Reproductive Efficiency Critical to Ranch’s Financial Success

No doubt many of you are fielding calls and emails on a weekly basis regarding availability of breeding stock. And you are undoubtedly mapping out your breeding strategies for your own operation as well, deciding which bull to use on a particular set of cows. The planning that takes place now will not be manifested until the fall of 2010— at which time there’s no turning back, obviously!

So what factors need attention? Obviously the breeding soundness of the bull battery. Breeding Soundness Exams should be performed to make sure semen quality is adequate and all of the bulls reproductive organs appear free of damage or infection. But the breeding soundness exam needs to continue beyond the veterinarian’s appraisal. Once the bulls are turned out, especially if younger animals are being used for the first time, they should be observed for performance. Make sure cows are being properly serviced. Watch for lameness throughout the early breeding season, which can result in a bull protecting his harem from other bulls in a multiple sire pasture without being successfully bred by him.

The cow should be in body condition score of 5 or above… but not too fat, as being overly fat can create hormonal imbalances that complicate conception. Having the cow’s vaccinations up to date for diseases that occur in your area can reduce the numbers of rebreeds and late calvers. Remember, some diseases travel to your ranch through running water supplies, wild animals, and nose to nose contact over fences.

Getting first calf heifers rebred is critical to the financial picture of the ranch, as they represent the most stressed class of animal during breeding season. The first calf heifer is expected to continue to grow herself, produce milk for her own calf, and return to a physiological state that is
Introducing... David and Carol Burley!

The Burley’s began their Galloway cattle operation in 2005 with an eye on grassfed beef production using a breed from the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC), which they had belonged to for many years. After some initial research, they concluded that the Galloway breed would be an excellent choice for their northern Ohio winters. They report having been very pleased with the amount of information and literature they received from their first inquiries to the AGBA, and eventually landed on the phone with Sarah Bowman. “After listening to Sarah talk about the Galloway breed, we were sold on the Galloway. It was very evident that Sarah was very passionate about the breed and very knowledgeable,” reports David.

The Burley’s farm is located in a 35-40 inch precipitation belt, and with only 80 miles separating them from Lake Erie, winter is no stranger to their region. They calve mostly in the spring, with a couple of fall calvers in the mix. The grazing season runs from late April through October.
Spotlight, continued from pg 3

The Burley’s herd began with six females and a bull from Hang 5 Ranch, and today contains 26 head of purebred Galloway, including a replacement bull purchased from Kaehler’s Mill Farm in Wisconsin last year. The cattle are in a rotational grazing system utilizing intensively managed pastures. The Burley’s attended several classes and pasture walks and then put their newfound education to work in their own operation. “We have an assortment of cool season grasses and legumes for our pastures (... and of course, a wide assortment of forbs) including white and red clover, alfalfa, fescue, timothy, bluegrass, oats, and orchardgrass. We have found that our Galloways especially love oats and bluegrass.”

I asked the Burley’s if the Galloway breed has lived up to their expectations. “Yes, they are a wonderful breed. If you use rotational grazing, you get to know your cows really well and their individual personalities because you are with them every day. We really like the disposition of this breed... (and) we’ve also had an excellent response to the meat that we’ve direct marketed.”

Inquiries for breeding stock have been on the increase this spring, representing another direct marketing opportunity.

Thank you, Dave and Carol, its been a pleasure getting to know you!

Forms, Forms, Forms.

http://www.bovigen.com Download the forms you need for DNA profiling. Also available on the AGBA website. Contact Bovigen Customer Service at 1-877-233-3362 if you have questions. Plan on about 4 weeks for DNA fingerprinting results of bulls. Other tests turn around in about 1 week.

http://www.americangalloway.com Download the forms you need to become a member or renew your membership.

http://www.clrc.ca/index.shtml Visit the CLRC website for .pdf forms and to do pedigree searches online.

Important Denver Notice

Please contact LeRoy Kindler immediately if you are interested in taking cattle to Denver for the Denver Stock Show in January 2010. Yes, that seems like a ways off... but LeRoy needs to submit important information to Denver very soon. Call him at 605-892-5832.
Whitebred Semen Available in U.S. Soon

Remember the Blue Grey cattle featured in the Spring 2008 edition of the Dispatch? Renowned and loved in the U.K for their extreme thriftiness, milking ability and meat quality, they are a cross between the Galloway and the Whitebred Shorthorn.

I personally have made several inquiries in the past several years trying to locate true Whitebred semen in the USA. There is none to be had. But Keith Nafziger, new to the Galloway breed in 2008, has set the wheels in motion for getting semen and embryos approved for importation into the USA. If you have an interest in securing semen or embryos, please contact Keith.

