

Welcome to [ASK] - Always Seeking Knowledge!
ASK #22 - The Value of One Breeding Season for Cows: April 28, 2006
Written and Published by Bruce Ward, Holistic Results Pty. Limited

In this issue you will find:

1. Quick [ASK]
2. Welcome
3. The Value of One Breeding Season for Cows
4. Training and Support
5. Notices
6. Books and materials you can use
7. Quotes that mean something
8. Joke

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1. Quick [ASK]

People that persist with long, or late, or early, or double, breeding seasons ignore these nutritional facts. The only justification for their actions is another factor - such as marketing, being more important. This is very, very rare.

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2. Welcome

There is a new group that I urge you to investigate, called the Carbon Coalition. It is supported by practitioners Michael and Louisa Kiely (formerly the owners of Boomerang Marketing, and now fine wool producers in central-western NSW); and by Dr Christine Jones, Rick Maurice, of Wellington NSW, Col Seiss, Darryl Cluff and Bruce Maynard. The coalition is fighting hard both nationally and internationally to have the financial benefits of carbon sequestered within rangelands and cropping lands recognised, and for rangeland carbon credits to be a tradeable item within a very short time. You can visit the blogsite where you will see a fascinating article by Dr Christine Jones, and much more as well.

Here is the big thing - the Carbon Coalition wishes to make an impact upon politicians, and is urgently wanting to give them evidence of strong farmer support - so please register your support with them urgently - at, so that politicians may be made both aware of - and reminded - that the changes that can be made are tangible and potentially lucrative for farm incomes. How lucrative? Well, potentially \$1,000,000 per 100 ha - so long as the increase in soil carbon is maintained over time. As Michael Kiely observes, "Even at a tenth of this theoretical maximum (\$1.0m per 100 ha), the motivation to change management practices will inspire many traditional farmers."

If you subscribe to Holistic Management International's "In Practice" newsletter, you will have just read in the current issue the article about Michael and Anna Coughlan. Their story is sensational, in my view. So much change being done with so little apparent physical human effort. Mind you the cows are working hard, and producing fabulously. If you are not subscribing to In Practice you can begin today by clicking through to (HMI was formerly the Savory Centre for Holistic Management).

The current issue also has an excellent article on dairy farms that are making dramatic changes. All in all, great stuff, and for US\$35 per year, just about the best value you can buy.

There is a fascinating Table within Dr Tim Flannery's latest book, "The Weather Makers". The Table shows that during the last 50 years, average annual rainfall in Australia has declined in some places by up to 250mm per year, whilst other regions have seen an increase in the same magnitude. Interestingly, one of the worst effected areas is around Canberra and Goulburn - and that decline is clearly and visibly reflected in the declining landscape of that region. As I write this newsletter, the town of Goulburn is almost without water. If you reckon you are getting drier, you probably are!! You may also have been reading the very lively discussion on the HMI 'General List' discussing the causes and effects of this sort of change.

To begin accessing this discussion, join the free electronic conference by sending an empty email (no subject or message) to: general-subscribe@lists.holisticmanagement.org

You may not have been aware of it, but on April 5 and 6 there was an outstanding conference in Dubbo, NSW, called 'Many Paths'. The focus was farm business succession planning. Apart from outstanding speakers, a highlight was an interactive three act play. The cast became facilitators during the conference, and the final act was based on audience participation through the conference. You can learn more by going to.

If succession planning is important to you, please give me a call on 02 9929 5568. I will introduce you to the most appropriate people for your task.

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3. The Value of One Breeding Season for Cows

*Note: This article was written by Dr Peter Ardington and published in the Southern Africa Holistic Management Newsletter, April 2006. It is reprinted with permission.
Dr Ardington writes ...*

I would like to endorse and add to the article by Sheldon Barnes (Southern African Holistic Management® newsletter March 2006) on breeding seasons because I have consistently advised this with productivity success for 30 years. During these 30 years the nutrient requirements of beef cattle have been more and more accurately determined and justify the right breeding season even more.

