



BEEFnews

HUNTER VALLEY, UPPER MANNING
& CENTRAL COAST

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NSW Department of Primary Industries, www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/beefnews

A quarterly newsletter for beef producers of the Hunter Valley, Upper Manning and Central Coast areas of NSW.

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NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

NLIS News

Ian Blackwood, LO (Beef Products), Paterson

Bobby calves consigned directly from their property of birth to a saleyard for sale or abattoir for slaughter may be consigned and sold without a transaction identifier (ie. Tail or ear tag). Such calves will have white NLIS breeder devices printed with the PIC of the breeder property. This arrangement commenced from 1/1/06.

The only remaining exemptions for NLIS identification are bulls, born before 1/7/04 and over 750kg, and movements under permit from a stock inspector.

Remember that if tagging a bull means putting yourself (or others) in danger (injury) then contact your RLPB for an "emergency" tail tag.

After 1/7/6 you won't need to apply the tail tags or ear tags you've been using for more than **20** years!

Between now and 1/7/06 selling centres will be able to run store sales with "tail tag" exemptions in place. Your agent will notify you if this is the case.

Private sales will not be "tail tag" exempt until 1/7/06.

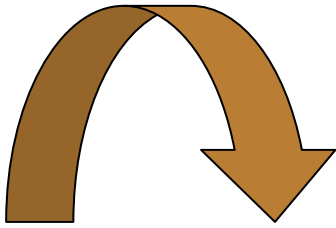
Managing Early Weaned Calves

Ian Blackwood, LO (Beef Products), Paterson

The horrible seasonal conditions experienced over much of the Hunter Valley in the 05/06 summer has meant that early weaning is a serious management option for breeding herds in early autumn.

Early weaning when cow fat scores are at F.S. 2 will have these benefits:

- maximise conception rates in the 06/07 joining
- allow you to manage calves for liveweight gain when they are weaned



Handy hints at weaning:

- drench cows because they have picked up larvae over summer and a drench is a cheap 'feed'
- in fluke country, drench with flukicide in May and August

- minimise supplementary feeding of cows over late autumn/winter 2006

The rain of the past 10 days is not going to change the need to make this decision. Both the cow and the calf will 'do' better and be easier to manage if separated.

At weaning use scales to get an accurate measure of the calves weaning weights. Calves to be kept should be drafted into at least two groups:

181kg and above / 180kg and below

If sufficient paddocks are available you can separate by sex if that's easier. Whatever you do the principle is the same – the target growth rate must be 0.6kg/hd/day. The 180kg weight criterion achieves more economical feeding and improved feeding management.

Pushing calves, weaned at around 180kg, by feeding high grain diets/winter fodder crops or high quality pasture may result in premature fattening.

To make sure early weaned calves preserve their potential to grow out later than you will have to supplementary feed them beginning at weaning. This autumn/winter energy will be the limiting nutrient so the choices are between grains/pellets; white cottonseed; molasses. Don't be afraid to mix two of these together for a useful ration.

At 180kg liveweight a weaner will need approx. 4kg D.M. of supplement, depending on the herbage mass in the paddock.

Silage will be useful providing the quality is better than 9.5 MJ/kg DM energy). Below 9.5 MJ/kg DM then you will need approx. 2kg DM extra of the feeds already mentioned.

Hay is not recommended as the sole feed unless you know the quality is more than 9.5 MJ/kg DM.

Because you finally get paid on weight the aim of feeding these lighter calves is to maximise their weight at turnoff. We know that carcass composition is not greatly affected compared to calves reared in a 'normal' season.

Markets for Early Weaned Calves

Calves weaned at 180-200kg liveweight, "fresh" and with some mulcularity are ideal for the export and supermarket veal trade. The major market operator for these calves is Greenmountain Trading who operate at Casino Abattoir. Their phone number is 02/6662 8588. At a local level David Payne 02/6545 3219 / 0409 920 561 is a buyer for them. You can deal through your agent or directly with the company through David.