Phone:  620-217-3899
Email: nafzigerks@yahoo.com

(See related photo pg. 8)

Breeding Stock For Sale
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President’s Box

Hello Fellow Galloway Breeders,

I hope this letter finds all of you late winter and early spring calving folks well on your way to a successful season.

This spring the Association took on a new advertisement campaign in the High Plains Journal. The Journal was selected for its vast coverage area, large circulation and reasonable cost of advertising. The advertisement is directed at the commercial producer in the mainstream cattle industry. The targeted themes are calving ease and feed efficiency. This ad runs for 13 weeks through the typical bull buying season. The main hope for this campaign is to use a cost efficient ad that directs people to the new website. Here they could further educate themselves on the attributes of the Galloway breed and access the breeders list.

Regarding the use of Galloway by commercial operations, I have two interesting items to report. Last year I sold three bulls to a commercial Angus breeder for use on his heifers. He is so impressed with the Galloway cross calves as well as his lack of involvement with the calving of the heifers that he told me, “I don’t believe that I will ever use another breed on my heifers again.”

On another note, I donated semen to the University of South Dakota (the AGBA paid for shipping) for use on heifers in their research program. They will begin to calve the week of Apr. 20th and I am hopeful they will be of the same opinion as my neighbor! We need to compile many more stories and testimonials about using Galloway cattle in crossbreeding situations. Perhaps you would be willing to pass along other such testimonials to your Director or myself, from which we could add a page to the AGBA website about the Galloway breed working in real life situations.

Looking more closely at this area of breed promotion, I like the idea, after visiting with Judy Decker (editor of the Dispatch), that the time may be right for the quarterly newsletter concept to change into an annual glossy color magazine. There are many...
More Producers Reducing Cow Size

As beef producers continue to deal with wildly fluctuating prices for inputs, the most sensible approach is to reduce reliance on inputs. More and more producers are realizing that a key component of reducing reliance on inputs is to reduce cow size.

One commercial Montana producer put on his thinking cap and ran the numbers. According to an article in the February 2009 issue of *Kansas Farmer*, Lon Reukauf has calculated that the first 450 pounds of gain on the calf contain the most value. As the calf goes beyond that milestone, the gain is more costly to put on, and the price for the calf begins to roll back. Armed with these calculations, Mr. Reukauf began a herd makeover, striving to get away from high production...
Continued from pg 6

cows who require more of every input, from mineral to pasture to stored forages to vet supplies. These same higher producing cows will typically experience the most difficulty getting rebred if the going gets rough. He also moved his calving date back two weeks to an April 1 start date, and found he lost only 35 pounds in weaning weight, because the sooner the calf gets to nurse from a cow on pasture, the better he grows.

In summary, every producer must examine the factors affecting their operation, such as peak forage production months, low forage production months, market trends in your local area, and finishing time frame for your calves (will they finish before the summer seasonal price drop?)

As Galloway breeders, we already run the most efficient cowherds in the country. But there are always management decisions that can further increase the ranch’s bottom line. Examining last year’s financials and then crafting goals for this year will help to achieve this, and provides goal posts to help evaluate the success of new management decisions.
U.K. Galloway Press Release

Galloway cattle gain ground

As the world supply of fuel, fertiliser and arable crops grows shorter, attention is turning to beef cattle breeds that thrive under extensive systems.

The commercial beef industry, both in the UK and across much of the world, has focussed on continental cattle breeds that require significant consumption of cereals, normally demanding considerable inputs of artificial fertilisers. Systems and cattle breeds have adapted to utilise the abundant cheap cereals, and become reliant on heavily mechanised forage methods, in the latter decades of the twentieth century.

As the century closed, significant tracts of uncultivated marginal land in the UK had started to fall into disuse, having become uneconomic for intensively produced beef.

But with peak oil production behind us, and a new economic climate, the maths driving livestock enterprises are changing rapidly. Although the 2008 harvest has temporarily pulled the price of corn back down, all the signs are that the price of arable products is going to inexorably rise.

Traditional breeds of cattle, developed over centuries to thrive on grass based systems, and on less productive land are making a comeback, not least the Galloway breeds. Utilising poor and unploughable soils, often in areas of extreme weather, has long been an accepted niche for the ancient Galloway breed of cattle.

There are several types, from the traditional solid coloured blacks and duns, the iconic belted, the whites, with their black or red points, and the rare, and recently resurgent 'Riggit' marked. What they all share is their hardy constitution, and their ability to convert natural unimproved vegetation into high quality beef.

