

2025 Surviving High Prices Webinar Series

Week 6 – October 29th

Economics of Reproduction Strategies

*Breeding Season Management &
AI vs. Natural Service*

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REPRODUCTION

One calf : One year

(365 Days)

Calve -> Lactation -> Rebreed -> Wean -> Gestation

\$

\$

\$

\$

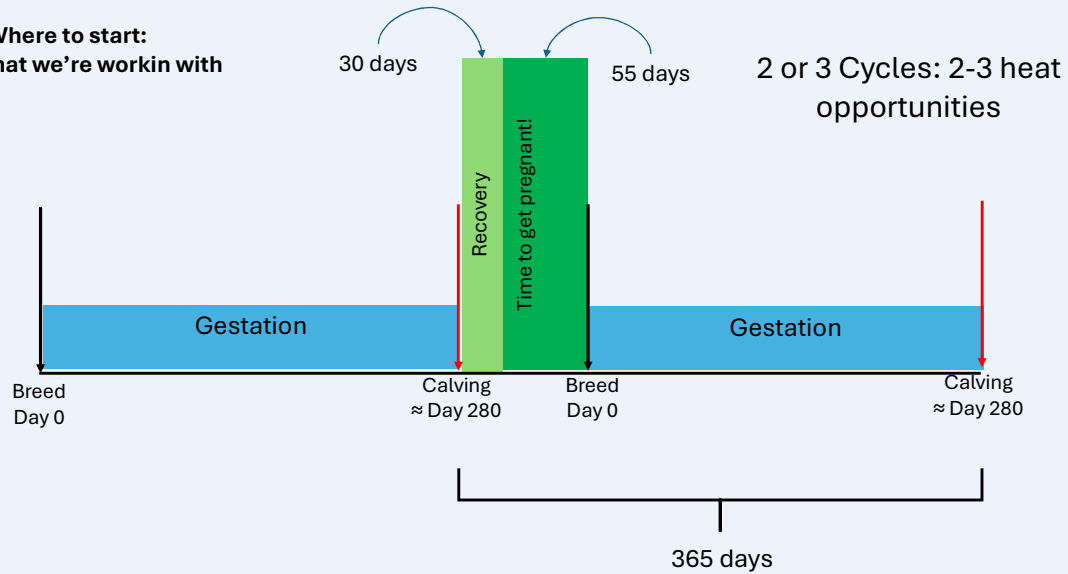
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How can we manage our cows economically??

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The Calving Interval

Where to start:
know what we're workin with

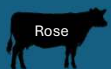


Gonella, 2019. Panhandle Ag e-News.

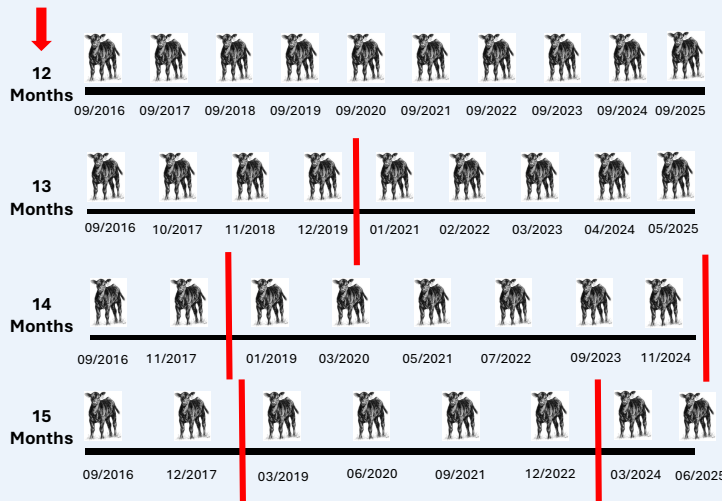
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Without Breeding Season

Cow date of birth
09/01/2014
and FIRST CALVING
09/01/2016



Calving
Interval



Calves produced after 10
years

10 calves

9 calves

8 calves

8 calves

*adapted from Dr. A. Gonella & Kalyn Waters

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Table 1. Variable Costs and Returns for Different Calving Intervals After 10 Years

