Enhance Pregnancies this Breeding Season to Yield Positive Results at Weaning
Omega-3 and Omega-6 Essential Fatty Acids are a simple and effective part of management strategies aimed to improve beef herd reproductive performance

PRINCETON, N.J. (March 8, 2018)—The goal behind a successful breeding season is simple—attain the most pregnancies possible over a specific period of time. For most beef producers, that means aiming for 95 percent or more of cows in calf by the end of 60 – 75-days. Doing so leads to a tighter calving window and a more uniform calf crop at weaning.

But a lot of things must go right to achieve your goal—and maintaining pregnancies is at the top of that list.

Roughly 30 percent¹ of beef cattle pregnancies are lost to early embryonic death—defined as occurring within the first 42 days of pregnancy. According to data¹ from Iowa State University, nearly 65 percent of all embryonic loss occurs between days 6 – 18 of pregnancy.

Loss in early pregnancy is often undetected, but important. The price tag on these losses is estimated at $1.4 billion¹ to cattle producers nationwide. Factor in additional reproductive challenges, such as lower-than-desired conception rates, and that number climbs even more.

What does that mean to your herd? Let's bring that huge figure down to a meaningful, per-cow basis.

According to a rough calculation by experts at the University of Florida, infertility costs you about $165 per exposed cow. In addition, there are additional costs associated with calf mortality after calving and late calving cows that also decrease the overall revenue per exposed cow.²

What does this mean in the real world? Even for a 20-cow herd, a drop from 100% cows pregnant to 85% has big financial implications.

20 cow-herd

100% pregnant
$1,110 per cow ($22,200 calf value)

85% pregnant
$935 per cow ($15,895 calf value)

*Assumes price for 500-pound feeder calves to $2.20/lb.

These figures will vary by individual herd based on your specific costs, but these estimates help explain the real challenge you face.

What if you could enhance your cows’ reproductive performance, improve breeding season consistency and maintain more pregnancies?

“A higher plane of nutrition that includes the Omega-3 and Omega-6 Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) available in ESSENTIOM™ offers a simple, yet highly effective way to help to beef producers to achieve their reproductive goals,” says Dr. Neil Michael, ARM & HAMMER™ Manager, Ruminant Technical Services.
“Producers can ensure cows get bred on time and increase their desired outcomes of improved reproductive efficiency, a tighter calving season and a more uniform calf crop at weaning, resulting in an improved bottom line,” he adds.

**Research-Proven Results**
Evidence from multiple trials3,4,5,6 indicates that adding the EFAs available in ESSENTIOM in beef cow and replacement heifer diets can have a significant influence on key reproductive parameters, including improved pregnancy rates and lowered pregnancy loss.

For instance:
- EFAs fed to 1,728 lactating beef cows and first-lactation heifers increased pregnancy rates 11.6 percentage points over cows on the control diet.
- EFAs fed to 771 lactating beef cows increased pregnancy rate to Artificial Insemination by 8.5 percentage points over cows fed the control diet.
- EFAs fed to virgin beef heifers also improved reproductive function. Pregnancy rate rose from 70 percent for heifers fed the control diet to 89 percent for heifers fed EFA-diets.
- These EFAs have also been shown to notably reduce pregnancy loss per first service from 31.6 percent to 14.8 percent and bring overall losses per service down from 16.8 percent to 14 percent in lactating dairy cows.

These research trials also explored timing of feeding ESSENTIOM. The researchers learned that adding Omega-3 and Omega-6 Essential Fatty Acids to at least the first feeding of the day improved reproductive results. This means that these essential fatty acids can be incorporated into various management strategies—you do not need to alter feeding routines to achieve desired results.

“The important consideration is to feed these EFAs during the pre- and post-A.I. period or prior to (and during) your natural service breeding window,” recommends Dr. Michael. “You can capture more benefits from your feed investment by including these specific EFAs in beef cow diets. You’ll see more efficient reproductive performance which, in turn, means more calves on the ground in the timeframe you desire and leads to a more uniform calf crop at weaning.”

**Manage for the Future**
EFAs are one integral part of your overall reproductive management strategy whether you turn bulls out or use A.I. Other key components include:
- Maintaining a controlled breeding window to avoid late season, light-weight calves
- Performing pregnancy exams to assess breeding success
- Monitoring cow body condition and health
- Providing proper nutrition before, during and after the breeding season

“Including ESSENTIOM in the pre-breeding mineral mix can help you optimize cow fertility and set the stage for a success,” notes Dr. Michael. “It and the key components above are investments in your future and that of your herd—and all help you achieve the desired outcomes of more pregnancies and a healthy, consistent calf crop.”

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