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Survey of Kansas Cow-Calf Producers

Jack Riley and Will Thompson

Summary

The average producer we surveyed was 46 years old with 1 year of college. He had 125 cows and 5 bulls, usually Hereford or Angus, breeding naturally on pasture for 4½ months. Most replacement heifers calved at the same time as cows. Few semen tested and only 50% pregnancy tested. Eleven percent of the cows were culled annually and 75% of the producers raised their own replacements. The average cow-calf pairs used 10 acres of pasture, 2 acres of crop residues and 1 acre of hay. Vaccinations for Blackleg (79%) and Leptospirosis (61%) were popular but less than 30% routinely vaccinated for Vibriosis or IBR. Only twenty-five percent implanted their calves, 35% used some form of pre-conditioning, and 40% used a wormer. Calves averaged 12 months old and 675 pounds when sold. The local auction market was the most popular (52%). In 1976-1977, when the survey was made, most producers (58%) planned to maintain their present herd size and 73% considered \$50-\$60/cwt. (\$47 average) a realistic price for feeder calves at weaning.

Introduction

We gathered information on management practices and opinions of 350 Kansas cow-calf producers. Results indicate tremendous variation in size of operation and management procedures. Information from the survey is presented.

Procedure

The survey was conducted in cooperation with the Beef Science class at Kansas State University. Each student the fall semester of 1976 and spring semester of 1977 completed a survey form by interviewing a Kansas cow-calf producer. The survey was not conducted according to standardized statistical survey methods, but we think the results from 350 producers indicate a cross-section of management practices and attitudes in the Kansas cattle industry.

Results

Questions asked are tabulated at the end of this report. The results indicate that students interviewed producers younger, better educated, and with larger operations than the average for Kansas. The results indicate that further education is needed so more Kansas producers use management practices proved beneficial. For example, only 24.6% of the 350 producers used implants.

Results from surveying 350 Kansas cow-calf producers, 1977-78.

	Total ^a	Commercial ^b	Registered ^c
Avg. age, years	45.8	45.5	46.3
Avg. education	1 yr. college	1 yr. college	1 yr. college
No. of Cows			
Avg.	126	110	141
50 or fewer	103 ^d (29.5) ^e	89 ^d (31.0) ^e	17 ^d (18.7) ^e
51-100	111 (31.8)	88 (30.7)	28 (30.8)
101-200	78 (22.4)	66 (23.0)	20 (21.9)
201-1000	57 (16.3)	44 (15.3)	26 (28.6)
Cow Breed			
Angus	59 (16.9)	47 (16.4)	15 (16.3)
Hereford	117 (33.5)	92 (32.1)	43 (46.74)
Angus-Hereford cross	21 (6.0)	21 (7.3)	
Angus and Hereford	29 (8.3)	27 (9.4)	5 (5.4)
Charolais	9 (2.6)	6 (2.1)	6 (6.5)
Simmental	9 (2.6)	1 (0.4)	8 (8.7)
Simmental-Hereford cross	7 (2.0)	6 (2.0)	2 (2.2)
Cross breeds	37 (10.6)	36 (12.5)	1 (1.1)
Other	61 (17.5)	51 (17.8)	12 (13.0)
Cow Weight			
Avg., lbs.	1018	990	1082
950 or less	117 (17.0)	109 (38.1)	12 (13.3)
951-1050	152 (50.7)	132 (46.2)	37 (41.1)
1050 or more	77 (22.3)	45 (15.7)	41 (45.6)
No. of Bulls			
Avg.	5.5	4.5	8.3
10 or fewer	301 (89.1)	255 (90.1)	68 (18.0)
11-20	27 (7.9)	21 (7.4)	11 (13.1)
21 or more	10 (3.0)	7 (2.5)	5 (5.9)
Bull Breed			
Angus	65 (19.1)	53 (18.6)	15 (17.4)
Hereford	120 (35.2)	98 (34.4)	36 (41.9)
Angus and Hereford	37 (10.9)	35 (12.3)	5 (5.8)
Angus, Hereford & Simmental	10 (2.9)	10 (3.5)	2 (2.3)
Angus and Simmental	10 (2.9)	10 (3.5)	5 (5.8)
Charolais	11 (3.2)	8 (2.8)	5 (5.8)
Simmental	22 (6.5)	16 (5.6)	7 (8.1)
Hereford and Simmental	8 (2.3)	7 (2.5)	3 (3.5)
Other	58 (17.0)	48 (16.8)	13 (15.1)

a refers to all producers surveyed.

b refers to producers whose operations produce primarily commercial cattle.

c refers to producers whose operations produce primarily registered cattle.

d number of producers.

e percentage of the producers.

