



Beef Cow Herd Planning Calendar

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Extension Resources

Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association

Mission: The mission of the Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association is to promote, educate, and facilitate the use of performance data, record keeping, and marketing opportunities for BCIA members, while providing a leadership role to improve the Alabama cattle industry.

Website: www.albcia.com

Alabama Extension Beef Systems Website

Find additional information on beef cattle management tips in the Southeast at on the Alabama Extension Beef Systems website at www.aces.edu/beefsystems. Check the website for upcoming events, publications, webinars, and more!

Alabama Extension Beef Basics Online Course and iBook

The Beef Basics online course is a free online class for those interested in getting into the beef industry or for beginners. Enroll using your email address for access to videos, publications, and lessons on beef cattle forage management, nutrition, health, genetics, and consumer relations. Following completion of the course, download your certificate of completion. A supporting text, the *Beef Basics iBook*, is available free to download from Apple iBooks.

Monthly Webinar Series

Visit our website to view our monthly Animal Science and Forage webinars broadcast live at 10:00 a.m. (CDT) on the second Wednesday each month. Missed the live version? The link to the archive allows viewers to check back at any time to learn more about the topics presented.

Additional Resources for Cattle Producers

- Beef Quality Assurance Program: www.bqa.org
- Alabama Farmers Federation: www.alfafarmers.org
- Alabama Cattlemen's Association: www.bamabeef.org
- Alabama Livestock Market News: <http://www.agi.alabama.gov/divisions/livestock-market-news>
- Alabama Weekly Feedstuff/Production Cost Report: https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/mg_gr210.txt



Calendar Definitions

- Winter-calving herd: January to March calving dates
- Spring-calving herd: March to May calving dates
- Fall-calving herd: October to December calving dates



JANUARY

Health Tips

- Use high magnesium mineral supplements for cows on lush pasture to prevent grass tetany.
- Monitor water sources. In severely cold weather, check daily for ice on watering tanks that are not freeze protected.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Limit grazing on winter annuals. Two hours of grazing per day and free-choice may stretch early season growth of these forages.
- As adequate forage becomes available, manage cool-season pastures to maintain at least 4-inch stubble height.
- Fertilize cool-season grasses before the flush of spring growth in mid/late spring.

Winter Calving Herd

- Maintain good calving records (birth weight, tag numbers, cow IDs).
- Establish an ID system and tag calves at birth.
- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.
- Make bull selection decisions for upcoming breeding season. Conduct breeding soundness evaluations on bulls 60 days before the start of breeding season.

Spring Calving Herd

- Evaluate herd sire options for the upcoming breeding season.
- Organize calving supplies and move spring-calving females close to handling facilities.

Fall Calving Herd

- Breed cows. Cows bred in early January should calve in mid-October. Heifers bred in December should calve in mid-September.
- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves by four months of age. Do not implant replacement heifers.

FEBRUARY

Health Tips

- Continue high magnesium mineral supplement feeding for cows on lush winter pastures to prevent grass tetany.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores, and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Graze winter annual pastures, maintaining a 4-inch stubble height.
- Collect soil samples on summer pastures and hayfields to plan spring fertilization and liming program.
- Check with your Extension agent about controlling weeds in cool-season pastures for the summer grazing season.

Winter Calving Herd

- Conduct breeding soundness exams and make sure bulls are in good condition.
- Provide shelter for newborn calves during severe weather.
- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.
- Begin breeding replacement heifers to calve about 1 month before cows. Heifers bred by early March should calve by mid-December.
- For artificial insemination programs, have ample semen and supplies on hand. Heifers bred by early March should calve by mid-December.
- Make sure your bull is ready for breeding season by having a breeding soundness exam done 60 days before the breeding season.

Spring Calving Herd

- Monitor bred heifers closely for calving.
- Maintain good calving records and effective ID system.
- After calving, plan to move cow-calf pairs to clean pasture to minimize health risk.
- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.

Fall Calving Herd

- Continue using the best hay and feed for lactating cows.
- Vaccinate calves over 3 months old with clostridial vaccines (blackleg). Check with your veterinarian about other problems in your area.