The following facts pertain:

1. A beef cow's energy, protein and mineral requirements go up enormously during the month after calving, peaking at about 50 days, when the calf will drink up to 7 litres of milk if it is there.
2. The young calf will convert milk and grass to beef more efficiently than at any other time of its life.
3. Only in spring and early summer (in summer rainfall areas) can the grass provide or exceed the lactating cow requirements and provide really great quality for the young growing calf. The difference in quality between seasons is considerable, even in sweetveld areas.
4. Cows can store energy (fat) for future milk production but have very limited protein storage. This means that they can "milk off their backs" with respect to energy but will do so inefficiently because the protein is not there for milk production.

Conclusions:

1. The best time to calve is a month before the spring flush of new grass, judged according to rainfall and temperature records. It is best for milk production, best for cycling and rebreeding and best for maximum calf growth. It follows that a shorter breeding season that crowds the calving around the best time is even better. Simply put, you are milking and growing beef when you have the right food for these goals.

2. A calf born very early will grow very well through that subsequent summer, but at great and inefficient cost to cow condition. The alternatives are thin cows that do not breed back or high supplementary feed costs - both bad alternatives.
3. A calf born too late has the result of a cow converting high protein grass to fat while she is still pregnant. This is inefficient and stresses the cow with converting the dietary protein to fat instead of to milk. The calf misses the best grass of the year and the best milk of the year, a double disadvantage.

People that persist with long, or late, or early, or double, breeding seasons ignore these nutritional facts. The only justification for their actions is another factor - such as marketing, being more important. This is very, very rare.

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4. Training and Support

As mentioned in [ASK] 21, we are in the process of creating an entirely new approach to both our training and our support. The model to be used is already successful in a range of industries overseas, and I am staggered at how well it fits in an agricultural situation.

- There is a new new web-site under development, and I will shortly announce its URL.
- Much of our material will be on the site in a readily accessible form.
- Much of this will be free.
- The written material will be augmented by a wide ranging variety of audio and video material.

In addition, we will soon be offering an entirely new suite of 'support' services. Briefly, we will be providing an attractive range, including:

- Phone access options
- Email services
- Monthly telebridges
- Quarterly personal meetings

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5. Notices

Managing the Carbon Cycle Forums

Christine Jones is again producing three Managing the Carbon Cycle Forums this year:

- Horsham, VIC on July 26/27
- Kojonup, WA on August 2/3
- Kingaroy, QLD on October 25/26

These will be similar to the Armidale, NSW Forum held last year, and given the creation of the Carbon Coalition since then, they should be well received. For details go to <http://www.amazingcarbon.com>

KLR Marketing

Grahame Rees - KLR Marketing, advises there are still some spots available at their next course at Orange - May 9th and 10th. That's not far away!

If you have not yet been to the KLR program, grab the chance. Attendees at the recent groups we promoted - in Perth, Orange and Alexandra - learnt heaps. To register, go to <http://www.klrmktng.com.au/>

"Best of the Rockies" Tour

This is short notice, but if you feel like breaking out, then dust off your passport and join the 'Best of the Rockies' tour, between 21-31 May 2006.

This is a specialist Holistic Management Ranch Tour led by Jim and Daniela Howell. There are two vacancies left. Join other Australians already booked, and see Colorado and Wyoming in all their glory. For details visit <http://www.scranchtours.com> Highlights include visits to the world famous Lasseter Ranch, home of the Beefmaster breed; to Duke Phillip's Chico Basin Ranch, the James family's ranch, plus time at the Howell's impressive Cerro and The Blue properties, where the Howell's are producing incredible hand crafted fabrics using fibres from rare breeds of animals. You will also visit the home of Tony and Andrea Malburg, and visit Yellowstone National Park.

