

# Don't Forget About Mom

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03/04/2025

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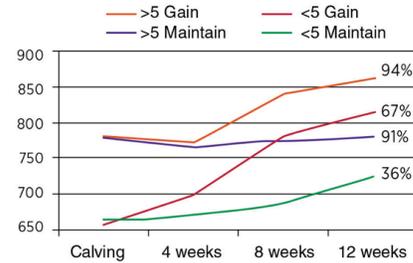
## Don't Forget About Mom



The 2025 cattle inventory report wasn't a big surprise with the beef cow numbers down to 27.9 million head. That is the smallest herd since 1951. Beef replacement heifers represent the lowest number since 1950, down 1.7% from 2024! Beef production amounted to 8.1 billion pounds in 1951. Amazingly, 2025 beef production estimates are 25.9 billion pounds! That is a success story very few people know and credit goes to greatest beef producers in the world!

Coming back to the ranch, many of you are in the midst of calving out, and cussing out, first-calf heifers. The cattle inventory report shines a little light on just how valuable those young, first-time mothers really are. Keeping those heifers in the herd has never been more critical than it is today.

Monitoring body condition is not a new concept but sometimes the frantic pace of ranch life in the early spring can prove to be a distraction. However, body condition score (BCS) at calving has been shown to be the greatest indicator of reproductive success. This is especially true for first-calf heifers. A study conducted at Oklahoma State University clearly demonstrates the importance of keeping heifers in good condition prior to and after calving.



Heifers that calved in BCS 5 or greater bred at a much higher rate than thinner heifers. Even if they were fed to improve their condition, thinner heifers bred at a lower rate than BCS 5 heifers that were fed to maintain weight (67% vs 91%).

The message is clear. Get and keep your heifers in BCS 5 or greater to maximize their opportunity to breed back. In a day when heifers are worth \$3,000 each and her calf will easily bring back over \$1,600, you can't afford to drop the ball now.

There are a few things you can do to make life easier on your heifers. First, feed them separately from your older cows if possible. They need higher quality feed and often don't compete well with older cows. Secondly, now is the time to use your best quality forage. Have the forage tested and supplement with protein if needed. Protein can be provided in the form of commercial supplements or good quality alfalfa. When you have the energy and protein bases covered, a good quality mineral can fill in the gaps. Trace mineral blocks have their place but a loose mineral will provide a greater quantity and quality of minerals and vitamins needed between calving and breeding. Check out the USU Beef Extension website for more information on body condition scoring. The link is [extension.usu.edu/beef/research](https://extension.usu.edu/beef/research) then click on The Importance of Monitoring Beef Cattle Body Condition.

Best of luck this spring!

Please feel free to reach out anytime.

## Contact

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