

Cull Inefficient Cows

Beef cattle producers should cull cows that are not making a profit for them.

At weaning time a producer should evaluate the performance of each cow in the herd. A cow that did not produce a calf should be culled. This cow takes the profit from four or more other cows to pay for her annual costs.

Cows that produced a low quality calf should also be culled. An inferior quality calf will not sell for enough money to pay for the cow's annual cost and still leave a profit.

The cow that generally does not get culled is the one that produces a calf each year, however, the weight of the calf is too low to produce a profit after expenses are paid. Records, such as those obtained from the The Beef Cattle fIRM Cattle Record Keeping Program, should be used to identify these cows. Even if a cow does produce a calf each year, she should be culled if the weight of the calf will not sell for enough to pay annual cow costs and still leave a profit.

Open cows should be identified in the fall before the start of winter feeding. Pregnancy checking may appear to be expensive, however, it is cheap compared to the cost of keeping an open cow through the winter. Cows should also be checked for any physical defects that would prevent them from weaning a healthy, heavy calf next year.

Beef producers should cull all cows that do not have the potential to produce a profit. For more information on cow culling or other topics on beef production, contact the local Extension office.