Check the Alabama Extension Beef Systems website at www.aces.edu/beefsystems for upcoming events, webinars, and more!

MARCH

Health Tips

- Watch for grass tetany, particularly with lactating cows grazing lush pastures, such as tall fescue or annual ryegrass.
- Plan summer fly control, and review options for anaplasmosis control in the coming months.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Fertilize cool-season grasses according to soil tests, if not already done.
- Rotationally graze tall fescue and cool-season annual pastures. Adjust stocking density to prepare for flush of growth in late spring.
- Spray winter annual weeds while still vegetative for better control.

Winter Calving Herd

- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.
- Start breeding heifers about a month before the cow herd—mid-February to early March.
- Breed cows. Cows bred in late March should calve in early January.
- For calving in mid-January, bulls need to go into pastures in early April.
- Calculate winter calving percentage.

Spring Calving Herd

- Provide good nutrition for lactating cattle and first calf heifers approaching breeding.
- Maintain good calving records and an effective ID system.
- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.
- Evaluate bulls and schedule breeding soundness evaluations.

Fall Calving Herd

- Schedule pregnancy checks 45 to 60 days after the end of the breeding season.
- Remove bulls by mid-March to finish calving season by end of December.
- Observe cows and heifers for return to heat, and monitor herd body condition.

APRIL

Health Tips

- Start watching for horn and face flies, and consider type of fly chemicals used last year. Rotate chemical classes.
- Consider options for anaplasmosis control as biting insects become abundant.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Plant and fertilize warm-season pastures according to soil tests.
- Contact custom bermudagrass spriggers to get on their planting schedules early. Locate seed for establishment of other warm-season grass pastures as needed.

Winter Calving Herd

- Consider marketing late-calving females that do not fit the chosen calving season.
- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves by 4 months of age. Do not implant replacement heifers.

Spring Calving Herd

- Watch calves for scours, and restock calving supplies.
- Begin breeding replacement heifers to calve about 1 month before cows. Heifers bred by early May should calve by mid-February.
- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.
- For artificial insemination programs, have ample semen and supplies on hand. Schedule for estrus synchronization programs, and reserve an artificial insemination technician.
- Make sure your bull is ready for breeding season by having a breeding soundness exam done 60 days before the breeding season.

Fall Calving Herd

- Observe cows and heifers for return to heat.
- Schedule pregnancy checks 45 to 60 days after the end of breeding season.
- Market bulls that will not be used again for breeding.

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MAY

Health Tips

- Make sure adequate shade is available for cattle as temperatures begin to rise.
- Implement fly and anaplasmosis control programs.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores, and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Fertilize warm-season pastures according to soil test recommendations.
- Sprig hybrid bermudagrass before moisture becomes limiting.
- Graze overseeded annual ryegrass to prevent shading warm-season forage.
- Review planting recommendations in Extension publication [ANR-0149, "Alabama Planting Guide for Forage Grasses,"](#) in your part of the state.
- Use high-quality warm-season forage as it becomes available.

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Winter Calving Herd

- Implement heat synchronization protocols. Breed heifers ahead of cow herd.
- Maintain breeding records.

Spring Calving Herd

- Calculate spring calving percentage.
- Heifers bred in early May should calve in mid-February.
- Breed cows. Cows bred in late May should calve in early March.
- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.

Fall Calving Herd

- Implement calf preconditioning programs including vaccinations, weaning strategies, and bunk breaking.
- Make sure calves are weaned and weighed within the acceptable age range for breed associations and performance record keeping.
- Perform pregnancy checks on cows/heifers and cull on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance.

JUNE

Health Tips

- Work cattle early in the morning to reduce heat stress, limit time cattle spend in confined areas, and provide adequate shade.
- Provide fresh, cool water for cattle confined for extended periods.
- Remove insecticidal fly tags as they become ineffective.
- Watch for pinkeye problems.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores, and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Continue using the best pasture available for lactating cows.
- Fertilize pastures and hay fields using soil test information.
- Monitor commodity prices, and purchase supplemental winter feed as appropriate.
- Rotationally graze bermudagrass and bahiagrass pastures for improved forage utilization.

