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 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Is there an optimal size for brood cows?

Over my career with OSU Extension I have been involved in several beef meetings. There is always discussion that involves the size of cows. This could be related to feeding, how big the bull needs to be to do his job, space needed for feeding or hauling, and this list goes on and on.

This information showed up recently discussing cow size. I thought it was a good explanation on at least weaning weights and what a cow “should” do. Oh, by the way, in most of those meetings everyone’s cows weigh about 1200 lbs. So, do mine. In reality cows are all over the board when it comes to weight, but it seems to me that the size of most mature cows is much heavier than 1200 lbw.

So, the question was asked to Dr. Ken McMillan, who is a contributing editor for DTN. I am not sure it is actually a question, but maybe more of an observation. Here it is.

I think many producers have unknowingly allowed their cows to get too large for their production systems. By focusing on weaning weights in their calves and using the cheap supplements of the recent past, they have selected for more growth in the heifers they retain.

Here is his response: I was always taught a cow should wean about 50% of its body weight. Calves with adjusted weaning weights of 550 to 650 pounds work well in our stocker and feedlot system and on the rail. So if we do the math that puts the ideal cow at 1,100 to 1,300 pounds. If it were only that simple.

Some producers, especially those in the grass-fed niche, feel cows that weigh less than 1,000 pounds work best. And, I have several very good producers whose cows average between 1,400 and 1,500 pounds. So one size does not fit all.

What is the take-home message? Weigh your cows and calves, collect data and do the math. Never assume your largest calves are the most profitable. At today's input and calf prices, a 1,500-pound cow would have to wean at least 50 and possibly up to 100 pounds more calf than a 1,200-pound cow to recover the higher carrying cost.

## Tire Collection Day in Adams Co.

Don't miss the opportunity to clean out some old tires. Adams Co. Tire Collection Day is August 15. You can bring 10 tires for free. There will be a charge for additional tires.

## Dates to Remember

August 9-12 Ohio Valley Antique Machinery Show in Georgetown. More info at [www.ovams.com](http://www.ovams.com)



- August 9 Adams County Farm Bureau/Adams Soil & Water annual meeting. Must register by July 26. Meeting on August 9 is at the Ohio Valley CTC on Lloyd Road beginning at 6:00 p.m.
- August 13 Pesticide Testing at the Old Y Restaurant at noon. Pre-register at 800-282-1955 or <http://pested.osu.edu>
- August 14 Beef Quality Assurance Training at the Union Stockyards in Hillsboro at noon.
- August 23 Beef and Forage Field Night in Jackson at the OARDC Research Facility on SR 93 about a mile south of SR 32, small charge for the meal that begins around 5:00 p.m. Please call in advance if you wish to attend. More details in next week's column.
- August 28 Beef Quality Assurance Training at the Union Stockyards in Hillsboro at 6:30 p.m.
- Sept. 13 Beef Quality Assurance Training at the United Producers Stockyards in Hillsboro at 6:30 p.m.
- October 25 Beef Quality Assurance Training at the United Producers Stockyards in Hillsboro at 6:30 p.m.