



LSU AgCenter
St. Landry Parish

BEEF CATTLE CONNECTION

January 2024



St. Landry Parish

1065 Hwy 749 Suite A

Opelousas, Louisiana 70570

337-948-0561

www.LSUAgCenter.com

****To be added to our email list, please call the office or email Brittany Zaunbrecher at bzaunbrecher@agcenter.lsu.edu.**

January 2024 Events

23-27: Acadiana District Livestock Show

30- Feb 3: Southwest District Livestock Show

February 2024 Events

7: Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification:
Eunice Northwest Community Center

8: Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification:
Evangeline LSU AgCenter Office

10-17: LSU AgCenter State Livestock Show

21: Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification:
Oberlin Allen Parish Library

22: Bull Breeding Soundness Exams
(Dominique's Opelousas)

March 2024 Events

2: Here's The Beef Cookoff- St. Landry
Cattlemen's Association

16: Acadiana Beef Cattle Spring Field Day

21: Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification:
St. Landry LSU AgCenter Office

21-22: Louisiana Women in Ag Conference

Benefits to a Controlled Breeding Season

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak to a group of beef cattle producers in Rapides and Grant Parishes. As many are just finishing up winter calving, I thought a good topic would be breeding and calf management strategies. As I started to research the benefits to a controlled versus a year-long breeding season, I discovered that many beef cattle producers reportedly do not use a defined breeding system.

In a year-long breeding operation, cows are constantly exposed to a bull. Producers may do this for several reasons. They may lack the resources to build fencing to separate cows and bulls into different pastures, they may lack good handling facilities, and they also may just not have the time or labor to manage calves being born so close together. They also may prefer to have calves born throughout the year as to always have a constant supply of beef ready to slaughter.

In controlled breeding, cows are only exposed to a bull for a specific number of days. This leaves to a smaller calving window which can have great advantages. During different parts of a cow's gestation and after, her nutrient requirements change. Having cows on a closer breeding schedule allows for nutrition to be adjusted according to those requirements. There is no worry about cows being overfed or underfed. Cattle can be closely observed for calving difficulty. Feeding times can even be adjusted using the Konefal method, named for a Canadian Rancher named Gus Konefal who observed that if his feeding times were pushed back by 4-5 hours morning and evening, cattle were more likely to calve during the day. This method keeps cows busy feeding and results in most calves arriving in daytime hours. Controlled breeding also gives a more uniform calf crop, making marketing more attractive to potential buyers by having cattle of similar size and weight. Time and labor can also be saved as all calves can be vaccinated, castrated, dehorned, etc. at once, rather than having to do those management practices as needed. And finally, having a controlled breeding season allows producers to identify reproductively unsound cattle more easily. Ideally, you want a calving interval of one per year. This keeps your operation profitable as the calf is what adds value after the costs incurred to raise and feed the cow. By culling cows who have not rebred within a given time, it keeps the overall herd more efficient. The only disadvantage of a controlled breeding season is that it forces marketing within a narrow period. Owners of large herds can reduce that liability by using both fall and spring calving seasons. Avoid summer calves as they seldom develop satisfactorily. Usually, they are small, stressed, and unthrifty and are not heavy enough at sale time to pay for their dam's expenses.

If you need assistance on how to implement a controlled breeding season in your operation, contact your local LSU AgCenter office for more information.

Bull Breeding Soundness Exams:

What are they and why you should be getting your bulls tested.

The breeding soundness exam (BSE) is much more than a “semen test.” It consists of a physical exam that should include examination of the eyes, feet and legs, teeth (if an older bull), and general overall condition.

The physical exam is a core component of the BSE. The bull must be able to identify cows in heat and must physically be able to go to the cow and mount. If the bull is unable to do these things, the semen quality is irrelevant. The bull's vision is evaluated, as this is a key way that bulls recognize activity that indicates a cow is receptive. An examination of the structural soundness of the bull's feet and legs allows producers to gauge the bull's ability to not only find food and water but to go to and mount the cow. If he is in pain, he may be reluctant or even physically unable to accomplish this. Additionally, the structural correctness of the bull may also give the producer an indication of the bull's longevity in the herd. The bull's reproductive anatomy is also evaluated during the physical exam. Internally, structures such as the vesicular glands, prostate, ampulla of the vas deferens and the urethra are examined for soundness. Externally, evaluations of the prepuce, penis and scrotum are made. Abnormalities that can be found here would include persistent frenulum, penile fibromas and warts, hair rings, scars, or even penile deviations. All these problems could lead to suboptimal fertility.

