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Making Beef Management Calendars Easier

Technology has been developed that makes many things in our lives much easier. Some of you may remember when you were the “remote control” when your Dad was watching TV. Now, new homes have heating, alarm and lighting systems throughout that can be controlled remotely with a smart phone. Cattle producers use electronic IDs to automate many data collection activities. Computer applications seem to only be limited by our imagination.

Our beef extension educational efforts have often pointed out timely management topics. For example, now is the time to sample harvested forages and get an analysis of the quality. Some of those items would relate to time of year, while others would depend on the individual operation’s calving and breeding dates. So, while those suggestions are timely for most (we hope), they certainly do not fit everyone.

Taking advantage of available technology, producers now have a tool called the Management Minder. This application will help you add as many reminders for management topics to a yearly production calendar as you would like, all based on the specific times that you calve, go to grass and wean in your operation. Examples include starting nighttime feeding before calving starts to promote births during daylight hours or ordering vaccines and supplies for weaning or pregnancy checking.

The Management Minder allows you to input your operation’s factors: calving season, weaning season and grass turn out, and then select management tasks to add to your specific calendar. For example, based on the expected start of calving in your operation, a reminder to start evening feeding defaults to two weeks prior to the due date and can be further adjusted as you like. The program creates an “ics” file, which communicates dates and times to calendar programs such as Outlook, Google and Yahoo. The ics file is sent to your e-mail address and allows you to import the data into the appropriate calendar.

If you don't want to let underappreciated dates such as the start of the third trimester of gestation creep up on you, utilize the Management Minder to get it on your calendar. The program saves your dates, and once set up, you can roll them into the next year. It is a great tool to communicate management plans with your veterinarian or other members of your team. You can find the Management Minder at www.KSUBeef.org/ManagementMinder.

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