

# OFF THE HOOF

**KENTUCKY BEEF CATTLE NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 6, 2023**



University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

Cooperative Extension Service  
University of Kentucky

**Beef IRM Team**

*Published Monthly by UK Beef IRM Team and edited by Dr. Les Anderson, Beef Extension Specialist, Department of Animal & Food Science, University of Kentucky*

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## Timely Tips

**Dr. Les Anderson, Beef Extension Professor, University of Kentucky**

## Spring-Calving Herd

***Get ready for calving season this month!***

- Have calving equipment, supplies and labor ready for the spring calving season. Some supplies that may be needed are: eartags and applicator (put numbers on eartags now), tattoo pliers and ink, record book, scales for calf weights, iodine for calves' navels and colostrum supplement. Calving equipment (puller and chains, etc.) and facilities should be ready and clean. Keep your veterinarians phone number handy!
- Overall condition of the cow herd should be evaluated. Cows losing weight now are more likely to have weak or dead calves. These cows will likely be a poor source of colostrum milk for the newborn calf. Feed cows, if necessary, to keep them in good body condition. Cows need to calve in a BCS of 5, minimum, to expect them to rebreed in a timely fashion. Calve you heifers a little heavier, BCS of 6.
- Heifers may begin head-start calving in early February. Move them to a clean, accessible pasture, away from cow herd and near facilities so that calving assistance can be given. Cows may start calving later this month. Signs of calving are relaxation of pelvic ligaments, enlargement and swelling of the vulva, and enlargement of the udder. Expect calving difficulty if (1) calf's head and two feet are not visible, (2) only the calf's tail is visible, and (3) the cow has been in labor for 1½ hours. Be sure calf is being presented normally before using calf puller. Recognize situations that are beyond your capability and seek professional help as early as possible. Calves that aren't breathing should receive assistance. Try sticking a straw in nostril to stimulate a reflex or try alternate pressure and release on rib cage. Commercial respirators are also available. Calves should consume colostrum within 30 minutes of birth to achieve good immunity.

## **2023 Mid-South Stocker Conference Back in Person**

*Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler, Extension Professor, University of Kentucky*

The Mid-South Stocker conference planning committee is hosting this year's conference in person at Western Kentucky University. The event will be held at the WKU L.D. Brown Ag Expo Center, Bowling Green, KY. The program will start on the evening of February 21 at 5:30 with registration followed a meal and vendor product reviews. Dr. Michelle Arnold, UK Extension Veterinarian, will wrap up the evening with a review of necropsy findings.

The program resumes the next day on February 22<sup>nd</sup> with registration at 8:30 and tradeshow. Given high feed costs, everyone is asking how to get more from their forage program. Dr. Kim Mullenix, Auburn University, will share forage-livestock considerations under changing environmental conditions. Following her presentation, Dr. Brittany Harlow, USDA Food Animal Production Research Unit, will discuss recent findings on the benefits of red clover to cattle on tall fescue.

Market outlook and economic risk management should be top of mind as well moving through 2023. Dr. James Mitchell, University of Arkansas, will provide a market outlook for the southeast for 2023. Our own, Dr. Kenny Burdine will then share considerations for using the Livestock Risk Protection program. Given the importance of keeping stocker cattle healthy to be profitable, Dr. Arnold will join us again to give a health update. Finally, the virtual tours of stocker operations in the region will once again be a part of the program.

To register, use the Eventbrite link <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/483761211807> or use the qr code below. The cost is \$70 for both days or \$50 for a single day. College and high school student registration is \$15.

We look forward to hosting you this year in person for the Mid-South Stocker Conference on February 21-22, 2023. Be sure to register and mark your calendars.



## **Changes to CAIP EPD Guidelines for Beef Bulls**

*Dr. Darrh Bullock, Extension Professor, University of Kentucky*

Every year we re-evaluate the EPD requirements for the CAIP bull cost-share program and make changes as needed. This year's EPD values can be found at:

Box 1

KRS Sec 321.185 Veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR)

(1) In order for a veterinarian to practice veterinary medicine, a relationship among the veterinarian, the client, and the patient shall be established and maintained.

"Veterinarian-client-patient relationship" means that:

(a) The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for veterinary treatment, and the client, whether owner or other caretaker, has agreed to follow the instructions of the veterinarian;

(b) There is sufficient knowledge of the animal by the veterinarian to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal. This means that the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal by virtue of an examination of the animal or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept; and