Cow	Average Cow Cost/Year	Total Cost after 10 years	Average Calf Revenue/Year	Calves Produced after 10 Years	Total Revenue after 10 Years	Returns
Dorothy	\$903.80	\$9,038	\$1,061.50	10	\$10,615	\$1,577
Blanche	\$903.80	\$9,038	\$1,061.50	9	\$9,553.50	\$515.50
Sophia	\$903.80	\$9,038	\$1,061.50	8	\$8,492	(\$546)
Rose	\$903.80	\$9,038	\$1,061.50	8	\$8,492	(\$546)

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Table 2. Variable Costs and Returns for Different Calving Intervals After 10 Calves

Cow	Average Cow Cost/Year	Years to Produce 10 Calves after 1 st calving	Total Cost to Produce 10 Calves	Average Calf Revenue/Year	Total Revenue for 10 calves	Returns
Dorothy	\$903.80	10	\$9,038.00	\$1,061.50	\$10,615	\$1,577
Blanche	\$903.80	12.75	\$11,523.45	\$1,061.50	\$10,615	(\$908.45)
Sophia	\$903.80	13.5	\$12,190.50	\$1,061.50	\$10,615	(\$1,575.50)
Rose	\$903.80	14.25	\$12,879.15	\$1,061.50	\$10,615	(\$2,264.15)

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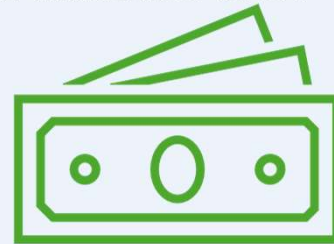
Controlled Breeding Season: Why Have One?

❖ Variables that can be “controlled” by a producer:

- Monitor/track when cows get bred (efficiency)
- Monitor length of the breeding/calving season
- Trying to get more cows bred early in the season
- Sell a more uniform calf crop

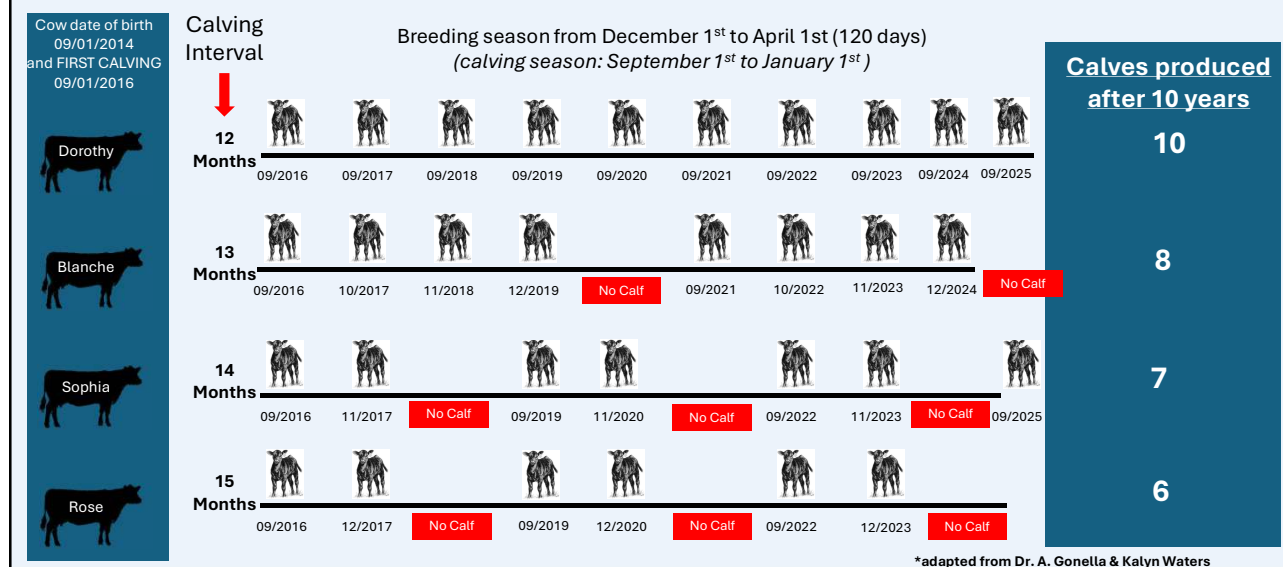
❖ Controlling these variables enables more influence over:

