Proper Storage and Handling of Vaccines

The Situation
Research conducted across the United States has shown that over two thirds of vaccines are improperly handled, stored and administered at the cattle farm and ranch level, thus decreasing the effectiveness of the vaccine.

Extension Response
Extension developed an educational program that was delivered at 22 locations to demonstrate to producers why it is so important to properly administer, store and handle vaccines, and how to store, handle and give vaccines at branding and chuteside.

Producers were able to make their own vaccine cooler at some programs.

Impacts
Surveys were given to program attendees on their use of vaccines chuteside and brandings. 32 percent indicated they were storing vaccines at the correct temperature and out of the sunlight when administering vaccines. Follow up surveys of attendees showed 92 percent of producers are now using a cooler with a thermometer to monitor temperature and shield vaccines from the sun when administering vaccines to their cattle.

Surveying conducted at the educational programs indicated one-half of the producers were using disinfectants (which render vaccines ineffective) when administering vaccines. 98 percent of producers who answered follow up surveys indicated they are no longer using disinfectants when administering vaccines.

Feedback
“I never used a cooler to store my vaccines when I was working cattle. I have built a cooler and use it 100 percent of the time. We treated less calves at weaning time this year.”
Grant County Producer

“I have always used disinfectants when vaccinating cattle. I never knew it was bad on vaccine. I have quit using disinfectants when giving vaccines.”
Logan County Producer

“When I left the meeting I immediately when home and built a cooler to keep my vaccines at a safe temperature. I told my neighbors and they have all made coolers, too.”
Morton County Producer

“We have started keeping our vaccines in a cooler when working cows.”
Sheridan County Producer

Public Value Statement
Immunizations are more effective when vaccine efficacy is preserved. An effective immunization against common livestock diseases is part of an effective herd health plan. Healthy cattle require less treatment from antimicrobials. Healthy cattle equals healthy beef!

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