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

Pinkeye Checklist

Pinkeye can be very costly to cattle producers in cow/calf operations. An outbreak can get out of hand in a hurry and it is very difficult to slow down once it gets started in a herd. It is also very difficult to work calves once their eyesight is hampered. The following is part of an article that showed up in a recent Beef Blog. You can access it by going to www.thebeefblog.com then go to March 8 to find the full article. I can tell you the costs referred to below is only a portion of the cost to producers. I once saw a group of 10 or so steers come into the ring at a stockyards that weighed about 550 lbs. each. One of the calves had a bad eye as result of pinkeye. That one calf was pulled out and sold separately after the remaining 9. The difference was 55 cents per pound. That was a total of \$302.50 difference for that one calf.

The article that appears in the Beef Blog comes from University of Kentucky Beef Specialist, Dr. Ray Burris. Burris keeps a mental checklist of six things he needs to do to keep pinkeye from becoming a problem. That checklist starts with controlling face flies that irritate cows' eyes and spread pinkeye. Next, he keeps pastures clipped so grass seed heads won't aggravate eyes. He provides a mineral mix with Vitamin A and he vaccinates for pinkeye prior to fly season. He watches for early signs of the disease, which can be treated with antibiotics before permanent damage occurs; and if an animal is infected, he isolates her. He is also careful to keep infected animals out of direct sunlight.

There's a strong economic incentive behind pinkeye prevention. Because the condition causes sufferers to feed less, weight loss is common. A calf with one infected eye can weigh 30 to 40 pounds less at weaning than calves with healthy eyes, according to research from the University of Kentucky. That's a loss of \$48 to \$64 (based on \$1.60 per pound) per head. If both eyes are infected with pinkeye, the calf may weigh an average of 70 pounds less at weaning or even be blind.

"Pinkeye not only decreases the performance of calves, but its effects can detract from the appearance of a pen of cattle and can lower the sales price by over five cents per pound," Burris explained. "In addition to the financial loss, pinkeye causes pain and discomfort for animals, which we want to avoid."

CARRIERS AND CALVES

Unfortunately, pinkeye is a common problem in beef herds. If infected animals aren't isolated and treated quickly, an infection can spread, possibly affecting 25% or more of a calf crop.



"Pinkeye is the most common condition affecting breeding-age beef heifers and a common disease of nursing calves greater than three weeks old," large animal veterinarian Dee Whittier, of Virginia Tech, said.

Keep in mind at the end of this year the new VFD (Veterinarian Feed Directive) will come into play on January 1, 2017. If you are not aware of this coming change discuss it with your veterinarian, feed supplier, or call me at (937) 515-2314. You can also e-mail me at dugan.46@osu.edu

Estate Planning Workshop

Estate Planning is only for people that are retirement age, right? That seems to be a common thought, but in reality it is far from the truth. Most people who are retirement age are pretty well set except for deciding who gets what when they are gone. While this can be very important, this may not be the most important group when it comes to an estate plan. The times when this would be of greater concern would be when a family business is involved. Is a farm operation a family business? A family farm is very much a business in many cases, so this could be a very important part of the business plan. What happens if a partner in the business would become ill for an extended time? How about a long term injury that would require months or years of rehabilitation or worse?

Here are some examples to consider. Two brothers farming together and one of the brothers dies or becomes disabled, what might happen? Can the surviving brother continue to operate the business? Maybe he can, but maybe not when you have to consider the wife and/or children of the brother who has passed or ill. How do they continue on? The widow may want to sell and move on, can the surviving brother afford to buy his brother's half?

In the event it is not the death of one of the brothers, but a long term health care that results in draining all of the savings and eventually results in selling of assets to pay medical bills. Don't forget how a divorce by either brother and how that could play out when it comes to the business or farm. Land, livestock, equipment and the list goes on of things that may be owned together.

Next week I will discuss what might be fair? Is equal fair? Think about a family of 3 children, one stays home with dad and continues to farm for 20 plus years, while the other two siblings have off farm careers. When it comes time to pass the business (farm) to the next generation is it fair to split the farm into thirds? Really?

Master Gardener Program about Birds

On Thursday, March 17 Birding Expert, Bob Thobaben, will talk about backyard birds and attracting them to your landscape at the Mt. Orab campus of SSCC in room 107 at 7:00 p.m. This program is part of the free program offered monthly on the third Thursday.

Dates to Remember

March 18-20

Ohio Beef Expo in Columbus

