

**MARTY MORGAN, WISE COUNTY AG AGENT
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
SERVICE-**

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AGRILIFE
EXTENSION**

Weaning Time=Pay Day!

Well every day its getting closer to Pay Day! Weaning our spring born calves in October is something I always look forward too. Some folks may wean in September trying to beat the usual dip in prices or early weaning those heifer calves or sometimes just out of grass. Some are behind and wean in November, I guess its whatever suits your fancy and your pocket book. Most of us work hard all year to get to this point, from calving in the mud and snow to getting through the summer heat, flies and everything in between. We put a lot of effort in keeping our calves healthy and on a good plane of nutrition to put on as much weight on them as possible. You know, the more they weigh the more they pay! We should be using good genetics and EPD's to maximize growth and make calves that will hang good, as far as a grade and yield. We should be on a good vaccination and health program to avoid sickness that not only cost us getting them ready to market, but also may cost the next guy that buys them. If he buys your calves and has no trouble with sickness he will remember that the next time you go to sell them, and he will dang sure want them again, and be willing to pay a little more for them, if he must. We should season our bulls to tighten them up for a more uniform calf crop, and paint them the same color, that way your calves can be his uniform lot and he won't have to put them together with other like calves to make a load. Let that truck load of good calves have your name on it. It only takes 80-600 lb calves to make a load, so all you need is 95 cows with a 84% calving rate. It's called building a reputation for good cattle. If you don't have the calves to make a truck load, its ok, hopefully your bulls got over in your neighbors pasture during breeding season and stuck some good genetics on his cows and painted his calves the same color as yours. Now if you can just get him to market them the same time and place as you do, everything will be ok! LOL! Seriously, we sure don't want to mess it up at weaning and when and how we market them. Have a plan and be ready to implement, and adjust when necessary. Usually value-added programs are going to get you the most money for your calves, but what does it cost you to get there? And how long can you hold them? Also how and where you market them along with how they handle them will also determine your profit realized. Shrink IS a BIG deal! Research it, put the pencil to it, and don't leave any money on the table. It really chaps me for someone other than myself to reap any rewards off of my bad management decisions. So you have some decisions to make depending on number of head you are marketing-sell them straight off the cow, background for 45 days in a value-added program, sell on online video value-added market. Do I sell local(saves trucking), a market closer to the feedlots(adds trucking expense, but increases calf price). Or Online Video(2% shrink, 10 cent slide, no trucking expense)? If your selling good quality, uniform calves, with good genetics, with all the shots, they will ring the bell wherever you decide to market them. Remember pay attention to reduce shrink, its a real killer! After-all, You're the Boss!!!