

Weekly Article

8-9-2021

Getting Ready for Weaning Season

Hello, my Name is Richard Purdin with OSU Extension, Ag and Natural Resource Educator and Community Development Educator for Adams County. I hope to better inform local producers and the public of the latest news in the world of agriculture. As The dog days of August continue, there are small hints that summer will soon give way to fall. As I conduct field scouting, field visits, and work on my own farm I take notice of changes in the natural landscape just as the ripening and yellowing of walnut tree leaves, the flowering of golden rod in the fields, the shortening of daylight hours, and Burley tobacco beginning to yellow down. Granted Autumn is still a long way off, time moves quickly and before you know it the cooler days of Autumn will be here. August is a good preparation month for Autumn and for many Spring calving operations this means getting calves ready for weaning. Early weaning can be an economical business decision on a cow calf operation, providing numerous benefits not only to the operations bottom line but for overall herd health and reputation. Today I want to talk about proper steps that can be taken now to make weaning go much smoother this fall.

- Start getting calves accustomed to being separated from their mothers. This usually means creep feed with grain in a gated lot. For grass fed only operations this can be done with creep pastures or paddocks, allowing calves to go through a creep gate into another paddock adjacent to where the mothers are currently grazing.
- Vaccinate sooner than later, vaccinating calves early, before weaning can build immunity and reduce chance of typical weaning diseases that can occur such as bovine respiratory disease (BRD).
- Dehorn, tag, and castrate before weaning. These are all stress that can reduce the calf's health when done at the same time as weaning. Remember what if someone grabbed you, threw you into a stock trailer, and shipped you to the stockyards or another farm, gave you 2-4 shots, nasal injection, and castrated all in the same day, you would probably not feel too good by the end of the day.
- Start training them to drinking water, this should be done based on what type of watering systems you have. If the calf will be drinking out of automatic waterers with balls (used to prevent freezing) lock the ball down or remove it for a temporary time. This allows the calf to know there is

water present. For open water tanks make sure they are continuously full and clean.

- Start developing a weaning ration. If calves will be grain finished starting a weaning ration early on is a good way to maintain rate of gain during weaning.

These steps might seem simple, but they can go a long way in making for less stressful weaning season for you and the livestock. Remember to keep cattle rancher in west in your prayers, for many weaning seasons is the least of their concerns, keeping the whole heard is on the ranch is a decision many are facing due to extreme drought conditions.

Some other details to go over

- August 28th- Forage Field Day Located at Scott Farms 9681 U.S. Route 68 Georgetown, Ohio 45121. Register by August 25th at 4:30 by contacting James Morris (937) 378-6716 or email at morris.1677@osu.edu. Presentations will be on proper wet wrapping, fertility management, poisonous and noxious weeds.
- September 14th, 2021, Adams County BQA/ Cattle Handling workshop will be held at the Adams County fairgrounds (Show Arena) 5:30 to 8:00pm. Contact the Adams County Extension office at (937) 544-2339 to RSVP.
- Farm Science Review Tickets are available at the office, the event will be September 21-23 in person!

From the field

- Corn pollination looks good.
- Third cutting Alfalfa is almost finished.
- Burley Tobacco harvest is in full swing and cigar wrapper tobacco harvest has begun.
- Some sudden death showing up in soybean fields
- Water hemp and giant ragweed is emerging above soybeans canopy.
- Be on the look out for spotted lantern fly.
- Some presence of Potato Leaf hopper in Alfalfa Stands.
- Pasture conditions are still in excellent condition.
- Gardens are producing very well.