

## CARE OF YEARLING BULLS

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You have just made one of the most important investments in your cattle operation by purchasing a yearling bull . Yearling bulls are typically 12 to 15 months of age and weigh at least 1100 lbs. The yearling bull you may have just purchased has probably been developed on about 20 lbs of a commodity based ration the last 100 days or so but has probably also had free-choice grass to eat having been developed in a pasture of Bermuda and Fescue . Most producers have probably had a semen test on this bull also , if not , insist that one is done before making a final purchase . Regardless a yearling bull should be monitored closely in his first breeding season . Making sure this bull will actually mount and then service a cow is very important and requires you to monitor the bull closely during the first 30 days of your breeding season . Keeping a calendar in your farm truck and recording breeding dates and then checking to see if this cow returns to heat 18 to 21 days later is a recommended way to do this .

Yearling bulls should never be bred to more than 15 – 20 cows in their first breeding season and this should be done in a small pasture if possible . In addition feeding the bull 10 to 15 lbs of grain daily plus good pasture or hay will allow the bull to continue to gain weight during the breeding season . Once the bull reaches two years of age he should be able to service 30 to 40 cows in a 90 day breeding season . Bulls should never get overly fat but also cannot produce semen and breed cows if they get extremely thin . An old saying in the cattle business is “the eye of the master fattens his cattle” and this definitely applies to bull management .

A good practice on any farm is to maintain a bull pasture where bulls can be kept when they are not in use . Hopefully a controlled breeding season is practiced so you will need about 1 to 2 acres per bull in your bull pasture so adequate grass is available year round . Bulls should be vaccinated yearly for reproductive diseases . Consult your local veterinarian for vaccinations needed in your area . Remember to also control internal and external parasites . Parasites will keep your bull from maintaining a good body condition and also keeps the bull uncomfortable .

In summary , your yearling bull needs plenty of TLC ( tender loving care ) his first breeding season so he will continue to grow both physically and sexually until he is a solid two year old . When a bull matures he simply needs good pasture to maintain a good body condition . Don't forget that when properly cared for your bull should weigh 1800 lbs or more at maturity and this amounts to more salvage value that will help offset the purchase price of a new bull you may purchase later . So .... Take care of your new investment !!