

As we move through the winter, the spring calving season is fast approaching. In our area after two very wet winters and LOTS of mud we have been blessed with a moderate dry winter. Most of our hay stocks are in good shape and most of the cows are doing well. However, we need to look at the cows that are lagging behind a little. Maybe they are young, old or just a little higher maintenance. If those cows are going to get rebred next summer, the next few months are extremely important. It is routinely said that cows need to be a BCS of at least 5 at calving to rebreed. Fat plays an important role in the ability of a cow to start cycling. Additionally a cow that is on a nutritional upswing from calving to breeding will be much more apt to come in safely pregnant this fall. This is a huge advantage of pushing that calving back to late March and April when forages are exploding in our area. If you are set on calving earlier, think hard about increasing those cows nutritional intake with supplements between calving and that green grass. While feed costs are high, a lot of the time open cows and raising/purchasing their replacements can be higher. In the short term this is a fix, longer term we need to look at selecting for and breeding more grass efficient cattle that require less inputs. I sure don't see much in the future that says input costs will be decreasing with any significance. Just remember the best time to be making these genetic selections was ten years ago. The next best time is today. Don't wait another ten years!

POSTPONED - The "Growing With Integrity" conference that is sponsored by the Oklahoma Grazing Lands Coalition has been postponed until March 25-26 due to Covid related issues. We will keep you up to date on any other possible changes as we move forward. It will be an excellent conference on building soil health and plant and insect diversity. These are some additional foundation blocks to counteract the skyrocketing input costs of fertilizers, chemicals, etc. In the past five years we have successfully eliminated over 95% of our fertilizer and chemical inputs. It can be done. All the while we increased our year long grazing up to over 330 days on several groups of cows. Contact Brandon or I for more information if you are interested. One last note on this subject, we are planning a pasture walk/grazing seminar for later this spring. Stay tuned for details!

Passing thought on big changes. If you decide to take away inputs, whether it be feed, fertilizer, chemicals etc., do so with a plan and gradually. If you yank the rug out, things will more than likely crash. If you gradually slide the rug out, things that can will adjust and you can eliminate those that can't.