

Many people may associate the term “ultrasound technology” with human medicine techniques such as pregnancy exams or tumor detection. Although this is certainly where ultrasound technology is most used, it is also readily used in the beef cattle industry for pregnancy detection, carcass evaluation, and fetal sexing. This week we want to discuss some of the key benefits of fetal sexing in your pregnant cattle, and how it can add value to your operation.

Fetal sexing by ultrasound is performed by simply using an ultrasound machine to determine the gender of the fetus of the pregnant animal. In cattle, fetal sexing is most accurate when the fetus is between 55-70 days of gestation. If the fetus is any younger, it will not be developed enough to determine gender. Conversely, if it is older than 70 days, the primary indicators of gender identification are not as easily recognizable, thus making a diagnosis more difficult.

This technique is popular in many registered herds, but is becoming even more popular as commercial producers realize the value that it can add to their operations. Fetal sexing can be used to make marketing, culling, and other management decisions concerning your cattle. That is, with fetal sexing, a producer is able to take the information he learns, and then make a decision accordingly. For example, producers that are looking to build their cowherd can efficiently do so by purchasing females that are pregnant with heifer calves. In some cases, producers may have females that are aged and potential culls. If you have an operation where a specific gender is preferred, fetal sexing can help guide the producer in deciding to go ahead and cull those aged females that are not pregnant with a fetus that will help achieve the herd goals. And, if you know the gender of the calf before it is born, you may have a better idea of whether or not the female will need assistance with calving, as bull calves are typically larger, and create more dystocia than heifer calves.

The buyer who knows more about the product he is purchasing will usually feel more secure about his decision to purchase. This is true of fetal sexing in cattle as well. Fetal sexing is a tool that can help you prepare for the future, make management decisions that will benefit your operation, and provide your customers with information that will make them want to purchase your product. If you have any bred cattle that you would like to be checked for fetal sexing, please contact us.

Thanks,
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