**Summary**
*Determining potential pregnancy status differences based on a new method of yearling heifer pre-breeding examination*

Replacement heifer management has a large influence on the reproductive success of beef herds. Overall herd productivity increases when a high percentage of heifers become pregnant early in the first breeding season.

The onset of puberty is primarily influenced by age and weight within breed.

* Examination of yearling heifers prior to breeding can provide information on the current pubertal status of the group and allow better predictions regarding success of the breeding season. Data used in the evaluation of breeding soundness of replacement heifers include body weight, days of age, reproductive tract maturity, and potentially, pelvic area.
* Potential replacement heifers should undergo a thorough physical examination including determination of body weight and palpation of the reproductive tract.
	+ Palpation of the reproductive tract to determine the presence of a corpus luteum (CL) or large follicles on the ovaries and to estimate the size of the uterus is done in order to determine if a heifer is cycling.
* The Kansas State University replacement heifer evaluation system combines several of these assessments into a single 3-point classification system (R, I, & P) to facilitate communication between the veterinarian and producer concerning heifer breeding management.
	+ **Ready** – adequate weight and body condition, no structural flaws that impede fertility or longevity, and palpable CL or large follicle with good uterine tone consistent with normal estrous cycles, and a normally-shaped pelvis with an adequate.
	+ **Intermediate** – adequate weight and body condition, no structural flaws that impede fertility or longevity, some uterine tone and small palpable follicles, but may not be cycling at the start of the breeding season
	+ **Problem** – heifers that are not adequately heavy or with frame size that does not meet herd goals, structural flaws that impede fertility or longevity, very immature reproductive tracts, ovarian abnormalities, eye lesions that impede vision, heifers with an abnormally shaped pelvis, freemartins, and in most situations, pregnant heifers.

These classifications are interpreted as:

**Ready** – these heifers are ready to breed by AI or bull-exposure.

**Intermediate** – these heifers are expected to have good reproductive success to a 30- to 60-day exposure to bulls, but may have only moderate success to an AI mating at the start of the breeding season. Whether or not to expose Intermediate heifers to AI breeding, bull-exposure only, or to manage them as stocker heifers will be based on the length of time between pre-breeding evaluation and the start of the breeding season, and other herd-specific management and marketing goals and options.

**Problem** – these heifers are not ideal candidates for replacement heifers.