

## BeefTalk: The Yellow, the Green and Anthrax



This Spring! "Ho! a cheer for Green and Yellow"

Now is the time to make sure all the calves are properly vaccinated and prepared to withstand the rigors of the world in the days ahead.

Last week, we were looking for grass, and this week we got it. If you listen carefully, you can hear the grass growing, tree buds starting to burst and the anthrax spores mingling.

Green definitely is back in style and the drabness of winter white is gone for the moment. This view is not new, and those who have walked the prairies know all too well the beauty that soon will explode across the northern Great Plains.

If one is not careful, you will find yourself singing the beautiful "The Yellow and the Green," which was written in 1908 by Archibald E. Minard. Minard was one of the early birds at the North Dakota Agricultural College, which today is known as North Dakota State University.

The song starts out with: "Ho! a cheer for green and yellow, up with yellow and the green; they're the shades that deck our prairies, far and wide with glorious sheen, fields of waving green in the spring-time, golden yellow in the fall-how the great high-arching heaven, looks and laughs upon it all!"

Wow, how true the words are. Those words return every spring and bless us as we go forth through another summer and on into the fall.

Tom Isern, a later bird at North Dakota State University, recalled some of Minard's thoughts as he was writing the song. Minard said, "I had just come to North Dakota from the east in 1904 and had spent three weeks of 1905 in the harvest field, being No. 50 on the payroll of a big Grandin farm near Blanchard. It was my first experience in the wheat fields. My impressions were rather vivid: the throng of casual labor drifting in on freight cars, the endless yellow fields, the monotonous sweating labor from dawn until after dark and the mosquitoes and the prairie roses, the abundant eating and the wretched beds, all under a sky of marvelous height and swept with the most gorgeous sunsets I had ever seen."

Not much has changed since then. Agriculture still is a hard, unpredictable life set around some of the most beautiful surroundings one can find.

Minard went on to write: "Here in autumn throng the nations, just to gather in the spoil, throng on freight cars from the cities, some to feast and some to toil, then the yellow grains flow eastward, and the yellow gold flows back; barren cities boast their plenty, and the prairies know no lack."

A good summer is set, at least for those of us in the North Country, because the moisture is deep. The seeds are actively prepped and ready to seed. The calves have been gathered and are ready to work. This is the North Country and, perhaps, the saying is somewhat true that we can feed the world. However, some of this is just some nice thoughts on a very nice spring day.

The calves need to be worked, so one can sit only so long to ponder the beauty around us. We can't forget the words of Minard when he said, "the monotonous sweating labor from dawn until after dark and the mosquitoes and the prairie roses, the abundant eating and the wretched beds."

There is work to do, at least in the calf business. We never will get to those glorious fall harvests without proper calf management today. In fact, those beautiful yellow and green prairies can get rather ugly if a producer forgets to vaccinate the calves, or simply decides otherwise.

Dead calves, lying bloated in a sea of green and gold, still are dead. So get to work and vaccinate those calves. Now is the time to make sure all the calves are properly vaccinated and prepared to withstand the rigors of the world in the days ahead.

Calves will be gathered to implement herd health programs that assure economic opportunity. Plan ahead to develop a sound vaccination program in concert with your local veterinarian.

We certainly don't want to forget about anthrax. If a herd is exposed to *Bacillus anthracis* and is not vaccinated, at least some of the cattle or other common domesticated livestock could develop the disease. Although uncommon, there are areas that have an increased risk for anthrax, so producers should contact their veterinarian to discuss appropriate managerial options.

Anthrax is a reportable disease that must be contained. All the cattle at the Dickinson Research Extension Center will be vaccinated for anthrax prior to spring turnout. Others should do the same.

May you find all your ear tags.