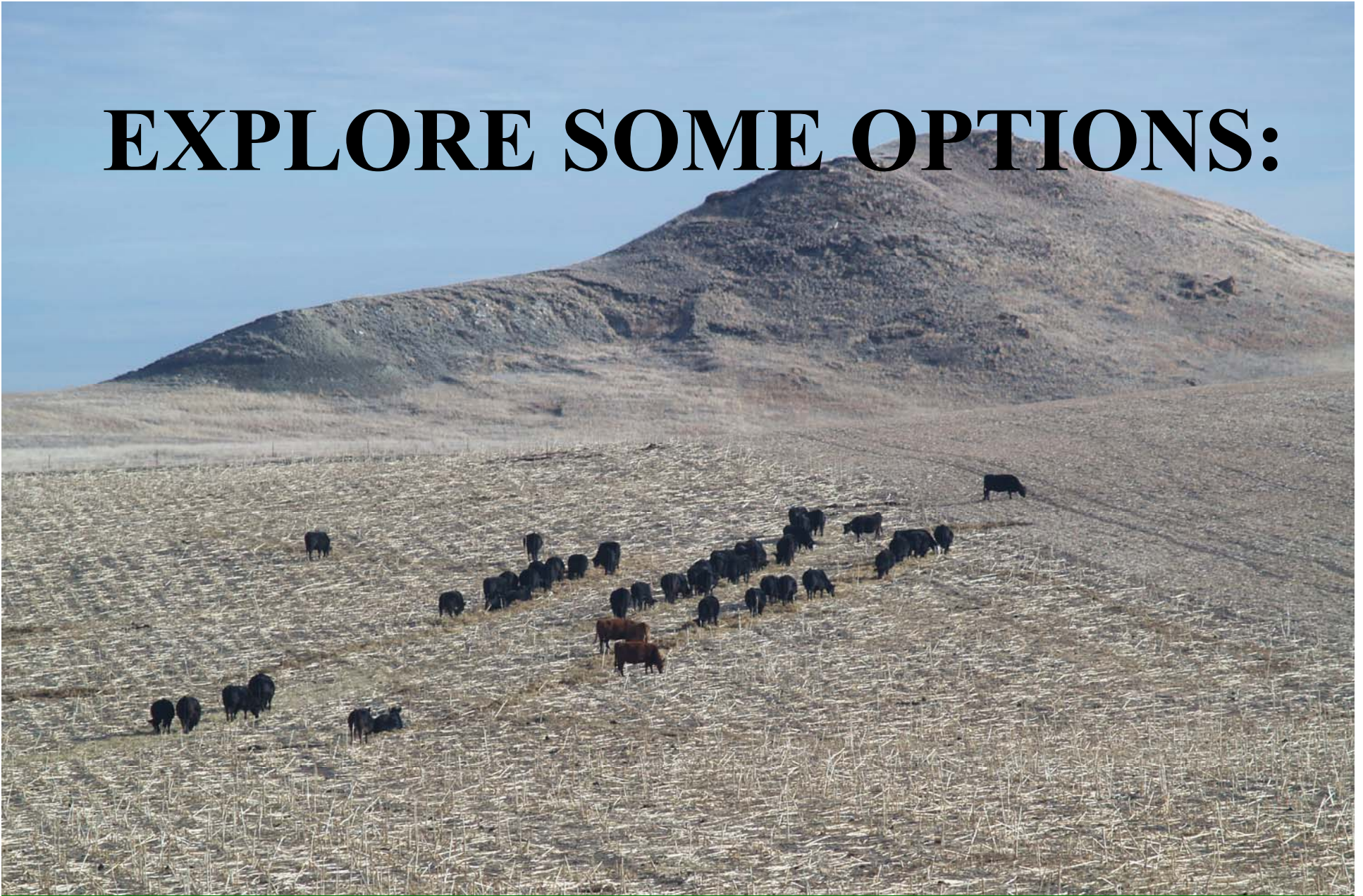
The Next Step:

JANUARY WEANING

The Next BIG Question

**HOW DOES BACKGROUNDING GAIN
COMPARE WITH JANUARY WEANING?**

EXPLORE SOME OPTIONS:



What Are Our Options?

