

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

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### *Importance of Bull Soundness Exam*

Burning is done, the rain has come, and the grass is green and looking good. It's a busy time of year between working cows and calves, and getting them ready for pasture season. While the cattlemen's to-do list seems never ending this time of year, there are a few "to-do's" that can have a huge impact on your bottom line.

Are your bulls ready for the upcoming breeding season? If you don't know the answer to that question, that needs to be put towards the top of your "to-do" list. Producers can contact their local veterinarian and schedule a breeding soundness exam, which can test for the overall fitness of the bull.

This year is a bit different than recent years, as we have actually had a real Kansas winter. We need to make sure our bulls are fit coming into the breeding season. We have to remember that even though we've checked fertility on these bulls the last several years, things can happen. These semen checks are a glimpse at whether they're viable today. Extension Veterinarian Dr. A.J. Tarphoff suggests that producers have a breeding soundness exam done on their bulls at least 30 to 60 days before the breeding season, based on when they expect to calve and market those animals. If the veterinarian has concerns with a given bull, there is still time for it to possibly recover and be re-tested. The exam should include a physical exam as well as a look at the bull's body condition. Bulls can actually lose two body condition scores during the breeding season. So we want to make sure that we have adequate fat cover going into the breeding season to make sure they have the energy stores for their work ahead. The exam also is an opportunity to test for certain diseases, such as trichomoniasis, bovine viral diarrhea virus, anaplasmosis and others. This is the insurance for the cow-calf operation, insurance for reproduction, insurance for fertility. These are all very important aspects for the cow-calf producer's bottom line.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Lindsay Shorter, at [lindsayshorter@ksu.edu](mailto:lindsayshorter@ksu.edu), or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.