

Developing Replacement Heifers

By Kit Pharo

Enough articles and papers have been written about selecting and developing replacement heifers to fill a barn. Guess what? It's not that complicated. I don't know why we are so determined to complicate simple matters, but we are. Unfortunately, the more complicated we make things, the less profitable they become.

Weaned heifer calves that have been saved for replacement females will not generate any income for two years. Therefore, we cannot afford to invest much money into their development. Rather than place them in a high-input, artificial environment, we need to treat them like the cows we hope they will become. They need to be out foraging for themselves, with little (or no) hay or supplements. If a heifer can't do this, she probably won't make an efficient and profitable momma cow.

With the exception of a few outliers, we suggest you retain all of your heifer calves, rough them through the winter and expose them to a bull for a short period of time. Why not sit back and let the environment sort out your best replacement heifers? Do you really think you have the ability to do a better job? This system will allow only your most efficient, easy-fleshing and early-maturing heifers to advance into the cowherd.

The heifers that fail to get bred can be treated as stockers and sold in the fall for a profit. If you have more bred heifers than you need, you won't have any trouble selling them for a good profit. There is always a good demand for the right size and type of replacement heifers.

Some maintain you can purchase replacement heifers for less than it costs to produce them. That may be — but where are you going to find heifers that are the right size and type for your program and environment? Properly done, this can be a very profitable enterprise. Long-term success, however, requires three things: 1) using low-input, early-maturing, calving ease bulls, 2) working with nature and/or your forage resources and 3) spending very little (if anything) on hay and other inputs.



Our 2024-born heifer calves are pictured above. The picture on the left is weaning day in December of 2024. After being separated from their mothers, the calves were turned back out on dormant grass. The picture on the right was taken one year later. These heifers are bred to calve in May of this year.

Keep the pressure on. Our first-calf heifers are thrown in with our mature cows after the latest calf crop has been weaned. If you have been using bulls with genuine calving ease, your heifers can be calved out on open range with the cows. This will save time, labor and money. Treating your heifers like the cows you hope they will become will keep the inefficient and unadapted females out of your program. Every heifer and cow should have to earn her place in the herd.

"A man is not old until regrets
take the place of dreams."

~ John Barrymore ~

THREE Spring Bull Sales

Cameron, TX – April 7th

Mtn. Grove, MO – April 13th

Burlington, CO – April 20th

- **440 Bulls** — Angus, Red Angus, Polled Hereford and Heat-Tolerant (no Brahman influence)
- **One-Year Guarantee**
- **Guaranteed Calving Ease**
- **Developed WITHOUT Grain**
- **DNA Tested for A2/A2 and Tenet®**
- **Evaluated for Disposition, Thickness, Muscling, Masculinity, Fleshing Ability, Grass Efficiency, Hair Coat, Fly Resistance and Much More**
- **Over 60 Delivery Points Across the Nation**

Call or Email to receive a Sale Catalog

THE PHARO CATTLE COMPANY® NEWSLETTER

Published four times per year by:

Pharo Cattle Company®
44017 County Road Z
Cheyenne Wells, CO 80810

Editor: **Kit Pharo**

Phone: **800-311-0995**

Email: **Kit@PharoCattle.com**

Website: **PharoCattle.com**

**Our Mission: Help ranchers put more
fun and profit into their business.**

Call or Email for a Free Subscription

Take Control

NOW is the time to take control of your life! Time stops for no one! When your life is coming to an end, it won't be the things you *did* that you will regret; it will be the things you *did not do* that you will regret. **STOP** making excuses! Commit to your hopes and dreams — and make them come true. You'll be glad you did!

Biggest and Best

There are 87 bulls to choose from in PCC's AI Sire Directory. This represents the biggest and best selection of low-input, grass-based genetics in the world! In addition to Angus and Red Angus, we have some Polled Hereford, South Poll and Mashona bulls. We also have some Heat-Tolerant Composite bulls and some Tarentaise Composite bulls.

Over 70% of these bulls are Certified Tenet®, which means they have the genetics for superior beef tenderness. Nearly 90% of these bulls are A2/A2. Better milk produces better calves. You won't find bulls like this anywhere else! There are bulls to fit every budget! Call 800-311-0995 to request our 2026 AI Sire Directory.

Cowboy Sayin's 'bout Women

- She soon had 'em walkin' the fence.
- You couldn't stop her with a 40 foot rope and a snubbin' post.
- She had about as much warmth as an icicle.
- She was as soft and fluffy as a goose down pillow.
- She was pretty as a li'l red wagon.
- She wore so much paint you couldn't see her blush.
- She was pretty as a red heifer in a flower bed.
- She was more ornamental than useful.
- She mighta had a short rope but she shore threw a wide loop.

Big-Calf Syndrome

By Kit Pharo

No, this is not an ailment that affects big calves. This is an ailment that affects ranchers who believe they must produce big calves to be profitable. Big calves are not always profitable. In fact, small calves are always more profitable than big calves. I know status quo cow-calf producers will find this hard to believe — but it's true. Allow me to share three reasons for this.

