

Jody G. Holthaus  
District Extension Agent  
Livestock and Natural Resources

### **Calving Book-Draw the Line**

After the first 21 days of calving, draw a line in your calving book. Next fall if you're selected replacement heifers, choose those above the line!

Calving distribution is the number of cows calving in 21-day periods during the calving season. Standard Production Analysis Guidelines indicate there are two ways to determine when to start the first 21-calving interval:

When the third mature cow (3-years-old or older) has calved or start the first 21-day calving period 285 days after the start of the breeding season.

Spring-calving cows that calve in adequate body condition (BCS = 5) tend to breed and calve earlier in the calving season and have calves that are older and heavier at weaning compared to those cows that breed later. In a cow herd that calves in a short calving period, most cows are in a similar stage of production and it is easier to develop rations that meet the requirements of the majority of the cow herd.

There are data where the researcher tracked male and female performance by whether calves were born in the first, second, or third 21-day period of the calving season. Male calves that were steered and data recorded from birth to harvest indicated calves born the first 21 days of the calving season had a significant advantage compared to calves born in the second or third 21-day period. Early born calves were heavier at weaning, had more carcass weight at harvest, and more had a USDA Marbling Score of Modest or greater (grading Choice or Prime) when compared to calves born in the second or third 21 days of the calving season.

Heifers born in the first 21 days of the calving season had several advantages when compared to those born in the second or third 21-day period. Early born heifers were heavier at weaning, were more likely to be cycling at the beginning of their first breeding season, had higher pregnancy rates than heifers born in the third 21-day calving period, and more calved in the first 21-day period of their initial calving season.

Another big data set indicates that when a heifer initially calves during the first 21-days of the calving season she is more productive and stays in the herd for more years than females that initially calve during the second or third 21-day periods of their first calving season.

Through 6 calf crops, replacement heifers born in the first 21-day period of the calving season as calves went on to wean heavier calves as cows than heifers retained as replacements that were born in the second or third 21-day period.

For a commercial cow/calf enterprise this means potentially fewer replacements are needed, more calves and weight are available to sell at weaning, and a higher proportion of the herd are mature cows, which is the most productive part of the cow herd.

David G. Hallauer  
District Extension Agent  
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

### ***Corn Planting Delays – What’s the Prognosis?***

As I write this – it’s raining...again... So while it’s only the early part of April, the itch to get spring field work done has already caused at least a little speculation about what our corn planting window might look like.

Based on a quick glance at three different National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center models, it looks like our moisture chances will continue to be above normal through April. Since that’s when we really like to get corn planted, it would appear that, at the very least, our ‘typical’ planting window may well be smaller, but what does ‘typical’ really mean?

For us in northeast Kansas, ‘typical’ is April, or maybe early May. Get much beyond that and we start to get concerned – with good reason based on what we’ve seen in the past. The *actual* window, however, has a lot to do, with what happens through the growing season. A few years ago, a two-year study was conducted at Belleville, Manhattan, and Hutchinson to look at the effect of delayed planting on three hybrid maturities: 100, 108, and 112-days in length.

The study had three distinct growing season environments. The low stress environments were those where rainfall was favorable during the entirety of the growing season. Early stress environments were those where early growth was affected by cool and wet weather, but were followed by favorable growing conditions. When rainfall and temperature were favorable early in the season, but things got hot and dry later in the summer, the environment was considered high stress. What they showed for how wide our window might be was interesting.

In the low stress environments, yields were reduced by less than 20 percent when planting was as late as mid-June. Planting from early April to May 20<sup>th</sup>, using any of the hybrids, resulted in yields that were not statistically different. In the early stress (cool/wet followed by favorable) environments, yields increased even as planting was delayed until late June. All maturities responded similarly. High stress environments (hot/dry summer) showed that yields dropped by about a percent per day of planting delay depending on maturity. Shorter-season hybrids had the best yields when planted before late May, but all hybrids showed yield reductions of more than 50 percent when planting was delayed until early June.

What can we expect for the rest of the summer? Difficult to say. The Climate Prediction Center is a great resource (<https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>), but no one has predictions very far out that are terribly accurate. What does it mean for us? Nothing yet, but if planting continues to be delayed – and we get a better idea as to what the rest of summer might bring – we can start to look more closely as to how wide that optimum planting window might be.

If you want to dig a little deeper in to the research report numbers, you can find a KSU Agronomy eUpdate on the topic via request to a District Office. It is also available online at [https://webapp.agron.ksu.edu/agr\\_social/m\\_eu\\_article.throck?article\\_id=1400](https://webapp.agron.ksu.edu/agr_social/m_eu_article.throck?article_id=1400).

### ***Pest of the Week – Iris Leaf Spot***

It’s time to make sure your old, dead iris leaves are removed. They are the transport mechanism for the iris leaf spot fungus that our current weather pattern will only encourage.

While it seldom kills plants, it does reduce their vigor. Plants heavily affected last year should receive a fungicide application when leaves first start to appear following label directions.

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Nancy C. Nelson  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

### Why You Should Eat Eggs

The egg has long been a symbol of new beginnings. Now eggs are celebrating a new chapter in our diet because the 2015 version of the Dietary Guidelines lifted the limit on dietary cholesterol.

While we know that high blood cholesterol is associated with heart disease, it has become evident that cholesterol in food is not the culprit — saturated fat is, and eating food high in saturated fat can trigger the body to produce cholesterol.

This gives the green light to enjoy the wonderfully nutritious egg, a high-quality protein with only 70 calories. One large egg also provides varying amounts of 13 essential vitamins and minerals and the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin.

Eggs are one of the most affordable and available protein sources. Refrigerated raw shell eggs will maintain quality for about 3 to 5 weeks after you bring them home. Store eggs in the refrigerator cabinet, not the door. To store them longer, beat whole eggs just until blended, pour into freezer containers and seal tightly, then label with the number of eggs and date. They will keep in your freezer for up to 1 year. To use in cooking, thaw and substitute 3 tablespoons thawed whole egg for 1 large fresh egg.

For safe storage of eggs and other refrigerated foods, make sure the temperature inside your refrigerator is 40° F or below and that your freezer temperature is 0° F or below. Label or note the date eggs were purchased so you know how long you can keep them.

Eggs are often considered breakfast food, but egg dishes can be a one-pot entrée for any meal during the day including brunch/lunch or even dinner entrée.