

# ***COW/CALF CORNER***

**The Newsletter**

*From the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service*

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**In this Issue**

## **Continued Rains Hampering Oklahoma Crops**

by Dr. Derrell S. Peel, OSU Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

## **Wet Conditions Bring Foot Rot Problems**

By Dave Sparks, DVM, OSU Area Extension Food-Animal Quality and Health Specialist

## **Cattle Producers Should Prepare for Mandatory COOL**

By Derrell S. Peel, OSU Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

## **Continued Rains Hampering Oklahoma Crops**

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The Oklahoma wheat harvest is severely damaged and is a total loss for many producers. Much of the state of Oklahoma has received 18 straight days of rain and that brings the total to over 30 inches in the last 90 days. In fact, we are within an inch or two of having reached the average annual total of about 36 inches here in Stillwater.

The rain is generally less of a problem for cattle producers although the mud and water is a management headache and may lead to problems such as foot, which is discussed in the following article. However, the wet conditions have made it nearly impossible to harvest hay and that which has been harvested is rain damaged and of lower quality. After two years of drought we are hesitant to complain about moisture but enough is enough right now.

## **Wet Conditions Bring Foot Rot Problems**

By Dave Sparks, DVM, OSU Area Extension Food-Animal Quality and Health Specialist

Foot rot is an ongoing problem, especially in the early summer, in Oklahoma. With the wet conditions over much of the state this year we can expect even more problems than usual. It is important to know, however, that not all lameness problems are foot rot and with a little care and planning the incidence and severity of the problem can be controlled.

Foot rot is caused by a bacteria, *Fusobacterium necrophorum*, that invades the tissues between the toes. It enters the tissue through abrasions or areas softened by extremely wet conditions. Once established, the bacteria releases toxins that cause swelling and decay of the tissues. As the infection works into the deeper tissues, the signs become more severe and control becomes more

difficult. Infected animals shed organisms into the environment where they can infect other cattle for up to 10 months.

The main sign of foot rot is swelling between the toes, usually in one foot only. As the disease progresses the swelling works higher up the lower leg. On closer examination you can usually find breaks in the skin in the tissues between the toes.

Treatment depends on catching the infection early before it works into the deep tissues. Oxytetracycline (LA200) or time release sulfa boluses have worked well for treatment and are available over the counter. Topical antiseptics also help as does confining affected animals in dry conditions. For resistant cases your veterinarian can suggest prescription antibiotics. Producers who utilize a mineral containing chlortetracycline for control of anaplasmosis may also find that it helps to reduce the incidence of foot rot. You can read more about foot rot in grazing cattle by looking at OSU Fact Sheet [F-3355 Foot Rot in Grazing Cattle](http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2023/ANSI-3355web.pdf).

The website address is: <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2023/ANSI-3355web.pdf>

## **Cattle Producers Should Prepare for Mandatory COOL**

By Derrell S. Peel, OSU Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

The long-delayed mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) law appears to be likely to take effect on or before the scheduled date of September 30, 2008. Although nothing is final yet, full implementation may affect some or all of the 2007 calf crop and certainly will affect the 2008 calf crop. USDA has reopened the comment period to allow interested parties to have input into the final rule for COOL implementation. Producers have until August 20, 2007 to submit comments on the proposed final rule for COOL.

Producers should also start thinking about how they will comply with the law. Some details may change with the final rule but the general requirements of the law are clear. The proposed final rule states “Any person in the business of supplying a covered commodity to a retailer, whether directly or indirectly, must maintain records to establish and identify the immediate previous source (if applicable) and immediate subsequent recipient of a covered commodity, in such a way that identifies the product unique to that transaction by means of lot number or other unique identifier, for a period of 1 year from the date of the transaction.” Producers should think about whether they have records that will meet these requirements, whether new records are needed and how those records must be organized and maintained to be available as required.

It is likely that many cow-calf producers already have the majority of records needed to prove the origin of the calves they sell although some reorganization of those records may be needed. Stocker producers, however, face a greater challenge to be able to trace animals from a variety purchasing sources to subsequent marketing groups after the commingling that is so typical and necessary for stocker production. Some sort of individual animal ID, although not mandated by this law, is likely to be the only feasible way for many stocker operations to be able to maintain records of animal origin. Feedlots and packing plants will likewise need detailed records to maintain a complete chain of identification through the marketing system, especially during meat

fabrication when pieces of animals are commingled in boxes of beef. Although the details are not finalized yet, it is time for producers to begin planning for implementation of mandatory COOL.

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