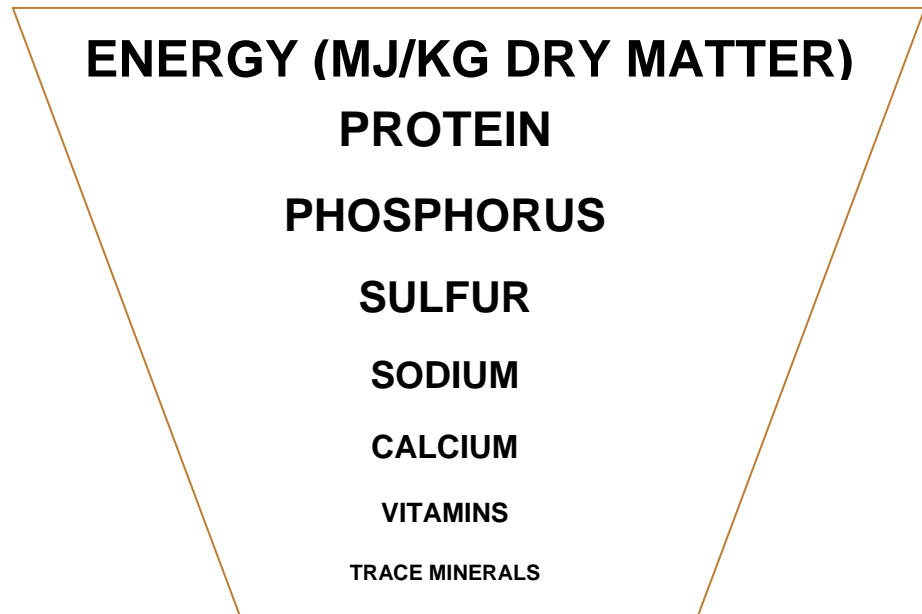
It's all about energy

Ian Blackwood, LO (Beef Products), Paterson

In dry spells and droughts your animals can quickly become energy deficient. The dry paddock feed you start off with will be eaten down faster when you feed protein supplements. This is because protein supplements have the net result of increasing paddock feed intake. When the paddock feed reaches 1,000 – 1,200kg DM/ha there is not enough pasture for cattle to get sufficient energy. They simply cannot graze for long enough each day to consume sufficient pasture dry matter.

The dry pasture they are eating is low in digestibility so their intake is reduced. The pasture takes longer to pass through the rumen. So, it is a double effect of decreasing pasture quantity and decreasing digestibility. If you continue to feed protein supplements when you are out of paddock feed you start to waste money and your animals will rapidly lose liveweight.

Under dry spell and drought conditions the order of importance of nutrient supply to the rumen (and on to the animal) is:



Providing energy usually looks after much of the protein and a quick balance is achieved using urea or protein meal.

Phosphorus and sulphur are also looked after by the energy feed and protein meal you use to balance energy. Molasses is an exception so we add a phosphorus supplement.

Calcium is added to grains & White Cottonseed as limestone at 1-2%.

Sodium is usually only added to feedlot diets, as salt, at 0.5% but not with grain/hay or molasses.

Managing the "green" drought

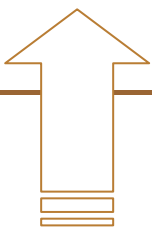
Short green feed is always highly digestible, preferred by all classes of cattle, and high in protein content and moisture content.

However, all classes of cattle are not able to eat enough of it, in a grazing day, to meet their energy needs.

So you need to feed energy dense feeds to maximise cattle performance when only short green feed is available.

You have the choice of hay, silage, grain/pellets/white cottonseed as the most suitable choices.

Protein meals & molasses/urea based formulations are not able to economically provide sufficient energy to supplement the short green feed available in the paddock.



Wormtest

This is the NSW DPI service that can help you know what internal parasites (round worms and liver fluke) are present in your herd, and how well your drenching program is working.

Two test categories are available: Gold/Basic

Worm Test Gold

\$48.50/10 samples & 10 counts

Worm Test Gold + type

\$65.35/10 samples & 10 counts

Worm test Basic

\$30.45/10 samples & 2 counts

Worm test Basic + type

\$45.10/10 samples & 2 counts

Pick up your test kit from

Vitamins are best provided directly to the animals rather than through voluntary intake by the animal.

Trace minerals are also best provided directly using drenches, rumen pellets or injectables.

Looking after energy, with energy dense nutrients, usually achieves the adequate supply of nutrients in the nutrient priority order.

Starting at the bottom end of the nutrient order will be the least cost effective strategy and of least benefit to your animals.

Drenching Program

Ian Blackwood, LO (Beef Products), Paterson

When you drench young cattle is the most important decision you can make. Drenching at our recommended times aims to prevent the build-up of internal parasites (roundworms) and reduce pasture contamination. The reinfestation rate after weaning is reduced. The drenching times aim to treat young cattle **before** they get “wormy”.

Worming program:

Drench times	Worms		Liver + fluke	Stomach fluke*
	Class	Management change		
Feb/March	Young stock** (3-20 mths)	Move to safe paddock	Stock 3 mths & over++	
May	Young stock (3-20 mths)	Move to safe paddock	Stock 3 mths & over	
August	Young stock (3-20 mths)	Move to safe paddock	Stock 3 mths & over	Stock 3 mths & over

- + Only treat for liver fluke if definitely present on property. Confirmed by post-mortem, abattoir check, or faecal check
- ++ The February liver fluke treatment is optional and may only be needed in heavy fluke country
- * This reduces pasture contamination. Use a single dose of NILZAN
- ** Use a worm drench that is active against immature worms in February/March for protection against ostertagia

Management Tips

- a “safe paddock” is one with low levels of worm larvae made possible by being ungrazed or grazed only by grown cattle (over 2 years of age) for at least 4 mths **and** spelled for 2 mths before grazing by young cattle

Injectables/Orals/ Pour-ons?

Well, it's up to you to decide. The drench manufacturer put a major effort into their product development and their labelling and product information has to meet the strict guidelines set by the National Registration Authority.

It is the timing of the drench and the correct dose rate (calculated by liveweight) that is critical. Both of these you, as a manager, control.

Round worm drenches control adult and immature forms of the round worms in the digestive tract. The label and product information will describe the "efficiency" (how well the drench kills) for the adult and immature worms.

Using this information will help select the drench for the worm control required.

- cattle over 20 mths of age are not generally drenched except in dry seasons
 - heifers can follow the program until their 2nd joining
 - a worm drench at weaning should not replace the recommended treatment times unless you wean in the same month
 - always check
 - your equipment for dosage accuracy
 - read the label, dose rate and with-holding periods (WHP) and export slaughter interval (ESI)
 - don't underdose – weigh by size before to calibrate the dose rate
 - make sure you can treat all the cattle in the mob on one day
 - always check that flukicides and round worm drenches are compatible (ie. can be used together) because some are not
 - don't mix drenches unless the manufacturer has listed that this is possible
 - don't forget to keep a record of:
 - what you've drenched
 - what drench you used
 - drench dose rate and
 - number treated
- for your Livestock Producer Assurance (LPA) Vendor Declaration records.

Sources of Climate & Weather Information

Paul Carberry, Advisory Officer, NSW DPI, Tamworth

As agriculturalists we have rapidly moved from having too little climate and weather information to a problem of information dazzle. Links provided here will readily source relevant information. The challenge in using the information is to be clear about the uncertainty in short term forecasts and seasonal outlooks and use these as risk assessments.

Access to short term weather forecasts

The following are some of the most relevant sites with comments courtesy of NSW Department of Primary Industries, Tamworth.

- **Bureau of Meteorology 4 day forecast**
Note: The hashed areas only indicate a chance of rain, not an expectation
<http://www.bom.gov.au/products/IDG00074.shtml> The Bureau of Meteorology forecast information is available in text at <http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/nsw> The notes on the weather are particularly helpful to interpret the synoptic events.
- **Weather zone**
Uses forecasts by The Weather Company. Type a town in the box on the left panel and it gives a four day forecast for that area. You can also click the "Synoptic charts" under the "Weather

maps” heading in the left panel to view a range of forecast maps and rain forecasts up to 7 days out.

<http://www.weatherzone.com.au/>

- ***IGES COLA forecasts for Australia***
Produced by the Centre for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere studies in the USA. This indicates where and the amount of rain that could fall in Australia in each of two five day blocks. Forecasts are updated daily and changes indicated in the day 6-10 block should be monitored for developments as information is updated <http://wxmaps.org> The same model can be examined for each of the next 6 days individually.
- ***Central & Southern Tablelands weather***
This site contains links to a large number of both short and long term forecasts useful Australia wide.
<http://www.hop.org.au/weather.htm>

There are a range of weather forecasts and base information available on Poll Fax (consult your fax manual for instructions on polling)

Bureau of Meteorology Fax numbers directory (free) 1800 630 100 includes the following that may be of special interest

All of – MSLP analysis chart, 24 hour forecast chart and latest cloud picture 1902 935 252

Australian region 4 day forecast 1902 935 002

48 hour forecast chart 1902 935 007

2/3 day forecast chart 1902 935 728

4/5 day forecast char 1902 935 003

6/7 day forecast chart 1902 935 004

Rain radar – maps of currently falling regional rain. The directory provides specific numbers for rain radar pictures from each site.

Farmweather fax – includes latest cloud picture and 4 day forecast plus written description of the weather systems and how they are expected to develop as well as probability estimates of forecast rain times and amounts within each region.

The directory provides specific numbers for tailored forecasts for 30 identified agricultural regions throughout Australia. Poll fax a directory to get the number for the local one.

Seasonal Climate Outlook

Seasonal climate risk assessments give the chance of the next 3 months being wetter or drier (or hotter or cooler) than the long term average.

- ***Bureau of Meteorology Seasonal Outlook***
Provided about the middle of each month this outlook shows the probability of exceeding the median rainfall for the next three months. The BoM seasonal forecast is derived from the pattern of the sea surface temperatures in both the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Temperature forecasts are also available on the BoM site:
http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/rain_ahead.shtml

- ***Queensland Centre for Climate Applications***

This uses historical rainfall records and historical SOI to see what happened to rain in Australia over the next 3 months, when there were similar SOI conditions to those prevailing over the last 2 months. You need to scroll down and select the “Australia” map: <http://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/SeasonalClimateOutlook/RainfallProbability/>

- ***El Nino/La Nina summary and background***

The Bureau of Meteorology is currently providing a good summary of conditions and why these are important to Australia. Worth a look to see what impact El Nino can have and the variability as well as the current risk: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/>

- ***Current drought declarations***

A list of all RLPB areas indicating the areas drought declared <http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/drought-eligibility>

Seasonal outlooks on fax

Bureau of Meteorology fax numbers directory (free) 1800 630 100
– includes the following that may be of special interest:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| - 3 month climate outlook | 1902 935 251 |
| - Southern Oscillation Index & Sea Surface Temperature update | 1902 935 432 |
| - Australian Drought Statement (by the Bureau of Meteorology) | 1902 935 259 |
| - 1 & 3 month Australian rainfall maps | 1902 935 262 |

Accessing historical climate data

Despite the short history of agriculture in Australia we have historical rainfall records that are the envy of most other countries. For example, Armidale has records from January 1872 and Glen Innes from 1881. Most centres have a similar length of records. They can be useful in preparing long term plans where the frequency and extremes of significant events are important and the medians and probabilities describe the local climate.

For the first cut analysis of past climate data the Bureau of Meteorology website:

http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/map/climate_avgs/clim_avgl.shtml has average monthly rainfall, rain days, max and min temperature and humidity for 1,000 sites in Australia. Just click on the map and you can download the data into a spreadsheet. The same information is available in most public libraries in printed form in “Climatic Averages”.

The bureau of Meteorology website also has excellent maps of rainfall and temperature over the past day, week, month or 3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 24 or 36 months: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/austmaps/>

Looking for Agistment

Ian Blackwood, LO (Beef Products), Paterson

On current prices agistment costs per week are 25% of the cost of feeding cattle per week. Looking for suitable agistment should be a real option in our current autumn and coming winter drought.

As well as talking to Stock & Station Agents to source agistment you can now use the internet.

Have a look at www.twohills.com.au which claims to be Australia's only free online agistment and backgrounding service.

If you are sending cattle on agistment then make sure you:

1. go and have a look at the property, yard, facilities, assess the pasture (quantity/quality), check for poisonous plants and look at stock water. Find out the property PIC
2. know if you will be the sole agistee. If not, who else is involved and who are they?
3. tag cattle not NLIS tagged before transport and notify the NLIS database of the agistment property PIC
4. drench and vaccinate cattle pre-transport – lice treatment is optional for cows
5. plan to visit them every 2 weeks whilst they are on agistment
6. decide if they are going to calve away or come home to calve. If they come home to calve then they need to be home 4 weeks before calving. So, August calvers need to be home in late June. This means they will only be away for 14 weeks if you sent them now

Above all, don't leave it too late to make a decision.