



Working for the silver lining

CATTLE MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS DURING DROUGHT

Effects on Animal Health

Seasonal Diseases

- Anaplasmosis
- Foothill Abortion
- Pinkeye



Diseases associated with feeding and confinement

- Calf diarrhea
- pinkeye



Diseases Associated with Drought

Deficiencies

- Water
- Feed quality
- Copper
- Selenium
- Vitamins A, D, E



Toxicities

- Sulfates (Polio and copper absorption)
- Nitrates (water from run-off, stunted feed)
- Blue Green Algae
- Irritating Grasses
- Alternative Feeds (Moldy fruits and vegetables, CHO overload)



Supplements

- Use salt to prevent overconsumption(salt toxicity)
- Provide urea but there is not enough forage to balance protein and ammonia toxicity results
- Provide carbohydrates but can cause grain overload



Supplemental Feeds

Poor quality feed can;
Contaminate a pasture,
Cause rumen impaction,
Cause hardware disease,
Be contaminated with
toxic plants.
Cheaper grain prices can
encourage replacement of
hay=rumen acidosis



Plant poisonings

Weakest cattle

- Most likely to consume toxic plants
- This is good reason to monitor animal health and body condition regularly to cull poor doers before they become a death loss

Toxic plants are seasonal

- Oak buds and acorns, and leaves
- Tannins and phenols are toxic principle
- Cow suffers liver and kidney damage, fetus will be born with birth defects
- California Buckeye seeds are neurotoxins

Reducing Livestock Numbers

- Takes pressure off native forage before damage to range is severe and prolonged
- Saves costs associated with supplemental feed
- Markets animals when they retain maximum value
- Considers what will be needed for expansion when the drought is over

Sell off is no different than every other year, just accelerated

- Pregnancy check heifers 90 days post bull turnout, if you want a 45 day calving season sell all that are not at least 45 days bred. If no vet available use blood test with Dairy Diagnostics.
- Sell open heifers as feeders
- Check bulls within 30 days of the end of the breeding season.
- The cost of retaining a bull for 5 months(March-August) can go up to \$ 1500-\$1800. The bulls value may be \$.90/ lb. (\$1500)
- In August you won't be paying \$5000 for that new bull, he'll cost \$2000

Cows are always marketed for the same reasons

- Lamé
- Infertile
- Bad behavior
- Age (teeth)
- Bad udder
- Disease (Cancer Eye)
- The only two that need to be checked in the chute are teeth and pregnancy status, the others are often observed in the field
- Act decisively, act quickly, if it walks like a duck it is a duck!

Age is important!

- Production falls off after 8-10 years
- Diseases are more prominent after 8-10 years
- 4-8 years is the most productive time of a cow's life.
- The energy costs to maintain a 4-8 year old cow are lower than for developing heifers
- You must be ready for expansion so you have to keep replacement heifers

Mouth your cattle



Teeth were prematurely aged due to tough feed conditions



Body Condition Score is About More Than Nutrition

Thin cows are young, old or diseased



Fat cows are open

