



STRATEGY: MANAGE STRESS

With early weaning often comes added stress. Manage to reduce its effects:

- Start supplementation early—at least three weeks pre-weaning.
- If you're leaving the weaned calves on grass, give them the best pasture you have. The cows can be relegated to poorer pastures and supplemented.
- Castrate and dehorn immediately after birth. Vaccinate as early as possible according to the label. Do not compound stress by doing these tasks on top of weaning. Clostridial disease vaccination is especially important in light calves, and respiratory disease vaccination may also be prudent, even if you don't normally use it.
- Wean slowly, by placing calves in a well sheltered pen or pasture. Take precautions to control dust.

Early weaning can improve reproduction

The average sow produces six times more live saleable meat every year than a beef cow. One reason: Pork producers get more use from their females by weaning animals as early as a week old. In contrast, even though a cow's milk production typically peaks at 60 days after calving, calves typically stay on the cows as long as another six months.

Research shows that—managed carefully—early weaning can be a tool that improves your herd's reproductive performance—and not just in drought years.

Oklahoma State University work showed that calves could be weaned in dry lot at about the same weight as calves raised on the dam, even while heifer conception rates increased from

59 percent to 97 percent. A Kansas early-weaning study compared calves weaned at 50 days old to creep-fed herdmates and a third group nursing in drylot without creep feed. During the 107-day test, the early weaned calves outgained both other groups. And work from Illinois reported in 1999 found that weaning at 90 days rather than 215 improved cows' pregnancy rates by 12 percentage points.

For more

Want a full set of all six Supplement Strategies for a Competitive Edge? Call 1-800-727-2502.



Beware of the down side

A five-year Nebraska study followed spring-calving cows through finishing and found that although weaning at 150 days improved cow costs and feedlot economics for retained calves, those gains were eaten up by higher heifer development costs when replacements were retained.

Age of calf weaning vs. effect on production economics			
Weaning age	150 days	210 days	270 days
Net revenue from sale of finished steer	\$33.54	\$28.90	\$4.74
Heifer development cost	\$419.81	\$372.06	\$329.42
Net revenue or loss per cow	-\$51.29	\$1.44	-\$8.39

Source: Rasby R, et al. "Age of Calf at Weaning of Spring-Calving Beef Cows and the Effect on Production Economics," J. Anim. Sci. 2000. 78:1403-1413.

Why consider early weaning?

- By late August, grass has matured and lost much nutritional value, causing a drop in milk production in the cow.
- Once the calf is removed and lactation stops, cows shift nutrition toward regaining body condition, even on low-quality forage when a supplement is used.
- That improvement in condition means cows come back into heat sooner, improving pregnancy rate and maintaining a 12-month calving interval.
- Cows aren't competing with calves for the limited grass available.
- Additional late-season cow grazing capacity that results means fewer winter-feeding days...typically the most expensive.
- Early weaning adds feeding and marketing flexibility. Calves can be sold at an advantageous weight or date.

GO WITH THE BRAND YOU KNOW®

Early weaning usually means additional stress during an already stressful period. CRYSTALYX® Brigade® stimulates



appetite and feed intake and is highly fortified with organic trace minerals and vitamins to help replenish body reserves. Brigade® is not only formulated to aid in reducing health problems in incoming calves, its intake stimulation is beneficial throughout the receiving phase. For maximum benefit, Brigade® should be available to calves immediately when they arrive at the feedlot.

For a free 16 page CRYSTALYX® booklet or the name and location of your nearest dealer, call 1-800-727-2502, or visit our web site at www.crystalix.com.