



## **Is Early Weaning an Option to Increase Calf Production in Sonora, Mexico? - Ranchers Perceptions**

Fernando A. Ibarra, Fernanda L. Leon, Martha H. Martin, Francisco G. Denogean, Salomon Moreno and Cyrene Y. Moreno; Universidad de Sonora, Santa Ana; Contact Author Email: [fibarra@hmo.megared.net.mx](mailto:fibarra@hmo.megared.net.mx)

Ranchers in northern Mexico have been experiencing low calf production efficiency. National statistics show that actual calf crop is low and has varied from 50 to 60% in the last 25 years. Early weaning (EW) is a practice capable of increasing calf crop production; however we believe few ranchers know about it and have applied this technology. This study was conducted to determine the actual calf crop percentages and the extent to which this technology is known and practiced in ranches of Sonora. We randomly applied 542 surveys to ranchers at 72 municipalities within the state of Sonora during the spring of 2007. Surveys were conducted in coordination with the Cattleman Union and State and Federal Governments. Results show that actual calf crop averages 60%: with 1% of ranchers having <20%; 5% from 21 to 40%; 57% from 41 to 60%; 30% from 61 to 80% and 7% from 81 to 100%. Although only 22% of ranchers know and had used EW, only 12% of them are currently applying it. From these, 98% have applied EW as an emergency tool to save calves during droughts, but few use it as a frequent practice on the ranch. They request newer and more practical information to increase calf crop. Most ranchers believe EW adoption will increase calf production. An efficient coordination among institutions is needed to apply demonstration programs and technology transfer by using these and other practices to increase calf crop percentages and rancher income.

2009. 62nd Society for Range Management Annual Meeting. Paper No. 2000-11.