While many breeds have chased ever-higher growth and conversion rates, which all come at a cost, devoted Galloway breeders have remained focussed on the fundamental qualities of their stock, including the sound constitution, longevity and reliable breeding.

Black Galloway breeder John Finlay of Blackcraig in Corsock, Dum-
fries. reports 'Even at our very low stocking rates on the hill ground, we've found that crossbred cows just won't do, while the Galloways will go on producing a saleable product. The steers grow away, happily living outdoors all year round'.

At the opposite end of the country, Colin Nankervis keeps Riggit Galloways on the gorse and boulder strewn hills of West Penwith in Cornwall. Mr Nankervis says 'It's all very well testing which bullock grows fastest on maize silage, but when what you can actually grow is heather and whins, that seems a bit irrelevant. Better to see which cow will rear a calf on your ground in the first place'.

He goes on to observe that 'It's easy enough to shovel grub into a continental beast, but when the grub is doubling in price, and has to be carted half way across the country, shouldn't we be looking at a beast that fattens on what we've got?'

The various Galloway types have also long found a quietly unsung favour around the world, in spots

Continued pg 10
where hardiness is the 'make or break' of a cattle herd. North American Alan Bias, of Montana, reports 'When killer blizzards of decades past hit the plains of the upper tier, Galloway herds would emerge intact, while those composed of less hardy breeds would be consumed in entirety.' Mr Bias goes on to say. 'As input costs continue to rise, the Galloway's ability to convert cheaper fodder into live weight gain through rotational grazing will become apparent. Utilization of stockpile and winter coat reduces harvested winter feed requirements'.

Coupled to a resurgence in straight commercial interest, has been the conservation lobbies growing interest in Galloway cattle. Recognition of the part they have played, and concerns about recent declining cattle numbers, on hill ground, peat moors, and various types of lowland heath, has recently put the Galloway breeds in favour with many conservation bodies.

Having been adversaries for some years, cattlemen, 'land managers' and ecologists have found that their paths are converging. According to Julian Hosking, Native Breeds Adviser for Natural England, 'The raising of suckler beef under extensive management systems utilising such low levels of input is an easily justifiable enterprise, and one that should be receiving far greater consideration in the quest for more sustainable grazing systems - especially as it also contributes to the essential maintenance of the native farm animal genetic resources of the UK'.

Hill sheep men have long known what conservation professionals are now appreciating, that sheep will follow Galloway cattle into ungrazed moorland, as the cattle open a sward. This is second nature to long established Galloway cattle breeder, Colin Abel, who, with his brothers, grazes a large herd of Galloway and Galloway cross cows far out on the Forest of Dartmoor SSSI. As Mr Abel says 'We've always kept up the cows, to open up the vegetation for the sheep. The fact that the Forest is such a ecological gem is no coincidence, and is in no small part thanks to the Galloway cattle'

The icing on the cake for the breeds' recent resurgence has been the rising interest from the specialist butcher and connoisseur market in Galloway beef. Whilst there is ample science to show why it is healthier, and eats better, it is still simply the fact that Galloway beef does eat so well that gets top chefs using it. Says Belted Galloway breeder and butcher Tim Wilson, of the Ginger Pig Company in North Yorkshire, 'The beef from Galloway steers is right at the top of the shop for eating quality'.

For further information on this press release please contact Anton Coaker wood@anton-coaker.co.uk 01364 631276
Galloway Cattle at a Glance

The Galloway breed has been in North America for over 150 years. At one time it populated the Plains states, back in the days when cattle were exposed to the rigors of the environment with little assistance their owners. The Galloway thrived in these circumstances, because that is the story of the breed’s development. They were the cattle on the British Isles that were left on their own in the roughest of locales.

The Galloway is today recognized as the oldest and purest breed of cattle from the British Isles. The Shorthorn breed tapped the Galloway gene pool to improve their stock, and subsequently the Angus breed tapped the Shorthorns for improvement. The Red Poll breed drew on the Galloway gene pool as well. But interestingly enough the Galloway was maintained as a pure breed. They populated the Southern Lowland regions of Scotland, a region hammered with hard, moisture-laden winds, poor soils and poor grazing. Probably in response to this environment, the Galloway adapted with a double haircoat. The long silky outer hairs may reach 6 inches in length, and repel great amounts of moisture, while the soft, downy undercoat traps heat. The haircoat sheds in summer, either completely or to a nap of felt that frustrates biting insects including flies. They also adapted by becoming non-selective grazers. Any owner of Galloway cattle will attest to their willingness to consume undesirable forages, weeds and browse.

