

FALL CATTLE HEALTH REMINDERS

Fall is here, the days are shorter and the list of things to get done is longer. Sometimes, there are multiple lists, or even a list of lists. Suffice it to say there is plenty to do and not much time. This time of the year as we try to get all the cattle worked through the chute, I thought it might be good to review a few cattle health considerations that are always important.

Pregnancy Check. For the cow herd this an important check on current progress and can be the first sign of any problems that might have occurred. This is a check on the bulls as well as the cows. For spring-calving herds, open cows can be culled at this time. The price of cows has been pretty good recently so it may be a good time to sell open cows or late-calving cows. For thin, open cows you may want to add a little weight on cheap feed before selling them. If the pregnancy rate is less than 90%, consider checking the bulls for Trichomonosis. When Trich gets into a herd the first year, the pregnancy rates often falls to less than 90% and the next year may plummet to 70% or less. When your veterinarian checks the cows for pregnancy, get a general assessment of health. If the cow is in marginal condition, this may be the time to start planning for her eventual exit from your herd.

Bull Examinations. For fall-calving herds, examine the bulls BEFORE they go out with the herds. This includes a breeding soundness exam and a Trich test. This is the time to prevent these types of losses. Dominant bulls that are sterile will really decrease pregnancy rates and move your calving season back. Vaccinate and deworm these bulls before they go out with the cows. The bulls can receive 2 doses of a "vibriosis" bacterin at 2-3 times the dose given to the cows. This is an effective way to prevent Vibriosis in the herd. If you have bought new bulls, be sure they were vaccinated against Anaplasmosis or do it at this time. Adult bulls should receive 2 doses of the killed anaplasmosis vaccine available from the California Woolgrowers. Vaccinate the bulls as you would for the cow herd (Clostridial vaccines, virus vaccines, etc.).

Vaccinations. In the cow herd, the minimum should include (1) a Clostridial vaccine (usually an 8 way) that includes Redwater protection (*Clostridium hemolyticum*) as the most important component (2) vibriosis vaccine for cows that are going to be turned out with the bulls, (3) Leptospirosis vaccine for cows 3 to 8 months pregnant, and (4) a virus vaccine booster (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV). For open cows the modified live vaccines are safe and for pregnant cows the killed virus vaccines are safe. Additionally, there are some new modified live virus vaccines that are safe for pregnant cows **IF** the cow herd has been vaccinated appropriately in the past. We need to remember that the modified live IBR vaccines can cause abortions if the pregnant cows have not been well vaccinated in the past. For pregnant cows that are going to calve within 30 to 90 days it is wise to use a Rota virus, Corona virus, K99 combination vaccine to help prevent scours in calves. In herds that have had Trichomonosis in the past, this may be a good time to vaccinate the cow herd with the Trich vaccine. But before you go to all the work and expense of working the cows through the chute, talk over your vaccination program with

your veterinarian. Also, take good care of the vaccines when handling them. Keep live vaccines out of the sun. Keep all vaccines on ice and prevent them from freezing on cold mornings.

Parasite Control. This is an excellent time of the year to deworm cattle. They are often going on to clean pastures or range. So kill the parasites, stop the parasites from laying eggs, and prevent the contamination of the fields they will be on for the next few months, as well of getting the parasites out of the cattle. Fluke control is particularly effective at this time of the year, as most of the flukes will be mature and this is the life stage when the flukes are most susceptible to drugs. The drugs that can kill flukes include Valbazen® and Ivomec Plus®. Grub control is an important consideration in the fall. Also be sure to check with your veterinarian that the grub control drug you are going to use is safe and effective.

Miscellaneous Items. Fall is the time of year to remove any fly control ear tags from the cattle. This will help prevent the flies from developing resistance to the insecticides used in these ear tags. There have not been many new fly control ear tags developed over the last several years, so preventing resistance in the flies is important. If you are in an area of California that is copper deficient, this is time of year you want to supplement with injections or boluses. The copper injections (copper glycinate) last about 6 months and the copper boluses last about 12 months. Also, for selenium deficient areas, this may be the time of year to supplement the cattle. The California Cattlemen's Association sells a selenium bolus that lasts for one year. Alternatively, selenium injections can be given to provide partial supplementation for 30 to 40 days. This is a good time of the year to review your overall supplementation program as well as your mineral program. Be sure to spend a little time with your veterinarian, livestock advisor, nutrition consultant, and any others to discuss the items that need to get done at this busy time of the year.

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