

By Patrick E. Phillips DVM

## This winter could threaten your 2015 calf crop

Breeding Soundness Evaluation recommended

**J**ust how cold was it? Ask the bulls. If they could talk, they would all say “&\$\$\$\* COLD!”

This winter in Iowa is the coldest winter on record since 1978-79 and is, so far, the 9th coldest on record in the last 121 years. The cold temperatures and bitter wind chills combined with lower-than-normal snowfall could potentially lead to problems this breeding season.

Primarily, that problem is decreased bull fertility due to extreme cold and frostbite.

This spring, bulls used in natural service in Iowa herds need to have a Breeding Soundness Evaluation (BSE) prior to the breeding season. To not use this important

test is like playing Russian roulette with your 2015 calf crop profits.

We have all heard that “Those who ignore history are condemned to repeat it.” Here’s your history lesson for the day:

The national organization that puts forth reproductive parameters for bulls is the Society for Theriogenology. This group of reproductive experts had a humble beginning in 1954, when they first met in Ft. Collins, CO. Twelve Great Plains and Front Range veterinarians assembled to discuss what caused a disastrous breeding season in beef cattle the previous year — a year very similar to the current Iowa winter with extreme low temps, wind chills and lower than normal

snowfall.

This visionary group of veterinarians focused on the bull as the primary cause of the severe decrease in fertility. They came to the conclusion that thermal injury to the testicles of bulls, i.e. frostbite, was the culprit. The group became known as the “Rocky Mount Society for the Study of Breeding Soundness in the Bull,” later to be renamed in 1974 to the Society for Theriogenology, which now establishes guidelines for breeding soundness evaluations.

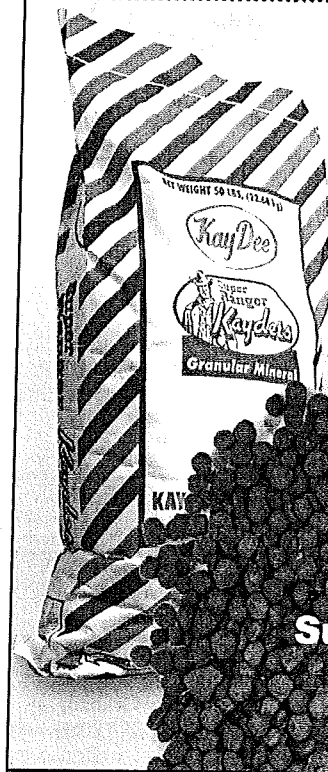
What does this mean for Iowa cattlemen in 2014? Be careful...very careful. Every bull in your battery needs to have a thorough BSE conducted by your veterinarian before turning

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him in with your heifers and cows.

Knowing the breeding status of your bull battery will allow you to plan on how to effectively use your bulls or whether replacement bulls are needed. This simple and inexpensive evaluation will ensure that this winter has not caused either permanent or temporary damage to the testes or epididymis, damage that can severely impact fertility.

**Test now**

Don't find out next fall at preg check that you had a bull problem at the beginning of the season. Bulls should be tested 6 to 8 weeks prior to the beginning of your breeding season to allow retesting of bulls that are borderline or to give you time to find suitable replacements.

Now that we have drove home the importance of having a BSE performed on all of your bulls this year, let's talk about one more

additional test to protect your income and herd this year.

As you have heard, Trichomoniasis has been found in Iowa, and in greater numbers in surrounding states. A simple test of your bulls can be performed during the BSE by your veterinarian and submitted to the Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Ames. This test is a very sensitive test and is run daily at the lab.

As of Feb. 12, 2014, the State of Iowa requires that all breeding age bulls coming into Iowa be accompanied by a negative Trich test within 30 days of arrival.

Any new bull introduced into your herd should absolutely be tested prior to being turned in with the females. Bringing this sexually transmitted disease into your herd through a purchased, leased or borrowed bull can severely reduce the calf crop by up to 50% and can cause major economic loss to your

bottom line.

If you have to bring new bulls into your battery, it is highly advised to bring in yearling virgin bulls as replacements. The risk of Trich is much lower for virgin bulls as compared to older bulls.

There is no cure for Trich. Slaughter of infected animals is the only option.

So, the take home message for this breeding season is: BSE all bulls used for natural service in your herd and have a Trich test performed at the time of the BSE. It's the best reproductive insurance policy you can have.

(Editor's note: Read more about Trich on page 20.)

*Patrick E. Phillips, DVM, is a senior clinician at ISU's College of Veterinary Medicine's Veterinary Diagnostic and Production Animal Medicine section.*

# Dbl R Cattle

Testing two Feb. sons of  
Connealy Consensus 7229 for Dunlap

## Lot 118

BW: 92 • ADG: 4.63  
Int. wt.: 980 • WDA: 3.11  
CE: 5 BW: .8 WW: 50 YW: 84

## Lot 119

BW: 77 • ADG: 4.33  
Int. wt.: 965 • WDA: 3.20  
CE: 10 BW: -.6 WW: 50 YW: 84



Ross & Robbi Kane  
12428 650th Ave.  
McCallsburg, IA  
515.291.8944

# Benson Angus



1911 1900th St.  
Irwin, IA 51446

Lonnie Benson  
712-782-3399 (h) • 712-579-1554 (c)

## On-test for Dunlap

March sons of  
Bensons Patriot 038

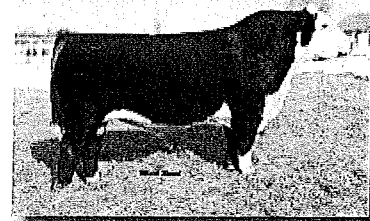
### Lot 101

BW: 82 • ADG: 4.13  
Int. wt: 960 • WDA: 3.47  
CE: 2 BW: 3.2 WW: 49 YW: 84

### Lot 102

BW: 77 • ADG: 4.71  
Int. wt.: 930 • WDA: 3.37  
CE: 4 BW: 2 WW: 49 YW: 87

# Tiernan Polled Herefords



Sire: MSU TCF Revolution 48

## Lot 156

1/2 brother to the 2013 Dunlap ICA bull  
that brought \$3,800, both are sired by  
MSU TCF Revolution 48.

BD - 2/22/13

BW - 77 • Int. Wt. - 835  
ADG - 4.08 • WDA - 2.71

## Lot 157

BD - 2/24/13

BW - 83 • Int. Wt. - 790  
ADG - 3.17 • WDA - 2.58

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