

Calf Vaccination Expenses Trivial In Comparison to Value of Calf

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Calves are starting to be moved. The transfer from grass to the feedlot will soon be well under way. This transfer process is no small task. Producers have to count, sort, load, haul, unload and pen. And did I forget to mention tagging and vaccinating?

The Dickinson Research Extension Center sent calves south to Hettinger this week and looks forward to the backgrounding performance. In order to fill the trial, an additional set of 31 steers weighing 654 pounds were purchased for \$117.25 per hundredweight. The total per-head price was \$766.82. These calves were purchased with current vaccination records.

Protecting this investment becomes the focal point and health the primary issue. As has been noted repeatedly before, death loss is critical and providing protection is paramount to presenting the calves for sale to the general public.

Out of curiosity, I grabbed a local livestock supply catalog for a quick review of product prices. Although the list of products can be long, the list of primary agents to control calf respiratory diseases is a lot shorter.

Most, if not all, programs list Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR), Bovine Viral Diarrhea type I and II (BVD), Bovine Respiratory Syncytial Virus (BRSV) and Bovine Parainfluenza 3 (PI3) as viral agents typically present that can negatively affect calves. Protection from these viral agents is available as a combination vaccine containing all four agents (thus the common saying four-way) from several vaccine companies in several product formulations. Killed and modified live products are available and need to be administered according to well-displayed, easy-to-read labels.

Currently the center is getting protection for \$1 per dose when using the modified live product and \$1.84 per dose when using the killed products. These prices vary according to quantity and vial size. The product should be administered twice to assure an adequate immune response for some agents, so total per-head costs will be twice the individual dose, or \$2 to \$3.68.

In addition to the viral agents, the primary bacterial agents are *Pasteurella Haemolytica*, *Pasteurella Multocida* and *Hemophilus Somnus*. Just as in the viral agents, several formulations combine the bacterial agents with other viral vaccines or common clostridial vaccines.

The center is paying \$2.15 per dose for protection from *Pasteurella Haemolytica*. Protection against *Hemophilus Somnus* is achieved with a combined clostridial product for 69 cents per dose. The dose is administered twice for a total cost of \$1.38.

Protecting calves is paramount. Hopefully this protection started with a strong calf vaccination program, followed by a pre-weaning vaccination protocol and vaccination again at weaning, following the labels and protocols developed by the respective vaccine producers.

For the center, the viral protection product cost, when using a killed product, is \$3.68, and \$2 when using a modified live product. Additional bacterial agent protection plus clostridial protection comes to a total of \$3.53 per calf following label programs.

In the end, a good prevention program for calves getting ready for shipment will provide reasonable protection from a disease outbreak involving respiratory or clostridial diseases for \$5.53 to \$7.21 per head. Given the current calf values, the investment for disease prevention seems somewhat trivial.

Even the fundamentally debated argument of who should pay seems trivial. The desired outcome is a healthy, thriving calf. So vaccinate the calf; it's worth it.

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 BT0216.

INVESTMENT: Calf Vaccination Product Cost versus Calf Value

Product Cost	Calf Value
\$5.53 to \$7.21	\$766

Products include two doses of a four way viral product, two doses of a clostridial plus Haemophilus somnus product and one dose of a Pasteurella haemolytica product.