



EXTENSION



Retained Ownership Discussion Nutrition Thought Process

Dana Zook
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension

Understanding the Current Situation

- Impending/continued drought
- Forage supply variable
- Wheat/small grains pasture affected by drought

- Producers facing the question of retained ownership
 - Feeding calves without traditional grazing options
 - High prices
 - Cheap? Feed....???



Recent Producer Conversation

Scenario:

Due to the lack of wheat pasture, local producers were weighing their options for this year's calf crop. They would like help with nutrition scenarios to feed their calves and had questions regarding the economics of keeping those calves.

- Options they were considering
 1. Sell calves directly after weaning.
 2. Retain calves and feed them with hay and supplement.



Taking Inventory

1. # of calves and weight range
2. What are the producers grazing options?
 - Native grass, wheat pasture, “stock-piled” bermuda, bermuda
3. What hay resources are in their supply?
 - What hay types do they have?
 - Are they acceptable for weaned calves? Ex> hay grazer not the best weaned calf forage source
 - Has a hay been analyzed for nutrient quality?
4. What feed/supplement resources do they have on hand?
 - Do they have some feed on hand?
 - Bulk vs. bagged options
5. What is their facility/equipment situation?
 - Ex> Pen space, grass trap, bunks, cake feeder, hand feeding

Inventory Results:

- Producer typically puts his calves out on wheat – less wheat pasture due to drought
- Producer has 400 bales of small grains hay that is 1 year old
- Hay Quality:
 - CP: 11.8%
 - TDN: 60.7%
- Age of hay likely prevents them from selling

- Producer has 90 calves – 50% are 700+ lbs. and the other 50% average 550lbs.
- Producer has calves currently penned together in a grass trap
- Has the ability to spilt calves into two groups

Inventory Results:

- Local feed/supplement options:
- They are currently feeding the calves a 14% grower pellet
- They have a supply of 20% cubes for their cow herd
- Producers do not have bulk storage but have a cube feeder, so they can drive to town and fill up when needed
- Plan to feed the calves until mid-February – 120 days

Thoughts on nutrition

- When weaning calves, palatability is the most important aspect of nutrition
- Health coincides with nutrition
- High quality hay is important
- Small calves will need a pelleted feed
- If calves are older/larger, producers may be able to get by with a 20% cube
- Encourage producers to conduct hay analysis – PLEASE!



Nutritional Tools

- Nutritional tools to use to address question

- OSU Cowculator

<https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/cowculator.html>

- OSU Beef Cattle Supplementation Program

<https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/beef-extension/calculators/>