No. of Cows per Bull

Avg.	24.5	24.8	23
20 or fewer	89 (26.3)	67 (23.7)	32 (38.5)
21 to 30	156 (46.2)	144 (50.9)	26 (31.3)
31 or more	93 (27.5)	72 (25.4)	25 (30.1)

Breeding Program Used

Artificial Insemination	11 (3.2)	3 (1.1)	8 (8.8)
Pasture	284 (81.4)	259 (89.9)	49 (53.8)
Both A.I. and pasture	54 (15.5)	26 (9.0)	34 (37.4)

Length of Breeding Season

Avg. days	134	144	103
45 or less	10 (3.8)	10 (3.6)	4 (4.4)
46-60	53 (19.6)	52 (18.5)	26 (28.6)
61-90	141 (36.3)	96 (34.1)	38 (41.7)
91-120	51 (14.9)	44 (15.7)	10 (11.0)
121-365	86 (25.4)	79 (28.1)	13 (14.3)

Heifers compared with cows calving

Earlier	101 (31.1)	82 (30.7)	30 (34.5)
Same time	185 (56.9)	154 (57.7)	46 (52.9)
Later	39 (12.0)	31 (11.6)	11 (12.6)

Do you flush

Yes	124 (35.5)	91 (31.7)	48 (52.2)
No	225 (64.5)	196 (68.3)	44 (47.8)

Do you semen test

Yes	151 (43.4)	117 (40.6)	48 (53.3)
No	197 (56.6)	171 (59.4)	42 (46.7)

Do you pregnancy test

Yes	175 (50.0)	138 (47.9)	56 (60.9)
No	175 (50.0)	150 (52.1)	36 (39.1)

Culling rate

Avg. %	11.0	10.4	12.8
10% or less	186 (66)	157 (68.0)	45 (59.2)
More than 10%	94 (34)	74 (32.0)	31 (40.8)

Are replacement heifers

Raised	257 (74.5)	208 (73.2)	76 (83.5)
Bought	35 (10.1)	33 (11.6)	3 (3.3)
Both bought & Raised	53 (15.4)	43 (15.1)	12 (13.2)

Acres of grass

Avg. acres	1217	1105	1266
0-250	75 (21.5)	64 (22.3)	13 (14.3)
251-500	80 (22.9)	67 (23.4)	17 (18.7)
501-1000	86 (24.7)	68 (23.6)	29 (31.8)
1001-2000	54 (15.4)	42 (14.7)	14 (15.4)
2001-4000	32 (9.2)	29 (10.1)	8 (8.8)
4001 or more	22 (6.3)	17 (5.9)	10 (11.0)

Acres of crop residue

Avg.	284	274	312
0-250	170 (60.1)	139 (60.2)	43 (58.1)
251-500	69 (24.4)	58 (25.1)	17 (23.0)
501 or more	44 (15.5)	34 (14.7)	14 (18.9)

Acres of hay

Avg.	112	111	137
0-100	217 (66.6)	183 (68.3)	48 (56.5)
101-200	74 (22.7)	57 (21.3)	26 (30.6)
201 or more	35 (10.7)	28 (10.4)	11 (12.9)

Have you ever used a liquid supplement

Yes	146 (43.5)	120 (43.3)	37 (42.5)
No	189 (56.4)	157 (56.7)	50 (57.5)

If you used a liquid supplement, were you satisfied

Yes	74 (52.5)	58 (50.0)	19 (54.3)
No	67 (47.5)	58 (50.0)	16 (45.7)

Vaccination used

Blackleg	257 (78.8)	214 (81.1)	68 (74.7)
Leptospirosis	198 (60.7)	156 (59.1)	65 (71.4)
Brucellosis	97 (29.8)	67 (25.4)	40 (44.0)
Vibrio	96 (29.5)	74 (28.0)	36 (39.6)
BVD	4 (1.2)	11 (4.2)	8 (8.8)
IBR	77 (23.6)	55 (20.8)	28 (30.8)

