



BeefTalk 729: Vaccinate to Protect Ranch Assets

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Asset Protection

Dickinson Research Extension Center

Simple Vaccination Program:

- Mid-summer: two vaccines
- Weaning: two vaccines

Asset protection at less than **\$10 per calf!**

Review the numerous vaccination programs available and then, in consultation with a veterinarian, design and match operational needs with marketing protocols.

Protecting one's assets is another term for fall calf vaccinations. One does not need to view very many market reports to understand that the asset value of a calf has gone up. In other words, calves are worth good money.

Many things can impact the life of these very valuable calves. Some are unpredictable, such as accidents. Handling facilities can be tuned and care taken in processing the calves, but not all handling impacts are controllable. Sometimes, what the calf is thinking and what the producer wants are so contrary that nothing will soothe the process. In those cases, calves can have

a bad day, and so can the producer.

However, for the most part, the care and management of calves is controlled by the producer, so minimizing risk is doable. What comes to mind first? Good management; nutrition, which includes good water; and just plain good animal husbandry practices all rank as No. 1.

Somewhere on the list will be calf vaccinations. Producers have many options to prepare calves for the market, but the first is to assure that the calf is adequately protected against the many pathogens that are lurking and waiting to take advantage of calves that do not have adequate protection.

Even well-managed calves that are fit, alert and ready to eat can, if exposed to the wrong pathogen, succumb to illness. So how does one plan?

To start, review the numerous vaccination programs available and then, in consultation with a veterinarian, design and match operational needs with marketing protocols.



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How does one start a conversation with the local veterinarian? The simple answer is to call the veterinarian. I called Gerald Stokka, who is an NDSU Extension Service veterinarian. With the large selection of vaccines available, he says producers should ask their veterinarian three basic questions as they implement a vaccination program.

First of all, he says there needs to be a good discussion on what the exposure risk is to a particular pathogen and what the subsequent consequences are if an infection occurs. Reading lots of information can overwhelm a producer, so localize the question with the veterinarian, but keep in mind the intended destination of the calves.

Stokka says the second question would be a discussion on the effectiveness of the vaccine. The local veterinarian could advise you on the effectiveness of different products. Not all vaccines are the same, and sometimes the overlap in names of viruses and bacteria, as well as the combinations within vaccines, can become confusing.

Vaccine effectiveness is not the same for the many pathogens, so a producer will have to decide, in conjunction with the veterinarian, the level of effectiveness that is acceptable while keeping in mind that even a modest rate of immunity may be better than none.

Stokka says the third question is related to vaccine safety. Although the general population expects extensive testing of new products, the ultimate recipient of the vaccine is the producer's calves. Stokka reminds us that every producer must have a communicative relationship with the operation's veterinarian and also a strong comfort level with the efficacy and safety of the products used.

A good discussion of all three questions will help producers make the right vaccination program decision.

Stokka also reminds us that many of the vaccines need to be given at least twice to achieve some level of herd immunity or some level of protective individual immunity. If one were to review the calf vaccination program at the Dickinson Research Extension Center, you would find that calves are vaccinated starting at 3 months of age and again at weaning. The center's program is fairly standard. What is remarkable is that the vaccination program is not very expensive.

These vaccinations provide protection against infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), bovine viral diarrhea type II (BVD) and bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV).

These vaccines also aid in the control of bovine viral diarrhea type I (BVD) and bovine parainfluenza 3 (PI3) virus, as well as the bacterial agents *mannheimia haemolytica* and *pasteurella multocida*.

The clostridial bacterin-toxoid includes blackleg caused by *clostridium chauvoei*, malignant edema caused by *CL Septicum*, black disease caused by *CL Novyi*, gas-gangrene caused by *CL Sordellii*, and enterotoxemia and enteritis caused by *CL perfringens* types C and D. Added only at weaning is *Histophilus (Haemophilus) somnus*.

All this protection cost the center less than \$10 per animal.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at <http://www.BeefTalk.com>. For more information, contact the NDBCIA Office, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601, or go to <http://www.CHAPS2000.com> on the Internet.