Scrotal circumference is a measurement of the distance around the scrotum at its widest point. Certain minimums have been determined to be necessary for optimal breeding soundness and depend on the age of the bull. Scrotal circumference has been linked to sperm count and quality, and a link has been established between scrotal circumference and the age at onset of puberty in that bull's daughters. While measuring the scrotum, the person performing the evaluation also should look for several other key indicators of breeding soundness. The shape, size and consistency of the testicles are noted, and the epididymis is evaluated. Any abnormality here may alert the evaluator of a problem.

Next, the semen quality is evaluated. Usually, semen is collected with the use of an electro-ejaculator. A probe is inserted into the rectum of the bull. This probe delivers electronic stimulation of the nerves that control erection and ejaculation. While the bull is being stimulated, an examination of the penis usually is conducted. Once the semen is collected, it is evaluated to determine how many sperm are moving in a forwardly progressive manner and how many have a normal shape. There are minimum percentages established for each of these measurements. The actual number of sperm is not usually determined.

Once all these factors have been evaluated, the bull is classified as a satisfactory potential breeder, an unsatisfactory potential breeder or as deferred. Deferred means the bull should be evaluated again later due to a problem that may be able to be corrected. One component the BSE does not usually evaluate is the bull's libido or his desire to mate. This is one reason why the term “potential” breeder is used in the different classifications. It also is important to remember this is an evaluation of the bull at a specific time point and is the best estimate of fertility at that time. It does not guarantee his continued fertility into the future. Obviously, if the bull becomes ill or injured, his fertility may be affected. Factors that may or may not be obvious can change from one moment to the next – and certainly from year to year. Thus, there is a need for a BSE to be done before each breeding season.

Given the economic impacts breeding soundness has and the complexity of the evaluation, it is key to have a professional veterinarian who is familiar with the process do the evaluation. Conducting these evaluations when a new bull is purchased and at the beginning of each breeding season can save producers time, money, and headaches by providing needed information earlier.

In conjunction with Lafayette Parish Cattlemen's Association and St. Landry Parish Cattlemen's Association, the LSU AgCenter is excited to offer two opportunities each year for Breeding Soundness Exams. The first BSE Event of 2024 will be held February 22 at Dominique's Stockyard in Opelousas. To register your bull(s), please reach out to Lanie Richard or Brittany Zaunbrecher to schedule. Bulls must be pre-registered as it takes roughly 15 minutes to evaluate each bull.

Lafayette Assistant Extension Agent Lanie Richard (337-291-7090)

St. Landry Extension Agent Brittany Zaunbrecher (337-948-0561)

(You may also fill out your information using the online form by clicking [here](#) and Lanie or Brittany will contact you to confirm number of bulls and time of exam.)



Bull Breeding Soundness Exams

*Thursday February 22, 2024
8:00 AM Until Completed
Dominique's Stockyard- Opelousas*

Breeding Soundness Exam- \$50

Trichomoniasis Testing- \$120

Vaccinations also available for an additional charge.

Payment due at conclusion of exam

**Exams performed by
Grant Fontenot, DVM**

Bulls will be tentatively scheduled by appointment when producers call or go online to pre-register and tested on a first come first serve basis once they arrive. Bulls may be brought in the afternoon prior, but only if special arrangements are made in advance.

All Trich test bulls must be tested first on Thursday morning.

Lafayette Assistant ANR Agent Lanie Richard (337-291-7090)

St. Landry ANR Agent Brittany Zaunbrecher (337-948-0561)

Mike Dominique at Dominique's Stockyard (337-654-4030)

OR

Visit <https://forms.office.com/r/NAqYBT1BSb>

Find Out If Your Bull Is Fertile Before Losing a Calf Crop!

- **No vet road service charges**
- **Good working facilities provided**
- **Free help provided to handle & work bulls**
- **Educational Information**

All bulls will be semen tested, visually evaluated, and will have scrotal measurements taken with a written soundness report provided to the producer.

**St. Landry Cattlemen's
Association**

**Lafayette Cattlemen's
Association**

Dominique's Stockyard



ACADIANA CATTLE PRODUCERS SPRING FIELD DAY

Date: Saturday, March 16, 2024

Time: 8:00 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.

Place: LSU AgCenter Iberia Research Station

(603 LSU Bridge Road, Jeanerette, La 70544)

Registration starts at 8:00 A.M.