Winter Calving Herd

- Maintain good breeding records.
- Observe cows and heifers for return to heat.
- Remove bulls by mid-June to end calving season by late March.
- Schedule pregnancy checks 45 to 60 days after the end of the breeding season.

Spring Calving Herd

- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves by 4 months of age. Do not implant replacement heifers.
- Vaccinate calves over 3 months old with a clostridial vaccine (blackleg). Check with your veterinarian about other vaccines recommended for your area.

Fall Calving Herd

- Wean calves depending on pasture conditions and marketing plans. After weaning, cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance.
- Select replacement heifers and permanently identify them.
- Plan a heifer development program to reach target breeding weights.
- Deworm calves at weaning.

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JULY

Health Tips

- Be careful to prevent heat stress–related losses. Provide adequate shade for cattle.
- Keep a close eye on fly numbers and possibly implement additional fly control.
- Employ internal parasites, pinkeye, and anaplasmosis control measures.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Continue using the best pasture available for lactating cows.
- Rotationally graze bermudagrass and bahiagrass pastures for improved forage utilization.
- Scout for armyworms and other pasture pests.
- Harvest warm-season grass hay at timely intervals for best quality.

Winter Calving Herd

- Market bulls that will not be used again for breeding.
- Schedule pregnancy checks 45 to 60 days after the end of the breeding season.
- Observe cows and heifers for return to heat.

Spring Calving Herd

- Vaccinate calves over 3 months old with a clostridial vaccine (blackleg). Check with your veterinarian about other vaccines recommended for your area.
- Schedule pregnancy checks for 45 to 60 days after the end of the breeding season.

Fall Calving Herd

- Wean calves, if not already weaned, depending on pasture conditions and marketing plans.
- Train calves to eat from a bunk and drink from a water trough.
- Select and permanently identify replacement heifers.
- Plan a heifer development program to reach target breeding weights

AUGUST

Health Tips

- Reduce cattle stress during hot weather; provide adequate shade and water.
- Watch for pinkeye and anaplasmosis problems as biting insects remain abundant.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Plan winter grazing and feeding programs in advance—locate seed!
- Watch dallisgrass pastures for ergot contamination as seedheads begin to appear..
- Avoid grazing heavily nitrogen-fertilized warm-season annual pastures during drought to avoid nitrate poisoning.
- Prepare to stockpile tall fescue and bermudagrass pastures for winter grazing.

Winter Calving Herd

- Perform pregnancy check on cows/heifers and cull cows/heifers based on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance.
- Acquire supplies for weaning ahead of time.
- Allow bulls to rest and regain condition.
- To precondition calves, vaccinate for respiratory diseases 45 days before shipment.
- Make sure calves are weighed to collect weaning weights within age range accepted by breeding associations and for performance record keeping.

Spring Calving Herd

- Maintain good breeding records.
- Observe cows and heifers for return to heat.
- Remove bulls by mid-August to end calving season by late May.
- Schedule pregnancy checks 45 to 60 days after the end of the breeding season.

Fall Calving Herd

- Evaluate herd sire options for the next breeding season.
- Organize calving supplies and move fall-calving females close to handling facilities.

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SEPTEMBER

Health Tips

- Reduce cattle stress during hot weather; provide adequate shade and water.
- Watch for pinkeye.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Watch for fall armyworms in pastures and hayfields.
- Prepare to stockpile tall fescue and bermudagrass pastures for winter grazing.
- Watch dallisgrass pastures for ergot contamination.
- Plant and fertilize cool-season forages in prepared seedbeds.

Winter Calving Herd

- Wean calves based on market and pasture conditions, and deworm at weaning.
- Vaccinate for respiratory and other diseases based on veterinary advice.
- Train calves to eat from a bunk and drink from a water trough.
- Perform pregnancy checks on cows/heifers and cull on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance.

Spring Calving Herd

- Market bulls that will not be used again for breeding.
- Schedule pregnancy checks 45 to 60 days after the end of the breeding season.
- Observe cows and heifers for return to heat.

