

An Electronic ID Project to Help Beef

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The Dickinson Research Extension Center, in concert with the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, will set to work processing calves this summer. Signup will begin soon and if one were to speculate, this summer will prove to be relatively eventful.

Many events are influencing the cattle industry on a world, regional and local level. The development of Calf AID by the DREC and the NDBCIA, along with six other collaborators, is a reaction to preparedness for some of the potential impacts of the changing world within the cattle industry. The DREC, through Calf AID, will provide a service to work local producer cow-calf pairs.

This year, in response to the interest in electronic cattle tracking within the industry, the Center will provide an electronic identification tag (commonly referred to as an EID) along with all the equipment, labor and handling facilities to process calves for \$4 per cow-calf pair. In addition, the service will require the producer to purchase vaccine and other needed chute-side supplies from a local health provider. Several cow and/or calf processing options will be available including sorting, weighing, frame scores, vaccinations, pregnancy checking and techniques for placement of new identification tags.

As the industry moved ahead to meet these new challenges, the NDBCIA met for three listening sessions last winter to help guide the needed response. From those discussions, several points surfaced as needs to help clarify the future.

From this list, the Calf AID program, a North Dakota Agri-Security Project, was developed. Calf AID objectives are reflective of those listening sessions.

One of the first concerns was a need to identify and implement the ability to respond to bio-security incidents with a trained and reliable response team. Such an effort, although not negating the seriousness of an incident, can build confidence for the local operations involved. The second point was to insure and maintain absolute privacy and confidentiality for all concerned.

Many questions came up regarding the ability to actually accomplish the task on a commercial scale. How many

herds could be done under typical ranch conditions and how feasible is it? What are the actual manpower requirements and costs? How does one implement standard data requirements chute-side and subsequently utilize those data when tracking cattle? Can one source verify and certify the actual data?

An additional concern was the need to provide safe working conditions for staff, participants and cattle. In a rural, seldom used, low populated setting, can adequate equipment be made available? What are the actual equipment needs and standards to ensure a safe and productive work environment? As with any complex project, one person can't do it all.

Those in the room wondered, 'What EID developers of products and protocols would be willing to assist in the implementation of a project like Calf AID?' There was an obvious consensus for a need to continue educating the general public and the cattle industry to ensure acceptance.

The educational efforts need to be jump started. The Calf AID program is available to provide that education. For producers within a reasonable distance of the Center here in Dickinson or close to one of the 21 local North Dakota veterinarians involved in the Bio-Security Vet-Core team through the North Dakota State Veterinarians office, listen up, sign up and get ready to work some calves this summer.

If you have a question, don't ponder, just act. Contact the Calf AID team by phone at (701) 483-2045 or (701) 483-0028. You can also contact the team by e-mail at chaps@ndsuxt.nodak.edu. Get to know your calves by using the new electronic ID tags.

May you find all your USAIP ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at www.BeefTalk.com. For more information, contact the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, 1133 State Avenue, Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to www.CHAPS2000.com on the Internet. In correspondence about this column, refer to BT0197.

Calf AID – A Program to Provide Insight into These Concerns:

Are there trained and reliable teams to help implement new industry concerns chute-side?

How is absolute privacy maintained?

How many herds could be done under typical ranch conditions and how feasible?

What are the actual manpower requirements and costs?

How does one implement standard data requirements chute-side and subsequently utilize those data when tracking cattle?

Can one source verify and certify the actual data?

In a rural, seldom used, low populated setting, can adequate equipment be made available?

What are the actual equipment needs and standards to assure a safe and productive work environment?

What EID developers of products and protocols would be willing to assist in the implementation of a project like Calf AID?

Can adequate education of the general public and cattle industry ensure their acceptance?