Cost of Production will always have a bigger impact on net profit than calf size. Profit is measured by subtracting your expenses from your income. Therefore, it's possible to significantly increase your profits simply by decreasing your expenses. I know several ranchers who are always very profitable even though their calves are much smaller than their neighbor's calves. Their success comes from their ability to maintain a very low cost of production and break-even point.

Stocking Rate. Some ranchers have small to moderate sized cows that require very little in the way of outside inputs. This allows them to run more cows on the same forage resources than ranchers with large, high-production cows. Because smaller cows will always wean a higher percent of their own body weight, they will always produce significantly more pounds per acre than bigger cows. This may be the easiest way to increase pounds and profit per acre.

Although these ranchers don't have any bragging rights at the local coffee shop, they've proven that 400 to 450-pound calves can be very profitable. In contrast, I've talked to many producers who seem to be doing everything right, but are struggling to break even with 500 to 600-pound calves. What went wrong? Their bigger, high-maintenance cows do not fit their environment. Therefore, they must reduce their stocking rates and/or increase their supplemental feeding.

Price Per Pound. Small calves always sell for more per pound than big calves. Cow-calf producers never receive fair compensation for producing big calves. To add insult to injury, take a look at market reports from your local livestock auction. Most years, it isn't difficult to find examples where 450-pound calves sell for the same price per head as 550-pound calves. In those cases, the extra 100 pounds have absolutely no value!

More total pounds that are worth more per pound seems like a no-brainer! So... why are most cow-calf producers still trying to increase weaning weights? They mistakenly believe they must produce big calves to be profitable. Eventually, however, these high-production producers will realize profit is more important than bragging rights. If they don't, then Big-Calf Syndrome may put them out of business. It doesn't matter how big your calves are if they're not profitable!

Not Getting Paid for Bigger

Every Friday afternoon, I receive a CattleFax Update that tells me what 450, 550 and 650 pound steers averaged that week. The figures below came from the February 6, 2026 CattleFax Update.

<u>Weight</u>	<u>\$/Cwt.</u>	<u>\$/Head</u>
450	\$540	\$2430
550	\$483	\$2656
650	\$423	\$2749

In this situation, the extra 200 pounds on a 650-pound steer calf were only worth \$1.60 per pound — NOT \$4.23 per pound. BIG difference!

Let's assume your farm or ranch is capable of producing 50,000 pounds of calves on an average year. That's equivalent to one truckload of calves. In this case, a truckload of 450-pound calves would be worth a whopping **\$58,500 MORE** than a truckload of 650-pound calves. That's not chump change! You would get paid BIG dividends to produce 50,000 pounds of 450-pound calves — instead of 50,000 pounds of 650-pound calves!



Guaranteed Calving Ease

Over 80% of our bulls can be safely used on heifers. Many will be guaranteed for calving ease. Calving ease is important to us because dead calves have distressingly low weaning weights.

Cold Weather and Birth Weight

For as long as I can remember, observant ranchers have noticed calves will have larger birth weights after a long and cold winter. This observation was confirmed by research conducted by the University of Nebraska in the 1990s.

When a pregnant animal is exposed to cold temperatures, the blood flow is concentrated internally to help maintain the body's core temperature. As a result, the fetus will receive more nutrients during periods of cold weather.

This also explains why birth weights are larger in the northern states than they are in the southern states. If you put cows that are genetically similar in Texas and Montana, birth weights could be as much as 10 to 15 pounds heavier in Montana.

Just the opposite is true for fall calving. The last trimester of pregnancy for fall-calving cows can be very hot. When a cow is hot, she will naturally increase blood flow to the outside of her body to get rid of the excess heat. When that happens, the fetus is essentially starved of nutrients. It's not uncommon for fall-born calves to have birth weights that are 10 to 20 pounds lighter than they would have been in the spring.

Worth The Wait

As you study all the bull sale advertisements and catalogs, you'll notice there will be no shortage of overfat, high-input Diesel Bulls to choose from this spring.

Most of these overfat Diesel Bulls are guaranteed to go backwards when you take them home if you don't continue to feed them a high-energy feedlot ration. Most of these Diesel Bulls have structural problems — level hips, high tailheads, sway backs, bad feet and rectangular-shaped bodies.

Worth the wait... Our spring bull sales will be among the last sales of the season — but we think they will be well worth the wait. Where else can you find bulls that were bred and developed with *your* long-term profits in mind?

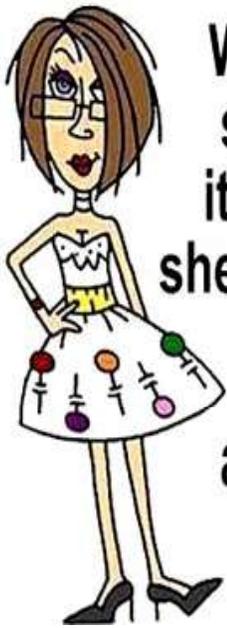
Momma's Boy

If you want to produce hard-working, long-lasting replacement females, you need to be using bulls that were produced by that type of momma cow. Like begets like!