Fall Calving Herd

- Monitor bred heifers closely for calving.
- Maintain good calving records.
- Establish an ID system, and tag calves at birth.
- After calving, plan to move cow-calf pairs to clean pasture to minimize health risk.

OCTOBER

Health Tips

- Heat stress conditions are still possible in some areas.
- Horn and face fly season is ending. Remove remaining insecticidal fly tags.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Consider overseeding warm-season perennial pastures with cool-season annual grasses and legumes.
- Conduct a forage analysis on stored hay, baleage, and silage before feeding to develop an accurate supplementation strategy.

Winter Calving Herd

- Finish weaning late calves.
- Train calves to eat from a bunk and drink from a water trough.
- Select and permanently identify replacement heifers.
- Plan a heifer development program to reach target breeding weights.

Spring Calving Herd

- Perform pregnancy check on cows/heifers and cull cows/heifers based on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance.
- Make sure calves are weaned and weighed within acceptable age range for breed associations and performance record keeping.
- Plan a heifer development program to reach target breeding weights.

Fall Calving Herd

- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.
- Provide good nutrition for lactating cattle and first-calf heifers approaching breeding.
- Evaluate bulls and line up breeding soundness evaluations.

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NOVEMBER

Health Tips

- Watch for lice and treat as needed.
- Remove any remaining insecticidal ear tags. Old tags release low levels of insecticide that tend to promote development of resistance.
- Follow up on internal parasite control practices.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores, and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Modify winter supplementation based on forage analysis information, availability, and herd nutritional requirements.
- Implement management intensive grazing systems on stockpiled tall fescue and bermudagrass.
- Begin monitoring for cool-season annual weed pressure as cool-season forages begin to grow.
- Conduct a forage analysis on stored hay, baleage, and silage before feeding to develop an accurate supplemental strategy.

Winter Calving Herd

- Check weaned calves regularly for health problems.
- Separate bred heifers from the cows, and provide adequate nutrition.

Spring Calving Herd

- Perform a pregnancy check on cows/heifers and cull cows/heifers based on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance.
- Implement calf preconditioning programs including vaccinations, weaning strategies, and bunk breaking.
- Select replacement heifers and permanently identify them.
- Wean calves, if not already weaned, depending on pasture conditions and marketing plans.
- Wean calves depending on pasture conditions and marketing plans. After weaning, cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness, health, and performance.
- Deworm calves at weaning.

Fall Calving Herd

- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.
- Provide good nutrition for lactating cattle approaching breeding.
- Make sure your bull is ready for breeding season by having a breeding soundness exam done 60 days before the breeding season.
- For artificial insemination programs, have ample semen and supplies on hand. Schedule for estrus synchronization programs, and reserve an artificial insemination technician.

DECEMBER

Health Tips

- Monitor cattle for lice.
- Supplement vitamin A, when necessary, if frosted grass or weathered hay is the primary forage source.

Forage & Nutrition Notes

- Monitor body condition scores, and adjust nutritional program as needed.
- Continue using stockpiled tall fescue and bermudagrass.
- Limiting grazing cool-season annuals for a few hours per day is a good way to use winter forages efficiently once they reach a target height of 6 to 8 inches.
- Modify winter supplementation based on forage analysis information, availability, and herd nutritional requirements.

Winter Calving Herd

- Make sure calving supplies are on hand.
- Move heifers into clean, dry pastures, and check frequently.
- Monitor bred heifers closely for calving.
- Tag calves at birth, and keep good calving records (birth weight, tag numbers, cow IDs).
- Establish an ID system, and tag calves at birth.

Spring Calving Herd

- Train calves to eat from a bunk and drink from a water trough.
- Select and permanently identify replacement heifers.
- Plan a heifer development program to reach target breeding weights.
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Fall Calving Herd

- Calculate fall calving percentage.
- Watch calves for scours, and restock calving supplies.
- Begin breeding replacement heifers to calve about 1 month before cows.
- Expect heifers bred by early December to calve by mid-September.
- Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as soon as practically possible. Do not implant replacement heifers.

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Beef Cow Herd Planning Calendar

Breeding Animals	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Calves												
Replacement Heifers												
Bred Heifers												
Cows												
Bulls												

Notes: