

# Investing in Heifers for the Long Haul

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# Heifer Growing Made Simple

- How many do I need?
- What do I need?
  - Select
  - Buy
- How am I going to do it?
  - Facilities?
  - Bull - \$
  - What is my budget or what will heifer development cost?
- Can I provide the aftercare needed for success?
  - Calve separate
  - Feed appropriate – after breeding through calving
- Are there other options for replacements?
  - Bred cull cows



- What are the important traits for a beef cow-calf farm?

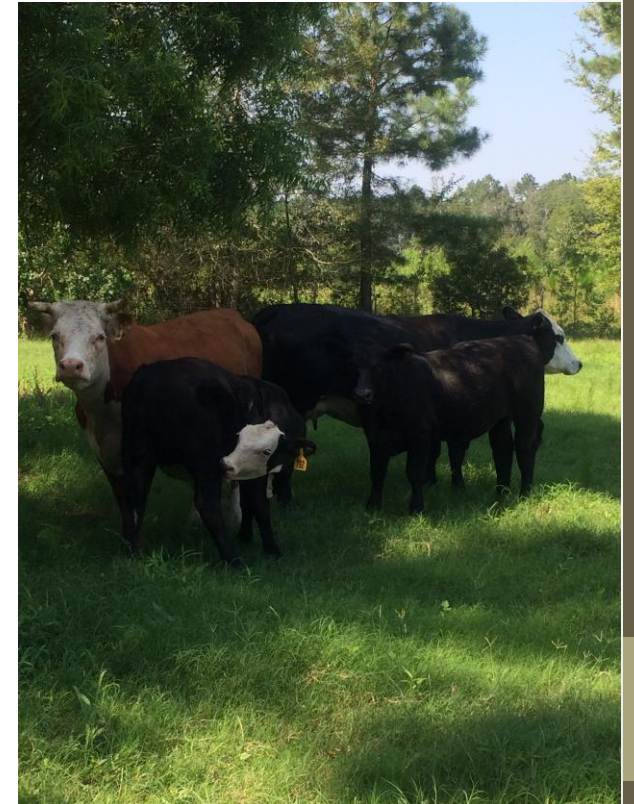
# Job Description

- Calve at 2 yr old
- High pregnancy rate in limited breeding season
  - High conception rate if synchronized and AI
- Calve unassisted
  - Vigorous calf
  - Quality colostrum
- **Rebreed!** – not a replacement until 3 yr old



# How many?

- Depends on how many cows are expected to leave the herd by next year
  - Culls
  - Deads
  - Resources – stocking rate – room for expansion
  - Plans for depreciating - accountant
- Most herds plan for 15-20% replacements
- Keep an extra 50% more for opens, culling, injuries, etc.



# Selection

- Heifers from proven mothers – proven in my environment
- Body weight at weaning
  - Weight gain to breeding date
  - Only selecting oldest and biggest has the potential to increase frame size
- Remove potential problems
- Remove infertile heifers
- Temperament - bad decisions can last a long time
- Genomics

# Genetic Tools

- Genetic evaluation is a useful tool to determine the genetic potential of animals
- It does not replace good management and phenotypic selection
- It can help identify productive heifers

Ignity® Order Form for Beef Cattle

Test Option	Description	Price	Units	Total
Parentage	Identify the sire and dam of your cattle	\$100.00	1	\$100.00
Sexing	Determine the sex of your cattle	\$50.00	1	\$50.00
Health	Identify health issues such as BVD, IBR, and Leptospirosis	\$150.00	1	\$150.00
Additional Services	...	...	...	...
Shipping & Handling	...	...	...	...
Total Due				\$300.00

# Maternal Traits

- Knowing something about the pedigree improves information and confidence of selection
- Maternal Traits
  - Birth weight and Calving ease direct
  - Calving ease maternal
  - Stayability
  - Heifer pregnancy rate
  - Docility
  - Milk

The image shows a document titled "Identify" Order Form for beef cattle. The form is organized into a table with columns for "Item", "Quantity", and "Price". The "Item" column lists various categories of cattle, such as "Heifer", "Cow", and "Bull", with sub-entries for different breeds and types. The "Quantity" and "Price" columns contain handwritten numbers. The form also includes a header section with the "Identify" logo and some introductory text. The overall appearance is that of a standard order form used in a livestock business.

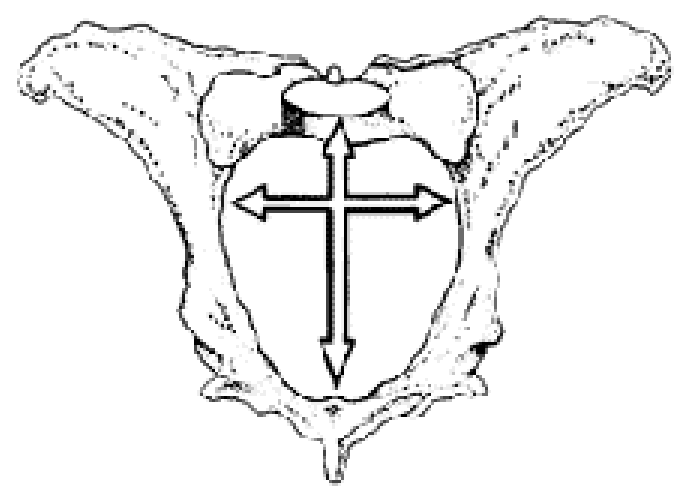


# Fertility

- Palpate, weigh and measure heifers early enough to make changes if needed
  - Adjust nutrition so heifers will grow to reach adequate weight – 60% mature wt
- Most heifers will reach puberty by 720-750 #; approx. 1200# mature
- Palpate to see if the heifer has reached puberty – pregnant, freemartin, other problems?
- Good time for vaccination program with MLV – at least 30 days prior to breeding
- Nutrition program also needs to include a good mineral program

# Pelvimetry

- Width – widest point between shafts of right and left ilium
- Height – sacrum and dorsal pubic tubercle
- Heifers with a small pelvis area relative to size of calf have increase in calving problems
- Influenced by sire selection



# Health Program

- At least 2 doses of MLV – BVD and IBR
- 7 way Clostridial
- Dewormed
  - Also deworm 2 months prior to calving



# Breeding

- Estrus synchronization and AI
  - Heifers conceive in a small group
  - Genetic advancement
  - Use proven sires AND don't have to keep a heifer bull around
- Pregnancy diagnosis
  - Blood test
  - Ultrasound
  - Palpate
- Good nutrition



# Development Pays Back

- Longevity – early bred heifers stay in the herd longer
  - Average heifer is open by 4 years old
- More income over lifetime – 2 heifers that calve 60 days apart over 10 years
- Influences herd for 2 decades

