

COW/CALF CORNER

The Newsletter

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In this Issue:

Anaplasmosis Prevention, an All Season Program

Dave Sparks, D.V.M., Oklahoma State University Area Extension Food Animal Quality and Health Specialist

Beef Quality Assurance Program Enhances Consumer Confidence in Beef

Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist and Jeff Jaronek, Director of Industry Relations, Oklahoma Beef Council

Anaplasmosis Prevention, an All Season Program

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Many Oklahoma beef producers associate anaplasmosis with horse flies, and keep up a prevention program only during the fly season. Unfortunately, many of these same producers are still experiencing anaplasmosis problems well into the winter, because biting flies are only a minor vector compared to other ways the disease can be transferred. In many areas, especially wooded or brushy pastures, ticks are more important vectors than biting flies. Ticks are an all-year problem in many areas of Oklahoma, so the control program also needs to be maintained all year. Stockmen also spread the disease from carriers to susceptible animals by not removing all traces of blood from equipment when processing adult cattle. The organism can be carried by needles, dehorners, castration knives, ear taggers, or any other implement that draws blood. It is sometimes possible to determine the source of the outbreak by the way cases develop. When insect vectors are responsible there will usually be one sick animal, followed several weeks later by multiple cases. If human transfer is the cause, several sick animals will show up at the same time 2 to 4 weeks after the cattle were worked.

The most popular means of anaplasmosis prevention is the use of mineral mixes that contain chlortetracycline (CTC). When fed at a rate of 0.5 mg/lb. of body weight CTC will prevent anaplasmosis infections. It is important to note, however, that CTC is added to minerals for several different reasons, including use as a growth promotant for yearlings, and these other uses require different levels of drug in the mineral. Make sure that the product you choose states on the label that it is formulated at a rate for the prevention of anaplasmosis, and gives the specific

amount of daily consumption needed to supply that level. The next step is to monitor your herd to make sure that the product is being consumed at the appropriate rate. If not, you may need to look at other products or change your management practices in order to correct consumption deficits. Recovered animals will be carriers of the disease and a source of infection for susceptible individuals. Clear them of the organism with high levels of antibiotics administered parentally, isolate them from susceptible animals, or cull them from the herd.

Signs of the disease include orange coloration of the mucous membranes due to breakdown pigments released from red blood cells that are destroyed. As more red blood cells are destroyed the animals become slow and short of breath. They may exhibit aggressive behavior due to a shortage of oxygen supply to the brain. By the time signs are noticed, the disease is usually far along and you may easily cause the death of the infected animal while trying to bring them in for treatment. If you suspect an anaplasmosis problem contact your veterinarian who can make a definitive diagnosis and recommend a course of treatment before other animals are exposed. Sick animals are about 10 times as infective as recovered carriers are, so it is important to either move them away from their herd mates, or if this is not possible, move the herd mates away from them.

It is popularly believed that anaplasmosis only affects mature animals. Recent information out of Kansas State University, however, shows that young animals can be infected and suffer with the disease, although it is not as serious as in older animals. This is due to young animals' ability to produce new red blood cells much faster than adults do. In young animals, anaplasmosis can easily be confused with bovine respiratory disease because in both instances the animal has a fever and experiences labored breathing. With anaplasmosis, however, the increased respiratory rate is due to a decreased capacity for the blood to carry oxygen rather than to any lung involvement. The two syndromes can also occur together.

If you live in an area where ticks are active in the winter, or you sometimes work your cows in cool weather, using CTC medicated mineral all year can save both the hard work involved with treating active anaplasmosis cases and the losses associated with the disease. Summer cases of anaplasmosis are often more dramatic and associated with more deaths because cattle are not watched as closely as in the winter when supplemental feeding is required. In the summer months it is easy to get involved in farming or haying operations and not check the cattle as frequently as they should be checked. This leads to outbreaks being more advanced and widespread before they are discovered.

In conclusion, beef producers can minimize the impact of anaplasmosis by 1) utilizing good sanitation concerning hypodermic needles and surgical instruments, 2) utilizing a preventative such as tetracycline in the mineral and, 3) observing cattle regularly for signs of trouble. If you are experiencing anaplasmosis problems, your local veterinarian can help to design a preventative program that is best suited for your location and operation.

Beef Quality Assurance Program Enhances Consumer Confidence in Beef

Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist and
Jeff Jaronek, Director of Industry Relations, Oklahoma Beef Council

More than ever before, it is essential for beef cattle producers to ensure that they are producing the highest quality beef and to make sure that consumers know it. The Beef Quality Assurance Program (BQA) does just that. The Beef Quality Assurance mission is to maximize consumer confidence and acceptance of beef by focusing producers' attention on daily production practices that influence the safety, wholesomeness, and quality of beef and beef products through the use of science, research, and educational initiatives. Becoming BQA certified is a great way for producers to ensure that they are using proper, research-based production practices and to demonstrate that commitment to beef consumers.

The Oklahoma Beef Council is providing opportunities this fall for producers to become BQA certified in a series of regional Cattle Processing Field Days and BQA meetings across Oklahoma. Cattle Processing Field Days will include chute-side demonstrations of BQA principles and guidelines, BQA recap and BQA certification tests. Each workshop is scheduled from 8:30am - 2 pm with lunch included. Cattle Processing Field Days will be held the following locations and dates:

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| - Tulsa Fairgrounds, Mustang Arena, Tulsa | August 24 |
| - Caddo County Fairgrounds, Anadarko | September 8 |
| - Woodward County Fairgrounds, Woodward | September 13 |
| - Pittsburg County Expo Center, McAlester | September 15 |

Producers unable to attend the Field Days can attend one of four district evening BQA classes. Each class will be 6-9 pm, with a meal followed by BQA training and certification at the following locations and dates:

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| - NE Technology Center, Afton | August 24 |
| - Canadian Valley VoTech, Chickasha | September 8 |
| - Major County Fairgrounds, Fairview | September 13 |
| - Eastern Oklahoma State College, Wilburton | September 15 |

Producers who RSVP their attendance at any of the Field Days or evening meetings by preregistering and completing the BQA certification test will be entered in a drawing to win a Prefiert S04 manual chute with carriage that will be used for the field day demonstrations.

For more information or to RSVP for any of the Cattle Processing Field Days or the evening BQA certification meetings contact Jeff Jaronek at (405) 840-3777 or jeff.jaronek@oklabeef.org

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