

BROOD COW'S NEW YEAR WISHES

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The following New Year's wishes were presented to a local cow-calf producer by a brood cow representative of his herd. These New Year's wishes would probably be similar to those of most cows in Tennessee herds.

“I have been appointed by other cows of your herd to present our wishes to you as we enter the New Year. If you can carry out these wishes, we can produce feeder calves that would be more profitable for you and of greater value when you market them.”

1. Improve pasture production and management that will allow us to graze more. This would make me happier and more profitable for you. We were made to convert grass into feeder cattle.
2. Harvest hay at the appropriate stage so we can get the needed protein and energy to perform profitably. This would also lower your cost of winter feeding.
3. Keep 30 percent Ladino clover in the fescue pasture to reduce the effects of the fungus. Both we and our calves will perform better. Poor quality feed offers little in nutrition and is more difficult to digest.
4. Maintain a good set of working facilities so we won't get hurt and your children can watch you work me and my herd mates and our offspring without wondering what are the words you keep yelling. Your wife might also be more willing to help.
5. Keep us in “good” body condition and supplement when needed. As you know,

we don't perform well when we are "too thin" and it is not profitable for you to keep us "too fat".

6. Develop a controlled, short calving season. We don't need to spend a lot of time with the bull. Sixty days, the most 90 days, are long enough for us.
7. Carry out a good health program that includes vaccinations for both respiratory and reproductive diseases. A healthy cow herd means more profit for you.
8. Check on us during calving to ensure that we make it "okay" and my calf is born with few problems, survives and does well. Do not lose the investment you have in our annual cost of maintenance.
9. Process (castrate, implant and ear tag) our male calves at birth so that they can get off to a good start and make you more money. Doing this as they get older will cause a set back in their performance.
10. Mate us to a bull that allows us to produce a high quality feeder calf that we can be proud of and will be profitable for you.
11. Before you purchase a new herd bull, consider what kind of genetics are needed to get the preceding wish done. Look at the herd's performance and make a breeding plan. We don't want to be mated with just any old bull. You should check with your neighbors and all of you develop similar breeding programs to produce calves that can be marketed together.
12. Control flies so that we can graze without being constantly irritated, our calves can perform well and neither of us develop eye problems.
13. Take better care of our daughters that you are planning for replacements. They should be fed and cared for better than us mature cows to be profitable.

14. Treat our calves with the Southeast Pride Blue Tag Health and Management Program, Tennessee Beef Advantage or similar VAC-45 programs. This will help our calves enjoy the marketing process and trip to the feedlot or grazing area without getting sick or at worst dying.
15. Market our calves with their other buddies on the farm and those from neighboring farms. I have heard that “lonesome calves sell for less”. You will also enjoy it better when you receive a larger check.

Our wishes are basic for successful cow-calf operations and will help us be more profitable for you. Happy New Year.