Although most ranchers say they want to produce efficient 1100-pound cows that can wean 50% of their own weight for many years without being pampered, they will usually confess to buying bulls that were produced by high-input, 1400 to 2000-pound cows that must be pampered to stay in production. Guess what? That ain't gonna work!

For 40 years, we have put a tremendous amount of pressure on our cows, requiring them to produce and reproduce with minimum inputs in many different environments. We let the environment sort out the "good ones" while we show no sympathy for open, late or dry cows. Unlike most bull producers, we never make an excuse for a cow and we never give her a second chance.

If you are serious about producing efficient, early-maturing, moderate-sized, easy-fleshing, low-input replacement females, then I suggest you get serious about buying bulls that were produced by the right kind of momma cows. Pharo Cattle Company® has the genetics you need to increase profitability — in good times and in not-so-good times.



When a woman says "What?", it's not because she didn't hear you.

She's giving you a chance to change what you said.

Everyone Looks Smart

All cow-calf producers look smart when 500-pound calves are selling for \$2500 per head. They can do many things wrong and still be profitable. I wonder how many cow-calf producers are going to look smart when the cattle market crashes? I'm afraid the smart ones will be in the minority by a large margin.

The smart ones will be those who have a very low cost of production. Many PCC® customers, for example, have a cost of production that is half what the national average is. They are extremely profitable now! They will continue to be profitable when their calves are worth half what they are worth today. Are you prepared for lower calf prices?

The Biggest Bang

Bull sales around the country are averaging more than ever before. That shouldn't surprise us because calf prices are also higher than ever before. Believe it or not, calf prices are up a whopping **250%** since 2020. Wow! Fortunately for you, PCC® bull prices are only up 85% in the same time period.

When I look at the inconceivable prices some of these bull sales are averaging, I have to wonder why anyone would pay so much for an overfat, high-input bull that is guaranteed to melt and fall apart when you take him home. Now, more than ever before, you need to invest wisely and make sure you get the Biggest Bang for every Buck in your bull-buying budget.

Consider this... The status quo beef industry recommends you keep the number of cows and/or heifers you turn out with a bull equal to the bull's age in months. An 18-month-old status quo bull, for example, should be put with no more than 18 cows. No matter how old a bull is, the status quo industry recommends you never go over 25 to 30 cows per bull.

In contrast, Pharo Cattle Company® suggests you **double** the status quo recommendations. We are not afraid to put a low-input PCC® yearling bull with 25 to 30 cows. An 18-month-old PCC bull can successfully cover 35 to 40 cows. Although we don't recommend it, we know several PCC customers who are successfully running mature PCC bulls with 60 to 80 cows.

With PCC Solar Bulls, you will only need half as many bulls as you used to need. That quickly gives you **Double the Bang** for every buck in your bull buying budget. If you would like to get the Biggest Bang for every Buck you spend on bulls, call us at **800-311-0995** to request a catalog. We will have a great selection of Angus, Red Angus, Polled Hereford and Heat-Tolerant bulls to choose from.

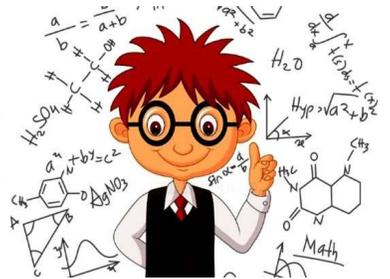
No Excuses

When we combined our Stay-At-Home options with our Bull Delivery Service, we eliminated nearly all of the excuses people had for not owning a no-nonsense PCC® Solar Bull.

It's not uncommon for over 50% of our bulls to be purchased by people who do not attend the sale. That says a lot about the trust and confidence our customers have in us.

We will be delivering bulls from coast to coast and from border to border. We will also have two delivery points in Canada.

Request a catalog — and let us help you sort for bulls that best fit your needs and budget.



PHARO CATTLE CO.

44017 County Road Z
CHEYENNE WELLS, CO 80810

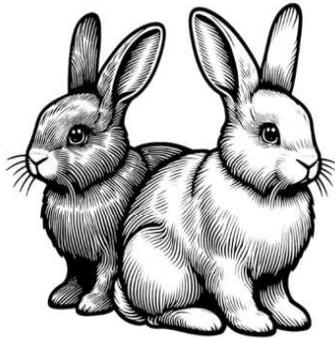
PHONE 800-311-0995

EMAIL Kit@PharoCattle.com
Tyson@PharoCattle.com

WEBSITE PharoCattle.com

◆ ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED ◆

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 28
Grand Island, NE



Cowboy Logic: "If you try to chase two rabbits, both will get away."

PHARO CATTLE COMPANY®

**Efficient, Easy-Fleshing,
Moderate-Sized, Low-Input,
Grass-Based Genetics
— with Calving Ease —**



*Call or Email to receive a catalog
for our three Spring Bull Sales
and/or an AI Sire Directory*

800-311-0995

Bulls@PharoCattle.com