- Pregnancy Rates
- Weaning Rates
- Weaning Weights



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With Breeding Season



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Table 1. Variable Costs and Returns for Different Calving Intervals After 10 Years

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Dorothy	\$903.80	\$9,038	\$1,061.50	10	\$10,615	\$1,577
Blanche	\$903.80	\$9,038	\$1,061.50	8	\$8,492	(\$546)
Sophia	\$903.80	\$9,038	\$1,061.50	7	\$7,430	(\$1,068)
Rose	\$903.80	\$9,038	\$1,061.50	6	\$6,369	(\$2,669)

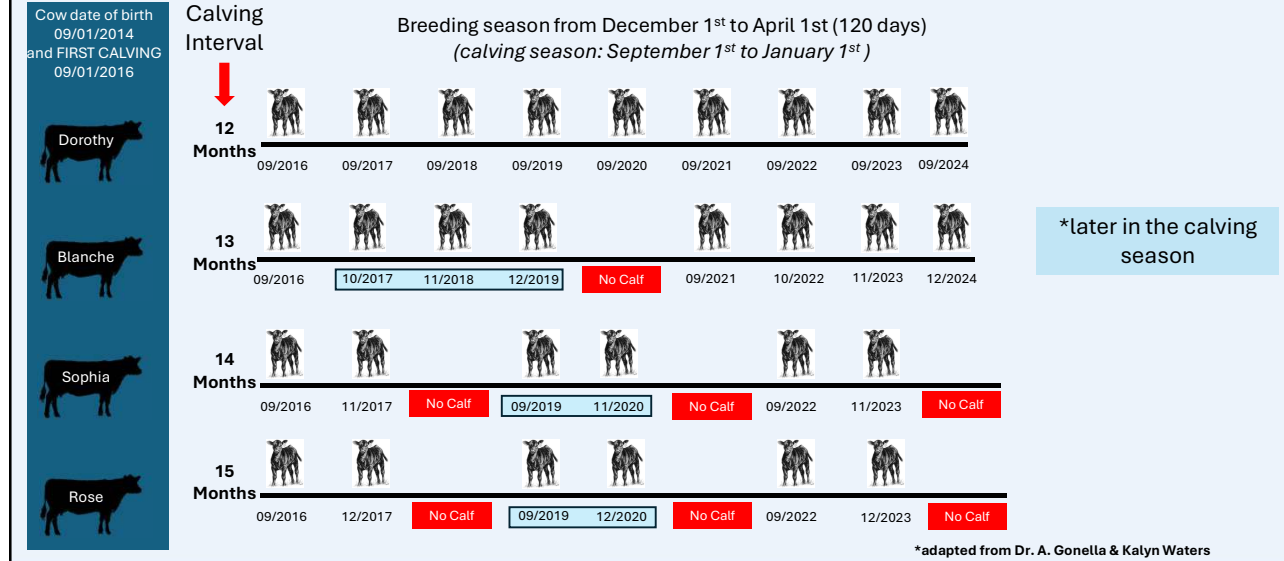
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Table 2. Variable Costs and Returns for Different Calving Intervals After 10 Calves

Cow	Average Cow Cost/Year	Years to Produce 10 Calves after 1 st calving	Total Cost to Produce 10 Calves	Average Calf Revenue/Year	Total Revenue for 10 calves	Returns
Dorothy	\$903.80	10	\$9,038.00	\$1,061.50	\$10,615	\$1,577
Blanche	\$903.80	12.08	\$10,918.00	\$1,061.50	\$10,615	(\$303)
Sophia	\$903.80	14.16	\$12,797.80	\$1,061.50	\$10,615	(\$2,182.80)
Rose	\$903.80	14.25	\$12,879.15	\$1,061.50	\$10,615	(\$2,264.15)

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With Breeding Season



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Calving Distributions (120-day season)

