

## Breeding Soundness Examination for Bulls

All beef bulls should have a breeding soundness examination prior to the breeding season. Just because the bull was fertile last year does not mean that he is fertile this year. Research and demonstrations have shown that approximately 20% of all bulls are either infertile or sub-fertile.

The local veterinarian can perform this examination at his/her clinic. The examination is more than just a semen check. The veterinarian will check the bull's eyes, ears, heart, lungs, etc. The bull must be in good physical shape if he is to mate with the cows.

Next semen is collected and placed under a microscope. The veterinarian can determine the number of normal sperm and their overall activity. The scrotal circumference is also measured. The various measurements are then compared to a predefined standard and then assigned a passing or failing score. If the bull fails the breeding soundness examination, then a new bull should be secured before the start of the breeding season. Do not assume the bull will pass the examination at a later date.

When the bull is turned out with the cows, be sure to watch his activity. Be sure he is finding and mating with the cows. Continue to observe the bull during the breeding season. An injury can stop his breeding activity and result in a number of open cows.

For more information about the breeding soundness examinations for bulls, contact your local veterinarian or Extension agent.