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 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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When Do Calves Need Vaccinated?

If are around a bunch of cow/calf producers here in Southern Ohio you will always get an opinion if you ask. In fact, if you are around a bunch of producers, odds are good that you will get a bunch of opinions when you ask a question concerning the management of a herd of cattle.

One question that will often get several opinions, or “ways I do it”, would be concerning a vaccination program for the calves. I can pretty much guarantee you if there are at least five producers, one will say something like, “what vaccination program”. Some do not vaccinate at all while others have a complete and detailed program. Still at this point, there is not as much of a difference in the price at market to really get everyone on board when it comes to vaccinating their calves. I think the buyers are not making it enough of an issue. When some buyers buy calves, that were not vaccinated, for close to the same price as those calves that had an extensive vaccination program, it is a hard sell to convince everyone to vaccinate. I try to put myself on the buying end. I would not want to buy calves that have much greater health risks and a need to medicate and monitor closely for the same price as healthy calves.

So, how about sick or dead calves before you get them to market? Blackleg and some of the diseases that can be vaccinated against for pennies per head, yes less than a dollar per calf. One shot is not normally enough, so a booster is needed, too. The following will discuss this, but producers would be well advised to discuss this with both the stockyards they market their calves through and their local veterinarian. This appeared in the Beef Blog and was in AGDaily.

You’ve made it through calving season successfully, now when should you start to vaccinate the young bovines? “Producers should consider vaccinating calves at 2 to 4 months of age, depending on the operation,” said Dr. DL Step, professional services veterinarian, Boehringer Ingelheim.

Colostrum consumed by a newborn calf provides protection against infectious diseases. However, this protection is only temporary, lasting a few weeks to months, and calves must start building their own immunities. That’s why it’s important to vaccinate during this time of transition to help protect the calf until weaning age.

The following are three key benefits of incorporating pre-weaning vaccinations on your operation.

1. Reduced stress

During weaning, calves are faced with stressors such as castration, transportation, disease challenges, weather fluctuations, dietary changes, and more. Stress can cause immunosuppression in a calf, decreasing its ability to respond to disease-causing pathogens and vaccines, making it susceptible to respiratory disease. “Early vaccination gives calves the opportunity to stimulate their immune systems to work at optimum levels,” said Dr. Step.

2. Enhanced BRD and BVDV protection

Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) is the top health and economic issue facing the beef industry today. Once calves are affected by BRD, there are both immediate and long-lasting effects on performance.



Studies have shown that calves challenged by BRD could weigh up to 36 pounds less at weaning than their healthy herd mates. Early vaccination can help producers prepare calves for challenges they may face during weaning time, ensure calves are less susceptible to becoming infected with pathogens and have a more rapid immune response to the various pathogens that cause BRD.

Bovine viral diarrhea virus (BVDV), another growing health issue in the cattle industry, can result in reproductive, digestive, and respiratory problems in the herd. Once infected, calves can shed a high level of the virus, spreading the disease to other susceptible animals. Studies have demonstrated calves as young as 5 to 6 weeks of age can be effectively immunized against BVDV. “BVDV Type 1b has been identified as the most common subtype found in persistently infected calves, so make sure [the vaccine you choose](#) offers solid protection against it,” Dr. Step recommended.

3. Cost effective

In the case of calf health, prevention is key. Calves affected by BRD can greatly reduce profits through poor performance and increased morbidity. The average cost of BRD in the U.S. cattle industry is more than \$640 million annually.

“When your calves are protected and healthy, it will show in their performance and well-being,” said Dr. Step. When you vaccinate before weaning, it’s also an opportunity to provide additional comfort and protection for your calves.

“Producers should work with their local veterinarian to develop a vaccination program catered to their environmental conditions and herd goals,” Dr. Step added. “For best results, ensure you are handling and administering the vaccines in accordance with Beef Quality Assurance guidelines.”

Wet Spring and Delayed Planting

The rain just seems to keep coming. The ground gets just about dry enough to do something and here comes another round of showers. I am not aware of much field work that has been done in Adams or Brown Counties to this point. I do know some fertilizer was applied to hay ground in parts of the area, but limited.

As far as planting, I know of very little. I did hear that a corn planter was seen in a field in the Decatur area on Saturday. I planted a little sweet corn over the weekend, but that is about it. I am sure there are many acres of ground that has not been sprayed with a pre-plant herbicide and many acres that have not had fertilizer applied. Before anyone gets too excited, a farmer told me this weekend that his grandfather told him that you wait until you see the leaves on a Hickory tree as big as a squirrel’s ear before you plant corn, and those leaves are not there yet. That particular farmer is not getting too excited just yet.

Dates to Remember

May 14	Pesticide and Fertilizer Exams at noon at the Old Y Restaurant. Pre-register at pested.osu.edu or call ODA at 800-282-1955.
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