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6. Books and Materials you can use

"Hurricane Tim" by Neville Peat
ISBN 1 877361 17 8

Sir Tim Wallis, like Sir Edmund Hillary, is something of a living legend in New Zealand. And he deserves to be. The young Tim Wallis grew up in the south of the South island. His family were involved in the timber industry, and young Tim learnt early about work, and about initiative. He also realised that New Zealand was suffering an entirely man-made feral animal crisis - wild deer who had been deliberately released into the rugged southern terrain. Tim Wallis began hunting these deer, and pioneered the use of aircraft and rough bush strips to gather up the carcasses, which he processed and exported to Europe.

The big breakthrough came when he purchased his first helicopter. This allowed him to massively increase his throughput. An inspired piece of thinking led him to purchase two ships which he converted to serve as mobile chilling rooms. This meant that the helicopters could work in otherwise inaccessible regions such as Fiordland, using the ships as mother-ships for the helicopters and as accommodation for his staff. When the ship was full of carcasses, it would head to a port, transfer its cargo, and soon return.

This highly effective culling of deer came to an end when their populations were reduced to uneconomic levels. At this point deer gained a new, much higher economic value if they were captured alive. Tim Wallis developed innovative ways to capture and transport live deer to farms by helicopter, where they became the basis of the modern NZ farmed deer industry.

All of this was achieved under tremendous odds. Only three weeks after acquiring his first helicopter he destroyed it in a crash. Tim survived with a broken back and spent months recovering in hospital in Christchurch. His company was at immediate financial risk, and two things helped him through. Firstly, like Sir Sydney Kidman, he developed communications so he could know what was going on. In the case of Tim Wallis, against tremendous authoritarian opposition, he created a communications centre in his hospital room, which was bristling with radios and telephones. Secondly, he appointed a powerful accountant who could manage him, and his business affairs. He concedes this was critical for his business development.

As his success grew, Tim Wallis began collecting wartime aircraft - Spitfires and Mustangs, Kittyhawks, Corsairs, and Harvards and many, many more. In recent years he has added many Chinese and Russian aircraft. Twenty years ago he ran the first of the internationally famous 'Warbirds over Wanaka' airshows, that attracts about one hundred and twenty thousand visitors over two days, every second year. His great love was his Spitfire's. In 1996 he crashed the most powerful of all Spitfires whilst taking off, and has been wheelchair bound since then.

Sir Tim Wallis is and has been a tough, visionary and influential Kiwi man, who developed an international business. This biography is beautifully written. I paid NZ\$39.95 for this inspirational, easy to read book.

By the way:

Most books we recommend are available at The Book Connection in Dubbo, NSW
Ph: 02 6882 3311 Fax: 02 6882 3311 or email orders@bookconnection.com.au
(Also ask David Pankhurst about their Mail Order Catalogue - it is terrific)

or

Scorpio Books in Christchurch, NZ

Ph: 03 379 2882 Fax: 03 379 2886 or email scorpbk@ihug.co.nz

Next book to read

I am looking forward to shortly starting on Patrice Newell's just released book, "Ten Thousand Acres - a love story". It is the most exquisitely produced book comprising photos, drawings and text about her property, Elmswood, at Scone, NSW. It is clearly a work of art and love.

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7. Quotes that mean something

"The best advisers, helpers and friends, always are not those who tell us how to act in special cases, but who give us, out of themselves, the ardent spirit and desire to act right, and leave us then, even through many blunders, to find out what our own form of right action is."

--Phillip Brooke

"One of the greatest discoveries a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn't do."

--Henry Ford

"An optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity; A pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity."

--Winston Churchill

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8. Joke

One of Microsoft Network's finest support techs was drafted into the Army and sent to boot camp.

At the rifle range, he was given some instructions, handed a rifle, and a couple rounds of ammo. He loaded the rifle and fired several shots at the target which was fifty yards away. The report came from the target area that all of his attempts had completely missed the target.

The tech looked at his rifle, and then at the target. He looked at the rifle again, and then once more at the target. He placed his finger over the end of the rifle barrel and squeezed the trigger with his other hand.

The end of his finger was blown off -- whereupon he yelled toward the target area...

"It's leaving here just fine; the trouble must be at your end!"

Friday, April 28, 2006

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Regards, and keep well
Bruce Ward