Historically the Galloway breed has been known for its performance on the butcher’s block. And in light of today’s currently stagnant beef improvement (choice carcasses having plateaued out at around 60%), an infusion of some ‘old blood’, tried and proven, might be just what the beef industry needs.

Got Galloway?
Yes! I want to receive each quarterly issue of *The Galloway Dispatch*

American Galloway Breeders’ Association

Membership Application

Name ________________________________________

Address________________________________________________

City____________________ State____________ Zip___________

Phone______________________           E8Mail_________________________________________________

Full Annual Membership Fee: $80 annually  OR  Associate Membership Fee: $20 annually  (Please circle one)

Signature: _______________________ Date: ________________

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capable of conceiving and maintaining a new pregnancy. It is recommended that she be at 80 to 85% of her mature body weight at the time of rebreeding, and be in a body condition score of 6.5. (*Whether this is necessary for Galloways is debatable.*)

By matching calving to coincide with forage production, the producer can save considerable money. Think about it this way: The pregnant cow’s nutritional needs really increase during the last 60 days or so of gestation (and of course skyrocket as lactation begins). This means supplying her these increased needs with more costly harvested/stored feeds if calving during the traditional Feb/March time frame that we in North America for some reason call ‘Spring Calving’. This increased quantity and time period is directly affected by number of days between calving and pasture turnout. But if that same cow is bred to calve around June 1, in many cases she can meet her own nutritional demands from pasture for at least the last 30 - 45 days of gestation even in the more northern latitudes. I am writing this from Kansas, where we begin seeing cool season trash grasses such as cheatgrass, greening up in early March, and often with brome and fescue beginning to green up as well. Producers here and in many of the plains states also have winter wheat as an option for meeting protein and energy needs, supplementing with cheap, low quality prairie hay to balance the diet. The late spring/early summer calving cow can be roughed through most of the winter on low quality relatively inexpensive stored feeds or range grasses, and require very little by way of more costly supplemental feeds as contrasted with her late winter calving counterpart.

A little juggling at bull turnout time really will add dollars to your bottom line.
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Independence of Trapper

Decebe was the Reserve Grand Champion Bull & Grand Champion Bull Calf at the 2009 Denver Stock Show! Only one of Decebe's full brothers remains for sale. This yearling bull, with an 8-star Feed Efficiency rating, will make a great prospect for a herd sire or to breed crossbred carcass cattle. Inspections are invited at any time.

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Independence of Trapper

Sire: Chief Joseph of Pacific
Dam: Diamond B Lisa 31L

Bovigen DNA Feed Efficiency Results:
Decebe = 7 Stars
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Videos of ET Calves Available Now!

Decebe of Trapper
Bovigen Feed Efficiency Score of 7 Stars!
advantages to this, appearance being one; there is nothing like a glossy publication with high quality photos to appeal to interested parties. In my vision I see a slick looking magazine complete with high quality ads from all breeders bordering interesting articles about the Galloway breed and why Galloways should be part of any breeding program. Kind of a Breeders’ Directory and annual magazine combined.

Another advantage is the cost of production and how many we have to produce. Leave it to the internet to continue to be a wellspring of new products and services. There is now a company that will produce a magazine for anyone using ‘on-demand’ order fulfillment. No minimum order and the ability to produce additional copies at anytime. If we need the Annual for promotional material at a show, we just decide how many copies to order, and it will be done. No more umpteen extra copies of old magazines hanging around with no place to go.

Yet another advantage is the opportunity to combine AGBA news with polished promotional articles, research results and advertisements. Judy has done a wonderful job (understatement) of creating each and every one of the quarterly Dispatches. However the usefulness of the quarterly newsletter, relative to its cost and time requirements to produce, certainly warrant a serious investigation into the annual publication concept. It may well be time for the caterpillar to metamorphose into its new and better self - A project that I am very excited about.

The AGBA Board of Directors will be having another conference call before the end of our Fiscal Year. The future of the Dispatch will be on the agenda. To remind all members the Fiscal Year ends June 30th. This means that in June your dues for membership in the AGBA are due. We will be updating the website Breeders’ Directory within 60 days of this date. Please don’t miss the opportunity for interested parties to find your listing on the website. This is the easiest way to advertise your operation. And I personally think one of the most cost effective.

Sincerely,

Sarah Bowman

Sarah Bowman, President

American Galloway Breeders’ Association
Want to receive the *Galloway Dispatch* quarterly? Complete this form and send it $20 Associate Membership dues to:

American Galloway Breeders’ Assoc.
c/o Canadian Livestock Records Corp
2417 Holly Lane
Ottawa, ON K1V 0M7 Canada

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