Do you worm

Yes	133 (39.9)	110 (40.1)	36 (41.4)
No	200 (60.1)	163 (59.9)	51 (58.6)

If you worm, which wormer do you use

Tramisol	52 (61.2)	43 (62.3)	15 (60)
TBZ	18 (21.2)	15 (21.7)	6 (24)
Other	15 (17.6)	11 (16.0)	4 (16)

Method used to treat lice, flies, grubs

Spray	59 (17.1)	52 (18.3)	11 (12.1)
Backrub	8 (2.3)	7 (2.5)	1 (1.1)
Feed	3 (0.9)	3 (1.1)	0 (0)
Dust/Powder	23 (6.7)	22 (7.7)	1 (1.1)
Pour on	20 (5.8)	17 (6.0)	6 (6.6)
Combination	227 (65.8)	178 (62.7)	71 (78)
Nothing	5 (1.4)	5 (1.8)	1 (1.1)

Do you implant

Yes	86 (24.6)	77 (26.7)
No	263 (75.4)	288 (73.3)

If you implant, which implant do you use

Ralgro	45 (55.6)	41 (55.4)
DES	26 (32.1)	24 (32.4)
Ralgro and DES	7 (8.6)	7 (9.5)
Synovex	1 (1.2)	1 (1.4)
Synovex and Ralgro	1 (1.2)	1 (1.4)
Varies	1 (1.2)	0 (0)

Do you precondition			
Yes	122 (35.3)	92 (32.4)	42 (45.7)
No	224 (64.7)	192 (67.6)	50 (54.3)
Age of calf when sold			
Avg. age	12.27	12.14	13.08
8 months or less	82 (25.3)	72 (26.4)	17 (21.8)
9-12 months	138 (42.6)	117 (42.8)	33 (42.3)
13 months or more	104 (32.1)	84 (30.8)	28 (35.9)
Weight of calf when sold			
Avg. weight, lbs	677	660	754
500 or less	102 (31.3)	94 (34.2)	17 (21.8)
501-750	142 (43.5)	120 (43.6)	33 (42.3)
751 or more	82 (25.2)	61 (22.2)	28 (35.9)
Where do you sell calves			
Terminal auction	34 (9.9)	32 (11.3)	6 (6.7)
Direct off farm	43 (12.6)	32 (11.3)	19 (21.3)
Order buyer	16 (4.7)	14 (5.0)	2 (2.2)
Local sale barn	176 (51.5)	160 (56.7)	26 (29.2)
Combination of above	53 (15.5)	36 (12.8)	22 (24.7)
Other	20 (5.9)	8 (2.8)	14 (15.7)
Have you ever maintained ownership of your calves			
Yes	124 (35.6)	97 (33.8)	41 (45.1)
No	224 (64.6)	190 (66.2)	50 (54.9)
Have you ever hedged			
Yes	19 (5.5)	13 (4.5)	10 (11)
No	329 (94.5)	271 (66.2)	81 (89)
If you have hedged, will you do it again			
Yes	8 (44.4)	7 (53.8)	2 (22.2)
No	10 (55.6)	6 (46.2)	7 (77.8)
Will your cow numbers			
Increase	78 (22.7)	62 (22.0)	21 (23.3)
Decrease	65 (19.0)	52 (18.4)	18 (20.0)
Stay the same	200 (58.3)	168 (59.6)	51 (56.7)
Price considered desirable for calves (Oct. 76 - May 77)			
Avg.	47.29	46.75	47.12
0-40¢/lb.	76 (23.6)	63 (23.0)	16 (20.0)
41-60¢/lb.	235 (73.0)	197 (73.3)	59 (73.8)
61¢/lb. or more	11 (3.4)	10 (3.7)	5 (6.2)
Should imports be restricted			
Yes	329 (96.8)	271 (96.8)	86 (96.6)
No	11 (3.2)	9 (3.2)	3 (3.4)
Should the government support prices			
Yes	45 (13.2)	38 (13.5)	10 (11.2)
No	295 (86.8)	243 (86.5)	79 (88.8)