

A Surprise Summer Calf

A black heifer produced a beautiful black calf today.
It is a bull calf, but we will change it to a steer later today.
That minor procedure is best done soon.
I bought the heifer several months ago.
She was not supposed to be pregnant.
I buy about one hundred yearling heifers and young cows each year.

We raise
and fatten
them in our
pastures.
I seldom



intentionally buy a pregnant heifer or cow.
Nevertheless, several calves are born here each summer.
Unplanned pregnancies happen to cattle too.
Maybe the previous owner was careless and let bull calves and heifer calves mingle.
Cattle can be fertile as young as six months of age.
Maybe he had poor fences.
But no matter how it happens, a small percentage of the heifers I buy as "open" are pregnant.
I have every animal checked by a veterinarian and vaccinated before I bring them home.
Not all of them are pregnancy tested, however.
I could have them all tested, but that test is somewhat traumatic for the animals and generally unnecessary.
A heifer becomes a cow when she produces a calf.
The new calf is relatively large, robustly healthy, and probably a full-blooded Black Angus.
He has won the lottery.
The calf will live here for about two years.
The cow comes out all right on this too.
I planned to harvest her early in the Fall, but now I will keep her to nurse her calf until winter.
From a business perspective, unplanned pregnancies are not a positive thing.
The hormones associated with pregnancy accelerate physiological aging.
A three-year-old heifer is likely to be physiologically younger than a two-year-old cow.
The per pound value of a cow is less than that of a heifer.
Additionally, the cow will probably be relatively thin after several months of nursing a fast-growing calf.
All that aside, it is always a joy to see new life and baby animals.
I called Gail to tell her about the new calf as soon as I saw it.
The cow and calf will have an excellent summer and fall.
Best regards. Tom