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Cattle Chat: Tips for breeding success

K-State experts share advice on how to use artificial insemination effectively in the herd

By Lisa Moser, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Founding Father and inventor Benjamin Franklin once said, “By failing to plan, you are preparing to fail.” In the cattle business, that sentiment rings true when it comes to executing an artificial insemination breeding strategy, said the experts at the Kansas State University Beef Cattle Institute.

Speaking on a recent [Cattle Chat](#) podcast, K-State veterinarian Brad White said it is important to make a schedule when considering using AI to breed cows.

“There are several time-sensitive steps to making an AI breeding protocol work, so it is important to go into this with a plan,” White said.

For some, the first step in that plan will be to attend an AI training, said K-State veterinarian Brian Lubbers.

“Training is really important, especially if you are new to AI, but even if you’ve been doing it a long time, attending a refresher course is a good idea,” Lubbers said.

In that training, the instructors will discuss synchronization protocols, appropriate drug use and ways to inject the drugs into the animals following the beef quality assurance best practices, Lubbers said. He also stressed that producers need to fully read the product labels as part of their preparation plan.

“Reproductive drugs cannot be used in an extra label manner because the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) considers them to have a production purpose and not a therapeutic purpose, so you need to read the labels closely to understand how to administer the products and what the withdrawal times are,” Lubbers said.

Another aspect of the training that is important is understanding animal handling, K-State veterinarian Bob Larson said.

“For AI to be successful, you need to have the right technician managing the process,” Larson said, adding that cattle also should be moved through the chutes easily and calmly when placing the semen.

Along with the protocols, it is important to have cows in the correct body condition for breeding, K-State nutritionist Phillip Lancaster said.

“AI protocols often start before the green grass shows up in the pastures, so it is important that the cows maintain their body condition through calving and the months of peak lactation,” Lancaster said. “Producers may need to supplement the cows so that they are on a good plane of nutrition leading up to the breeding season.”

To hear the full discussion, listen to [Cattle Chat](#) on your preferred streaming platform.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Beef Cattle Institute Cattle Chat podcast, <https://ksre-learn.com/3TKiLtt>

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