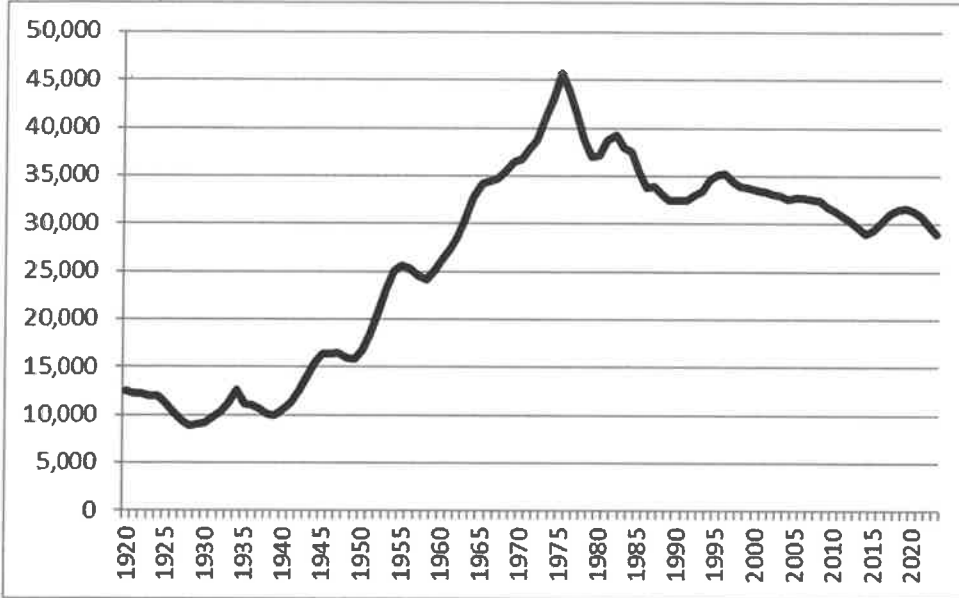
(c) The practicing veterinarian is readily available or shall provide medical service for follow-up in case of adverse reactions or failure of the regimen of therapy. A new regimen of therapy shall be contingent only upon cooperation of the client and availability of the subject animal.

(2) The veterinarian shall maintain records which document patient visits, diagnosis, treatment, and other relevant information.

laypersons unless they meet the above criteria. Similarly, practicing veterinarians or their employees may not legally sell prescription animal drugs to walk-in customers unless the same criteria are met." Therefore, the first step to do now is establish a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR). Kentucky has its own definition of a VCPR (see Box 1). Although the rules are straightforward, how to build a VCPR first requires communication with a veterinarian and asking the question "What do I need to do to establish and maintain a VCPR with you?" The law requires the veterinarian to be familiar with the client, the livestock, and the management of the animals on the farm through "medically appropriate and timely visits" to the place the animals are kept. Scheduling routine veterinary visits to the farm at intervals *established by the veterinarian* is a perfect way to meet this requirement. At a minimum, the veterinarian needs to know the livestock business you are in (commercial cow/calf; stocker/backgrounder; seedstock operation), what vaccines are routinely given and when, what diseases are recurring problems at the farm and how you typically treat them (for example, pinkeye, foot rot, bronchopneumonia, calf scours, etc.) and any health concerns that may be on the horizon. Some veterinarians will execute a written VCPR agreement although it is not required.

Once the VCPR is established and recognized by both the client and the veterinarian, then the discussions can begin regarding how to obtain prescription antibiotics after June 2023. Working with the veterinarian to establish when antibiotics are necessary before illness occurs is crucial to having the drugs on hand when needed. Setting up treatment protocols in advance with the veterinarian for common problems on your farm, including a written plan of when to treat an animal (also known as a "case definition"), what drug to use (dose, route of administration, how often to give it), what treatment records should be kept, and how withdrawal times will be recorded and observed will reduce the need for emergency veterinary visits and expedite treatment. An important piece of the protocol is to establish when an antibiotic treatment should be considered a failure and what the next step should be when failure is recognized. The treatment protocol needs to be discussed with every person on the farm who may be involved in identifying, pulling and treating an animal in the herd.

**January 1 US Beef Cow Inventory (1920 to 2023)**  
(1,000 head)



Source: USDA-NASS and Livestock Marketing Information Center

While I always tend to focus on beef cow inventory, several other numbers are of particular interest. Heifers being held for beef cow replacement was down 6%, which is a larger decrease than was seen in either the January or July report from last year. This suggests continued reductions in the size of the beef cow herd for the current year. While weather will certainly play a factor here, both cow numbers and heifer retention estimates suggest that calf crops are going to keep getting smaller in the near term.

I would also point to cattle-on-feed numbers. As more females entered the beef supply chain, on-feed inventory ran above year-ago levels for much of 2022. That trend finally changed last fall and note the 4% reduction seen in the following table. This speaks to beef production in 2023, which will be down considerably. In fact, 2023 will be the first year-over-year decrease in beef production that has been seen since 2015.

The Kentucky estimates were also very much worth discussion. A large number of cull cows had moved through Kentucky markets, so a significant decrease in cow numbers was expected. USDA estimated the size of the KY beef cow herd at 895 thousand. This was a 7% decrease from 2022 and the smallest beef cow herd the state has seen since 1967. Beef heifer retention was also estimated to be down by 8% in the Commonwealth.

While the table below speaks to flat dairy cow numbers and a decrease in the number of heifers being held for dairy cow replacement at the national level, the Kentucky estimates did not follow this trend. After a long period of decreasing dairy cow numbers, USDA estimated that Kentucky dairy cow inventory increased by one thousand cows. This 2% increase is significant in that it may suggest a reversal of this trend that has been in place for a very long time.