The One Minute Examination — Beef Herd Records on the Run...

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Most beef practitioners have found beef herd record-keeping to be a chore, too technically demanding for the results achieved. Practice Tip: during a one-minute pregnancy examination, enough information can be collected to provide a rewarding summary of the herd. It may also be a toe-in for other herd health or production management visits.

Prior to beginning examination of animals in the herd, establish the examination date, the dates the bulls entered and left the breeding herd, and from these, calculate the breeding season length, the minimum and maximum duration of gestation in cows to be examined. Use a julian calendar conversion table to quickly calculate this information.

What information can be gathered in the one-minute pregnancy examination? The animal signalment is established, ie. ID, breed, age, (sex). As the cow is approached, assess body condition score, lactation status and general health. Determine pregnancy (or) non-pregnancy state and the stage of gestation (days pregnant). After an initial herd visit, a preprinted herd worksheet with animal signalment in a sorted order can

be prepared. Data is quickly gathered and recorded as numeric codes, ie. BCS= 1 to 9, Lactation= 0, no or 1, yes, Pregnant= 0, no or 1, yes, Days Pregnant= days (10 day intervals), and comments (as needed). So, once a cow signalment is recorded or identified, the practitioner may report: 5, 1, 1, 150, which would be interpreted as BCS=5, Lactating, Pregnant 150 days, comments or observations are noted.

The data is easily entered into a computer spreadsheet program by clerical or technical help. This information can then be summarized, tabulated and graphed (exhibit 1).

The pregnancy analysis report provides the practitioner and producer with a simple but substantive source of herd evaluation. It provides a basis for documenting and discussing successes and short-comings in the herd's performance. This potentially leads you to a whole array of other herd health and production management activities. You will find that producers are impressed with all that you can discover during a.... One-minute Examination.

Exhibit 1.