- 
- ☐ Sell Younger Calves
 - ☐ Begin Backgrounding in January
 - ☐ Keep Calves for Yearling Operation
 - Use May Crested Wheatgrass
 - Utilize Cover Crops
 - ✓ Supplement Weight Gain
 - ✓ Build Soil Quality
 - Capture Additional Revenue

2015 Calves Weaning Plan

Mid to late October

Work Calves, Cows

Precondition (calves)

Weigh (calves and cows)

Condition score (calves and cows)

Pregnancy check (cows)



Mid December

Wean Calves

From 2 and 3 year old cows

Mid January

Wean Calves

From mature cows

Management Goals

Winter calves for three-plus months

Weight gain goal of 1 to 1.5 lbs/day

Diet is primarily forage based

Turn yearlings onto Crested Wheatgrass May 1

Target is breed yearling heifers in August

Grazing Sequence Perennial Pastures

- Early May
Crested Wheatgrass
(39 Days)



- Mid-June
Native Range
(61 Days)

Grazing Sequence (Annual Forage)

- Mid-August (27 Days)

Pea-barley

Protein bridge



Mid-September

Unharvested corn

(55-77 Days)



Graze to Slaughter Forage Sequence



1,264 pound steer

May-June Calving

A photograph of two black calves standing in a field of dry grass. The calf in the foreground is facing left and has a yellow ear tag with the number 15001. The calf behind it is partially obscured and has a yellow ear tag with the number 1008. Both calves appear healthy and are standing on their hind legs.

We pulled off 665-pound calves from May calving. They were not that much lighter than our February calves we weaned in mid-October . . . and they all have their ears and tails.

Garry Ottmar, DREC Ranch Manager

May-June Calving



Those early born calves can get their feet froze a little (and) once those calves go to the feedlot they do not do well . . . If the calf gets in trouble, the calf will be fine with (May-June) temperatures. In the winter, if you are not there right away, the calf is gone.

Garry Ottmar
DREC Ranch Manager

May-June Calving



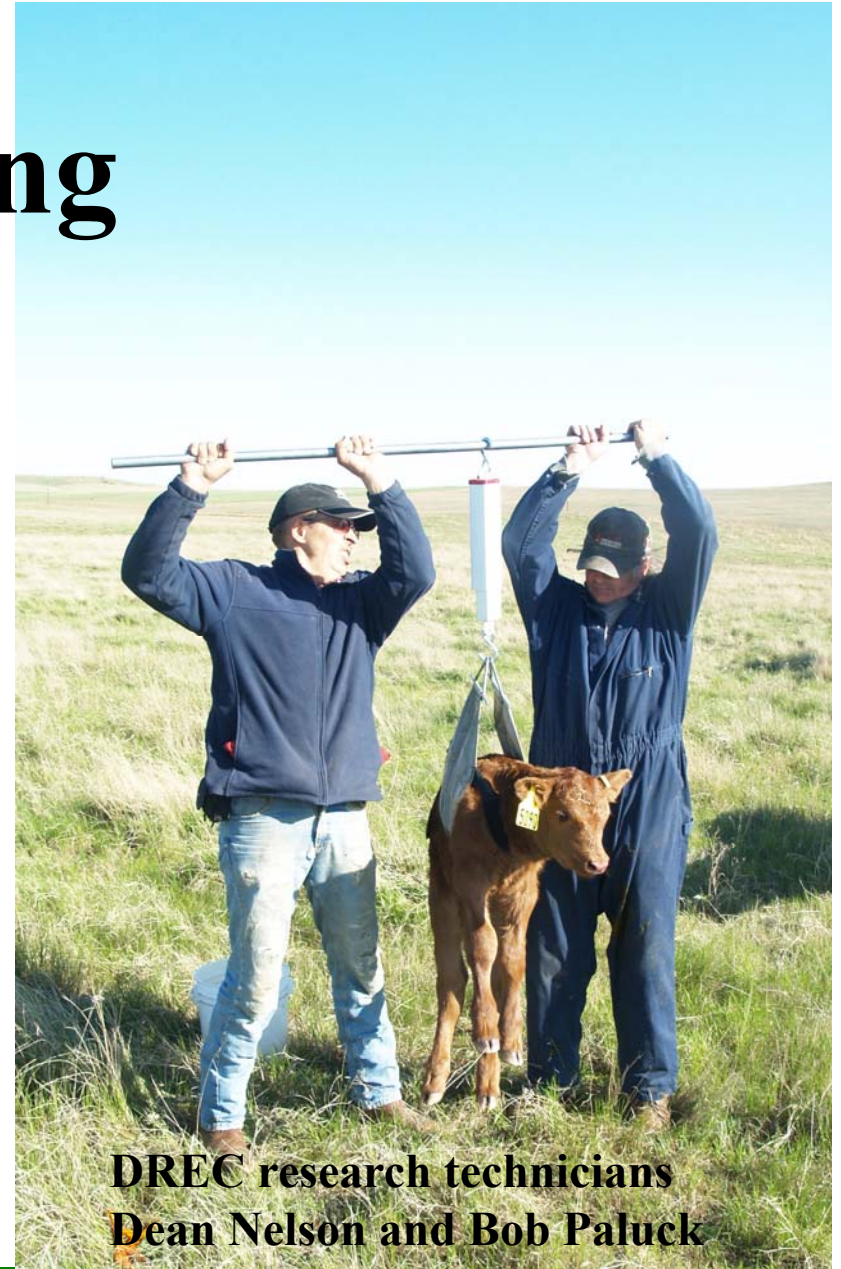
I would never go back to February and March calving. This is a good option (for) husband and wife teams that are so prevalent out there (on the farm or ranch). I don't know a better way to do it.

