



## Cow-Calf Management Considerations for May 2026

### Cow Herd Management

- If cows are in marginal BCS (4.0-5.0) going into breeding, possibly consider:
  - Supplementing 2-3 weeks prior to and through 1st cycle.
  - Using monensin (200 mg/hd/day) in feed supplements.
  - Temporary calf removal or a CIDR to initiate estrus in anestrus females.
  - Early Weaning if BCS doesn't improve during the season.
- Pregnancy check and cull fall calving cows, if not already done.
- With higher costs, its important to closely manage salt and mineral programs.
  - Record date and amount of salt and mineral offered and calculate herd consumption.
  - If consumption is 2x the target intake, then cost will be too!
  - Properly store bags and pallets to avoid damage and product loss.
- Continue to provide high magnesium mineral formulas to cows grazing high risk forages: wheat, rye, triticale, oats, brome grass, and other cool-season forages.
- Risk of grass tetany is greatest for lactating cows and older cows.
- The estrus synchronization planner (<https://www.iowabeefcenter.org/estrussynch.html>) is a helpful tool for scheduling synchronization protocols.
  - Order your A.I. supplies well prior to starting your protocols.
- Closely monitor bulls at the start of the breeding season for injury and to make sure they are aggressively covering cows.

### Calf Management

- Calculate the value of gain relative to cost of grain for: implanting nursing calves and grass cattle and creep feeding nursing calves.
- Finalize health protocols for spring-born calves and cattle going to summer grass.
- Consider supplementing or feeding replacement heifers for a period when initially turning to grass if they don't have post-weaning grazing experience and/or forage supply is limited.

### General Management

- Reconsider stocking rates and turn-out dates for drought stressed pastures.
- Begin implementing early-season weed/invasive species control.
- Use the Management Minder Tool on KSUBeef.org to plan key management activities for your cow herd for the rest of the year.
  - <https://cowweb.exnet.iastate.edu/CowWeb/faces/Index.jsp>
- Employ multiple strategies and chemistries for controlling flies and insects.
- Make and evaluate important production calculations: calving distribution (% 1st cycle, % 2nd cycle, % 3rd cycle), calving interval, % calf crop (# calves weaned/# cows exposed for breeding) for calves born in fall 2025.



### Managing Chickens From Chicks to Peak Egg Production

This article (<https://extension.usu.edu/small-acreage-livestock/research/managing-chickens-from-chicks-to-peak-egg-production>) from Utah State University Extension is an comprehensive resource worth checking out for all those who currently raise chickens or for anyone looking into it. Highlights of this article are:

- \* Choosing the right breeds and good management practices are essential for farmers to maximize egg yield, quality, and safety.
- \* As laying birds develop, they undergo internal growth that strengthens their muscles and skeletal structure while gradually accumulating body fat.
- \* Proper management during this stage is essential to support healthy development and future egg production.
- \* Hens go through several distinct growth phases including brooding, pullet, pre-lay, laying, and spent.
- \* Premature laying, calcium deficiency, feather pecking, heat or cold stress, and parasites are challenges that may be prevented by careful management.
- \* Proper lighting (14 to 16 hours of consistent light per day) helps maintain a regular laying cycle and encourages feeding and activity, which are important for growth and muscle development.
- \* Best practice for success: keep daily records (feed, weight, egg count), ensure clean housing and tools, observe birds for unusual behavior or signs of illness, enrich the environment (perches, scratch areas), and for free-range systems rotate pastures regularly.