

# Rich County Extension

## Using the Second Trimester as a Management Tool

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It is common to hear producers and industry specialists talk about the three gestational trimesters of cattle. However, there are four periods in a cow's biological cycle to consider. Of course, we have first trimester, second trimester, and third trimester. We also have the "fourth" trimester, also known as the post-partum period. All these periods are important, in their own right, when it comes to performance of the cow itself and calf growth and development.

I will briefly give a crash course on nutritional requirements during the four biological periods for cows. In the first trimester, a cow has nutritional requirements for maintenance and lactation. During this time little nutrients are required to maintain pregnancy. However, the cow is usually suckling a calf during the first trimester, and milk takes energy. In the second trimester, the cow usually stops lactation because her calf has been weaned. Nutritional requirements are the lowest during this period. Through the third trimester, there is rapid fetal growth which means nutritional requirements are increasing.

The most critical nutrition period is the post-partum period because nutritional requirements are 50% higher than other biological periods. This period is crucial because it affects the outcomes of next year's calf crop.

This time of year, cattle are in the second trimester of gestation. Like I mentioned earlier, this is a period where nutrient requirements are at their lowest for a cow in production. This offers some management benefits to producers. This is a time where extra supplementation isn't necessary to maintain cattle at their current body condition score. On the flipside if you have a cow that came home thin, and she needs to increase a BCS or a few, this is the best time to do so.

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## Using the Second Trimester as a Management Tool: Cont.

Since nutritional requirements are at their lowest, offering supplemental feed during this time will work effectively at increasing BCS. However, this is not the time to decrease the plane of nutrition so much that it affects the performance of the unborn calf. During the second trimester of pregnancy, the unborn calf is developing muscle. We all know that more muscle equals more pounds across the scale.

The second trimester of gestation for cows offers producers with different management decisions. As always, it is helpful to know the condition of cattle so you can make the best management decisions that best fits your herd.

If you have questions, please contact me!  
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# Upcoming and Past Events

## Winter Workshops

January 10, 2023 - Beef and Forage School

February - Ranch Succession Training

March - Managing Nutrition to Reduce Costs



UTAH 4-H JUNIOR LIVESTOCK

COMMERCIAL CATTLE PROJECT

## Commercial Cattle Project Workshop

October 3, 2022

This new program will debut at the 2023 Rich County Fair!!

Look for the recording of the meeting in next month's issue.

for more visit: <https://extension.usu.edu/rich/>