- Approved for Master Farmer Phase II/CEC credit

Indoor Program

- Welcome/Introductions - (Administration, LCA, & LFGC)
- Program Updates - (Beef Extension Program and Master Farmer)
- How Will the 2023 Drought Affect Forage Production in 2024?
 - An Update on Available NRCS Programs and Services
 - Bull Breeding Soundness Exam and Breeding Considerations
- Backgrounding Calves: Management Decisions and Opportunities
 - Producer Panel Discussion

Outdoor Program

- Filling Early Spring Forage Deficiencies with Cover Crop Mixes
- Current Experiments Being Conducted at the Iberia Research Station:
Preliminary Results
- Equipment Rental Program Through Soil and Water Conservation District

Lunch Provided -- Door Prizes -- Vendor Exhibits



Contacts: Iberia - Blair Hebert (337-369-4440); Iberia Research Station - Dr. Al Ogeron (337-276-5527); Lafayette and St. Martin - Lanie Richard (337-291-7090); Vermilion and Acadia - Abigail Sartin (337-898-4335); Louisiana Forage and Grassland Council - Ed Twidwell (225-578-4564); Beef Cattle Nutritionist - Marcelo Vedovatto (318-473-6520)





2024 Central Region MASTER CATTLEMAN PROGRAM

When: Every Thursday for 10 consecutive weeks
Beginning April 11 to June 13- 6-9 PM

Where: St. Landry Farm Bureau Federation Board Room
5265 I49 S Service Rd, Opelousas LA 70570

Cost: \$200 includes materials, meals, certificate of completion, and sign

What is the Master Cattleman Program?

The Louisiana Master Cattleman program began in the summer of 2004. The course includes 10 three-hour lectures on all aspects of beef production. It is a commodity-specific program to enhance the profitability of beef producers by equipping them with important information on all aspects of beef production. The program will be provided statewide in various multi-parish areas. It will allow participants to add farm management/marketing components related to beef production. Upon completion of the Master Cattleman program, participants should be better able to increase farm profitability while being environmentally sustainable.

The Master Cattleman Program curriculum consists of 10 three-hour blocks including:

Animal Handling
Animal Health
Beef Quality Assurance
Breeding and Selection
Economic and Marketing

End Product
Nutrition
Pasture Agronomy
Reproduction
Weed Management

Complete Registration and Submit Payment by March 15

For more information contact:

Brittany Zaunbrecher - Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resources (Beef Cattle & Forages)
St. Landry, Avoyelles, Evangeline, and Allen Parishes
337-948-0561 bzaunbrecher@agcenter.lsu.edu



Central Region Master Cattleman Program

2024 Registration Form

(Please Print or Type)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: LA Zip Code: _____

Home Phone (_____) _____ Cell Phone (_____) _____

Parish of Residence: _____

Parish of Cattle Operation if different from Residence: _____

E-mail address: _____

To complete the Master Cattleman Program, persons must meet the following requirements:

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Animal Handling | End Product |
| Animal Health | Nutrition |
| Beef Quality Assurance | Pasture Agronomy |
| Breeding and Selection | Reproduction |
| Economic and Marketing | Weed Management |

The cost to participate in the Master Cattleman Program is \$200.00. Cost includes meals, supplies, certificate of completion, and sign. Please make check or money orders payable to:

LSU AgCenter

Classes will begin on Thursday April 11, and continue for 10 weeks on Thursdays until June 13.

Classes will be held from 6-9 PM with a meal provided at the St. Landry Farm Bureau

Federation Board Room, located at 5265 I49 S Service Rd., Opelousas, LA 70570.

Mail to or drop off registration form and payment to:

LSU AgCenter St. Landry Parish Extension Office

c/o Brittany Zaunbrecher

1065 Hwy. 749 Suite A

Opelousas, LA. 70570

Registrations must be received by March 15th 2024

Online Resources



- **Website:** www.lsuagcenter.com/beefcattle
- **Beef Brunch Educational Series:**
 - www.lsuagcenter.com/beefbrunch
- **YouTube:** [LSU AgCenter – Livestock](#)
- **Remind App System:**
 - Text @labeeff to 81010
- **Social Media:**
 - Facebook – [@LSUAgCenterBeefCattle](#)
 - Instagram – [@lsu_agcenter beef cattle](#)
 - Twitter – [@BeefLsu](#)

St. Landry Parish has a Facebook Page!

<https://www.facebook.com/StLandryLSUAgCenter>

Membership and participation in activities and events are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, veteran status or disability. If you have a disability that requires special accommodation for your participation in an activity, please contact us at 337-948-0561.

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1065 Hwy 749 Suite A

Opelousas, Louisiana 70570

www.LSUAgCenter.com



For the latest research-based information on just about anything, visit our website:

LSUAgCenter.com

The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.