

**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY  
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NDSU EXTENSION SERVICE  
WILLIAMS COUNTY**

**Estate Planning-Short Version Offered**

Estate planning is often viewed as a difficult task thus it is often avoided. A few weeks ago I announced that an in-depth three-session farm/ranch transition and estate planning seminar will be held in Williston, March 1, 8 and 10. This is a statewide effort organized by the NDSU Extension Service.

Another, but much shorter, version of estate planning will be conducted in Williston on Wednesday, March 2 at the Ernie French Center located on the Williston Research Extension Center. This two-hour seminar features presentations by Dr. Scott Barrett, the director of planned giving and Peter Nygaard, assistant director of major gifts. The two hour seminar is free and will begin at 2 pm CST.

Barrett and Nygaard will discuss the purposes and successful uses of a "will", the benefits of a living trust, tax effective ways to transfer property, planning for incapacity, health care powers of attorney, how and when a living will is necessary, and the new Federal estate tax, how charitable trusts can provide income and help avoid capital gain taxes along with appropriate steps before you visit an attorney.

Although the March 2 seminar is free to the public, organizers request pre-registration by calling 1-800-279-8971.

As a reminder, the registration deadline for the Farm/Ranch Transition and Estate Planning series is Tuesday, February 22. Call our office 701-577-4595 for more details.

**Body Condition Affects Beef Cow Reproduction**

The relationship between cow body condition and reproduction has been known for many years. In his book "Feeding the Beef Cowherd for Maximum Profit" Dr. Danny

Simms cites Colorado State University research showing only 46 percent of cows with body condition score (BCS) of 4 exhibited estrous within 60 days after calving. This increased to just 66 percent 50 days following calving. However, 61 percent of the cows with a BCS of 5-6 at calving exhibited estrous at 60 days while 92 percent were cycling with 90 days.

There is a tendency to believe a BCS 5 is optimum. Such a score can be described as follows: the 12th and 13th ribs are not visible to the eye unless the animal has been shrunk. The backbone (transverse spinous processes) can be identified with firm pressure and feel rounded but are not noticeable to the eye. Also, areas on each side of the tail head are well filled but not rounded.

While a BCS 5 at calving is generally a good recommendation, it may not be the most profitable if green grass is not available or the cost of providing supplemental feed is high.

There are some key times to assess the body condition. One is 60-80 days prior to calving because there is still time to change the score prior to calving. It is often too late if one waits until 30 days pre-calving because of the high plane of nutrition required to improve condition in such a short time period.

Another key time to assess the body condition is at weaning or when the cows are checked for pregnancy. This has great value because much progress in advancing body condition can be made between weaning and the next calving period. The cow is no longer providing nutrients for lactation and she is generally in her second trimester of pregnancy when fetal growth is small compared to the final trimester when fetal growth is near one pound per day.

Assessing body condition at calving is another time although changing body weight of the cow is most difficult. At this time the cow will tend to increase milk production rather than body weight if given added nutrients. It takes approximately 80 pounds of body weight for one full BCS.