

January Beef Cattle Management Tips

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Winter is here. The cold weather can make management a challenge. Suggestions for January are given below.

Hay and supplement are usually the most expensive item in the cattle producer's budget. Good supplementation may be more critical than usual in 2004 because test results indicate that much of the hay cut in 2003 may be inferior in quality. Have forages tested by the University of Tennessee Agricultural Forage Testing Lab or other laboratory and supplement based on the results of this test.

Many Tennessee calves are born in January so producers should be prepared. Discuss medicine and equipment needs with your veterinarian and/or county Extension agent. Carefully observe heifers and cows for signs of labor. Know when to assist and when to call the veterinarian. Calves should be kept in as clean an area as possible. Scours and pneumonia can result if conditions become too unsanitary. Purebred producers should plan to take birth weights on all calves.

Watch the water. Ponds may freeze during cold weather. This can decrease performance and even be dangerous if cattle walk out on ice in search of water. If electric water heaters are used in automatic waterers, make certain there is no stray voltage to decrease or prevent water consumption.

Plan to purchase bull(s) in the University of Tennessee Senior Bull Sale on January 22 at Spring Hill. Other dates: March 11, Junior Bull Sale in Spring Hill; Tennessee Beef Agribition, March 12-14 at MTSU Tennessee Livestock Pavillion in Murfreesboro and the Volunteer Horse Fair, March 19-21 at the MTSU Livestock Pavillion in Murfreesboro.