Day of Breeding Cow becomes Pregnant	30	60	90	120
Birth Weight (lbs)	75	75	75	75
Average Daily Gain (lbs)	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25
Weaning Weight (200 days start of calving season)	525	457	390	322
Calf Value at Weaning (\$/lb)	\$1.78	\$1.88	\$2.18	\$2.32
Calf Value at Weaning (\$/head)	\$934.50	\$859.16	\$850.20	\$747.04
Total Value Difference (\$/head)	\$ 0.00	\$75.34	\$84.30	\$187.46

*All calves assumed to be weaned on a set date and marketed as a group.

**Average prices from 2017-2024 for Florida steers marketed between October – December.

*Dr. Angella Gonella, Kalyn Waters, & Hannah Baker

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Comparison of Increasing Weaning Rates & Weights

Average Return to Variable Expenses Per Cow for a 50 Head Beef Cow Herd*

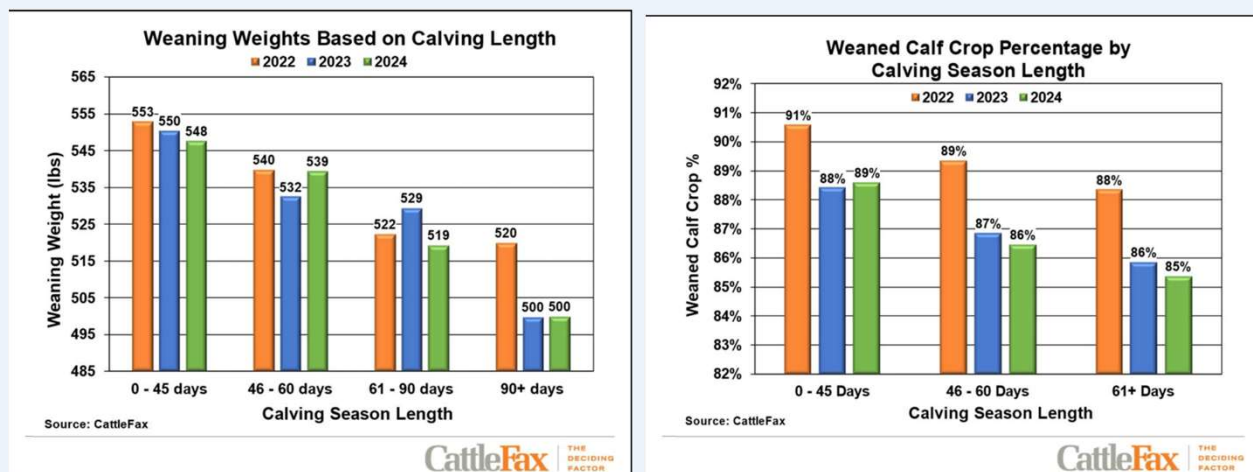
Calving Distributions	Weaning Rates		
	76%	86%	96%
25-25-25-25	\$(215.82)	\$(106.54)	\$(5.67)
40-25-20-15	\$(169.57)	\$(59.43)	\$51.10
50-35-10-5	\$(129.17)	\$(6.54)	\$110.75

*Estimated Revenue: average annual Florida steer prices from October 2017-December 2024; seasonality will effect prices received for cattle

*Estimated Variable Expenses: average from 2015-2024, \$903.80

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Cattle Fax 2024 Survey Data



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Some Takeaways about Breeding Seasons

- ❖ Hard to “preach” this stuff when calves are bringing \$4/lb, when we are trying to expand, & we’ve already culled everything...

HOWEVER...

- ❖ Having efficient cows that can maintain a 365-calving day interval, or close to it, are vital to a cow-calf operation, no matter the market situation.
 - ❖ *A “cheap” calf is better than no calf*
- ❖ Having a controlled calving season can help you keep better track of which cows are the most efficient!
- ❖ We can use the profits & prices we are getting now to start making changes & adopting new management strategies.
 - ❖ *Two birds, one stone example...*



sell cull cows in a
high market



establish breeding season



improve forage management

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THANK YOU!

Hannah Baker

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