**Garry Ottmar, DREC
Ranch Manager, and
wife Wanda.**

May-June Calving

*I love it (May-June calving).
The (warmer) weather seems to
quiet the cows down, the cows
are more healthy, there is less
disease . . . I would never want
to go back. It's just Dean and I
. . .*

Bob Paluck
DREC Research Technician



**DREC research technicians
Dean Nelson and Bob Paluck**

			Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec					
June 1 Calving																			
	month of gest		5	6	7	8	9	Calve						Wean		500 weaning wt 12/6	180 days		
	month feed cost		25	27	27	34	34	25	25	25	25	25	35	35		356.7	total including 10% waste		
	feed resource		crp hay	crp hay	crp hay	grass hay	grass hay	pasture	pasture	pasture	pasture	pasture	pasture	grass hay					
March 1 calving																			
	month of gest		8	9	Calve							wean	6	7		600 wean weight 10/15	225 days		
	month feed cost		34	37	50	52	50	25	25	25	25	22	20	28		415.3	total including 10% waste		
	feed resource		grass hay	grass hay	hay/silage	hay/silage	hay/silage	pasture	pasture	pasture	pasture	pasture	pasture	crp hay					
Income at weaning			weaning %		Weaning Weight		Price		Cow feed cost		net above cow feed cost								
	June Calving		0.97	*	500	*	1.8	-	356.7	=	516.3								
	March Calving		0.94	*	600	*	1.65	-	415.3	=	515.3								
Income after Backgrounding			marketing %		Shipping weight		Price		cow feed cost		background days		feed-yard cost		net above cow and backgrounding feed cost				
	June calving		0.96	*	675	*	1.63	-	356.7	-	120	*	1.1	=	567.5	hay plus DDGS supplement for			
	March calving		0.93	*	850	*	1.45	-	415.3	-	105	*	1.5	=	573.4	hay -silage - DDGs for 2.5 adg			
Assume equal cow death loss and pregancy percent, additional cost estimates																			
	cow ownership		145																
	health/vet		20																
	fuel/utilities		38																
	breeding		30																
	equipment		21																
	facilities																		
	supplies		13																
	repairs		48																
	labor																		
	interest		6																
	Total		321																