

April 19, 2016
 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 David Dugan
 OSU Extension Educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources
 Adams/Brown/Highland Counties
 Ohio Valley Extension Education Research Area

Should I Deworm?

As we get closer to turning cattle out on new pasture, there are several things that we need to think about as we turn cattle out. I am sure that some are already out on pasture. Deworming and vaccinations are something that we need to think about prior to turnout, or need to do shortly after turnout, if they are already on pasture. Don't forget to take precautions for other problems that can occur when cattle are put out on pasture early in the season.

The following article is from Dr. Bill Shulaw, retired DVM MS, OSU Extension Veterinarian that appeared in a past issue of the Beef Cattle Letter a few years ago.

There is precious little information that suggests that routine deworming of adult beef cows (spring or fall) will always, or even usually, provide a return on investment. A small number of studies have suggested deworming in spring will improve conception rates, but a number do not. Likewise, deworming the cow doesn't always result in heavier weaning weights for calves. The potential for return always depends on a number of factors including FORAGE QUALITY, intensity of grazing, patterns of grazing (land use issues) and whether other species are grazed with the cattle or alternately on the pastures. My overall recommendation has been that deworming well-fed adult beef cows generally is not cost efficient. This is because the cow (as opposed to sheep) develops a relatively strong immune response in the first, and possibly second, season of grazing. Thereafter, if their nutrition is good, measuring a beneficial response is difficult. If the cows become thin, or are forced to graze poor quality forage while milking, then deworming may be of benefit as the immune response may be compromised.

Stocker cattle and similar age replacement females usually DO benefit by deworming when grazing contaminated pastures. Work done here in Ohio in the early 1980's in dairy heifers showed that 2 dewormings at 3 and 6 weeks after turnout resulted in significantly improved performance over untreated controls grazing moderately contaminated pastures. This was with any of the shorter acting compounds such as fenbendazole, thiabendazole, (no longer available) and levamisole. That work has been repeated elsewhere and in some regions (warmer and wetter) more than 2 dewormings were needed. The newer pour-ons all have extended activity and one pour in the spring may be enough, depending on conditions.

The ivermectin boluses that used to be available lasted over the whole grazing season. They were relatively expensive but convenient. However, some parasitologists have cautioned that replacement females must have some exposure to parasites, or the strong immune response seen in older cattle will be delayed in development. Conceivably, a heifer that had not had sufficient exposure and time to develop a strong immune response could calve and try to milk without adequate protection. Therefore, preventing all exposure is neither practical and cost-effective,



nor desirable.

Deworming unweaned calves is also somewhat controversial, however, it is likely that one will almost always see a performance boost by deworming at weaning, whether they are to be roughed through the winter or put in the feedlot.

This is the time of the year to be thinking about parasite control for cattle on pasture. There are new products available since Dr. Shulaw put this together. One that has a long lasting control is an injectable called Long Range. Check with your local veterinarian for options that they may recommend. Also, remember to rotate the mode of action to reduce resistance.

They're Back

With the warm weather this past weekend and the fact that we are just past the middle of April, they are back. I am referring to the Carpenter Bees. They resemble Bumble Bees, but these will be around the edges of barns and bore into the lumber. I will have more on these destructive bees next week.