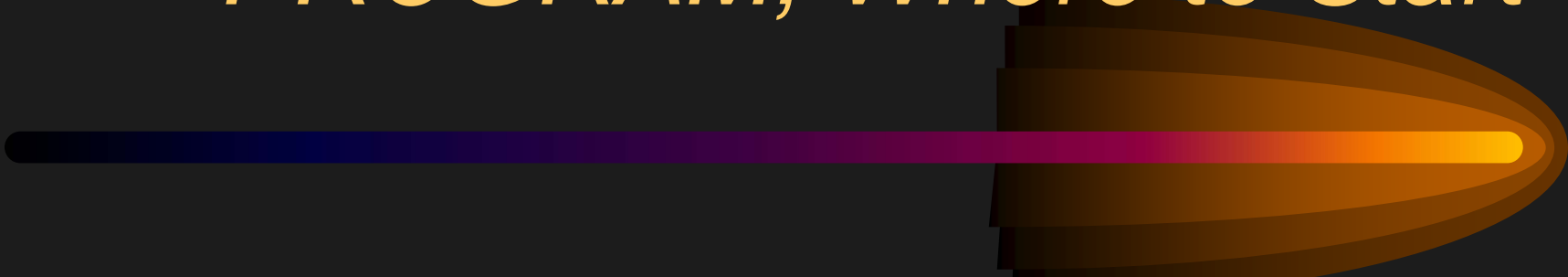




# *IMPROVING REPLACEMENT PROGRAM, Where to Start*



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# *Goal of The Replacement Program*

The primary goal of all heifer programs is to raise the highest quality heifer who will maximize profits once she enters the lactating herd. A quality heifer is one carrying no limitations into the dairy herd that would hinder her ability to produce under the farm's management system. Profits are maximized by obtaining the quality heifer at the lowest possible cost.

# *Assessment of Current Operation*



- Need to have information to use in making decisions
- If not measuring, can't evaluate or track current performance or changes
- Two key areas
  - Quality of replacement
  - Cost of replacement

# *Quality of The Replacement*



- What is the current status of replacement program
- Replacement Heifer Management Snapshot
  - How do you compare to goals
  - Which areas may provide the most opportunity
  - What do you think should be worked on first

# Quality of The Replacement

- 1st Calf Heifers “Treated” as Calf/Heifer\*  $\leq 30\%$   
24 hrs.  $\rightarrow$  3 mos. \_\_\_\_\_, 4 mos.  $\rightarrow$  fresh \_\_\_\_\_
- DOAs in first calf heifers  $\leq 9\%$   
Male DOAs. \_\_\_\_\_, Female DOAs \_\_\_\_\_
- 1st Calf avg. peak  $\geq 80\%$  of Mature or 1st  
Calf lactation total yield  $\geq 80\%$  of Mature
- 1st Calf Culls  $\leq 60$  Days in Milk  $\leq 5\%$
- 1st Calf ME’s  $\geq$  Mature
- 1st Calf “Treated” in Lactation\*  $\leq 15\%$
- 85% retention (any herd) to 2nd lactation  $\geq 85\%$
- Lower #1 reason for 1st lactation culls (continuous improvement)

# *Cost of The Replacement*



- What are your costs to raise the replacement?
- Are there limitations within the replacement system that are impacting quality and/or costs?
- Developing a better understanding of the replacement system

# *Cost of The Replacements*

- Estimating/Tracking different areas
  - Feed
  - Labor
  - Housing
  - The full system
- Data collection worksheets in materials
- Spreadsheets available at????

# *What next*

- Once you have identified quality issues and measured costs, can start moving through a decision making process
- Series of questions to think about
- Homework to answer some of the questions



# Decision Process

- What changes do you need to make to improve the quality of the heifer?
  - Management changes
    - Different inputs
    - Additional inputs
  - New investment
    - Facilities
    - Equipment
- From today's presentations

# Decision Process

- What impact will these changes to improve the quality of the replacement have on costs to raise the replacement?
  - Feed
  - Labor
  - Housing
  - Other

# Decision Process

- Can you make changes to maintain the current quality of the replacement and lower costs to raise?
  - Management
  - Feed
  - Labor
  - Facilities
  - Equipment

# *Decision Process*

- What other options do you have to improve the quality of replacement or the costs to raise
  - Multiple options should be considered
  - Role of custom heifer raising

# Decision Process

- Custom Heifer Growing Services
  - What is available
  - What is the cost
  - What is the quality being produced
  - How could it fit with the dairy
    - 0-5 months of age
    - 5 months to checked pregnant
    - Checked pregnant to close-up
    - Excess animals beyond the current capacity of the replacement system

# *Decision Process*

- What is the best use of limited resources
  - Only have so much available
    - Labor
    - Management
    - Capital
  - Where is the best place to invest?

# Decision Process

- What are other things that could be done within the dairy to improve overall profitability
  - Crop production
  - Dairy production
- Overall business assessment
- Mission Statement
- 5-10 year strategic plan

# Going Home Today

- Think about the following three questions
  - How much can the dairy bottom line be improved by improving the quality/cost of raising dairy replacements?
  - Is there other areas within the farm, if focused on, would have a larger impact than focusing on the replacements
  - If focus on the replacements, what would the order of priority be for changes?



# *Special Thanks*

- Thank you for attending today
- Special thanks for the case farms
  - For taking time to be here today
  - For taking time over the last 3 months to look at their replacement program
  - For being “under the microscope”

# Questions

