COW/CALF CORNER

The Newsletter

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Regional Differences in Cattle Markets Continue to Grow

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The latest USDA Cattle on Feed report contained few surprises in the overall numbers for placements and marketings. However, a closer look at the report reveals a continuation of recent trends that reflect more regional differences in cattle markets. No doubt the lingering effects of the drought, which continues in parts of the southwest, contribute to some of the observed differences but the changes may also reflect more long term shifts in market structure.

The contrasts between Texas and Nebraska in this Cattle on Feed report are striking. On April 1, on-feed inventory in Texas was equal to last year, but below the national total of 102 percent of

last year, while Nebraska was 106 percent of last year. March Placements in Texas were down 12 percent from last year but Nebraska placements were up 13 percent from a year ago. Nebraska placements included more feeders over 800 pounds while Texas placed more under 600 pound feeders as part of smaller total placements in the state.

Feeder and fed cattle prices likewise indicate some regional differences. For several months, there has been a tendency for stronger fed cattle prices in the Midwest relative to the Southern Plains. In fact, for 2011, the average of weekly fed steer prices for the year was $0.79/cwt. higher for Nebraska compared to the Texas-Oklahoma fed price. For the seven years, from 2005 through 2010, the average Nebraska price compared to Texas-Oklahoma was negative each year and averaged -$0.79/cwt. across all years.

Interestingly, the feeder market comparison is just the opposite. Feeder prices are normally higher in Nebraska but in the last few weeks Oklahoma feeder prices are averaging much closer, though still slightly below, Nebraska price levels. However, while Southern Plains steer prices are averaging closer to Nebraska levels, heifer markets in the central and northern plains continue to show more indications of heifer retention compared to the south. Several recent market reports from Nebraska and South Dakota include heifers for replacements that are selling at prices at or above steers of comparable weights. So far, this phenomenon has not been very evident in Oklahoma. It suggests that herd rebuilding is proceeding slowly and cautiously in the Southern Plains. Bred heifer and cow prices in Oklahoma are strengthening but have not advanced as fast nor to as high of levels as have been seen for more than a month in Nebraska.

Prepare for Anaplasmosis Prevention

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist, (adapted from Anaplasmosis “current treatment and preventative measures”, by John G. Kirkpatrick, DVM)

The mild winter and early, wet spring in Oklahoma has been a blessing. However, insects that are vectors for the cattle disease anaplasmosis have also enjoyed the weather and are quite plentiful. Any blood-sucking insect can be a potential carrier of the disease. Ticks and horse flies are often the most common culprits. Cattle-working tools such as castration knives and vaccination needles are other methods of anaplasmosis transmission.

Anaplasmosis is an infectious disease of cattle caused by a rickettsia organism, Anaplasma marginale. This organism invades red blood cells, forming a small dot or marginal body and causes the infected cells to be removed from circulation, thereby initiating the clinical signs of anemia. Clinical signs of anaplasmosis are related to the age of the animal. Calves under 6 months of age become infected, rarely show clinical signs, and remain carriers. Carrier animals

seldom exhibit clinical signs when challenged with A. marginale later in life. A carrier animal may or may not give a positive reaction to serologic tests for A. marginale. A. Marginale bodies may or may not be demonstrated in the stained blood smear of the carrier animal. However the carrier's blood is infective for the susceptible animal. Yearling to 18-month-old cattle will develop symptoms. The clinical signs are mild and these animals become carriers. In adults, signs are progressively severe; the animals will either die or become carriers.

The incubation or prepatent period is 3 to 8 weeks and is the time between inoculation of the infectious agent and occurrence of A. marginale bodies in 1% of the red blood cells. The developmental stage is about 4 to 9 days and is the time when most of the characteristic signs of anaplasmosis appear. During this phase from 10% to greater than 75% of the red blood cells may be infected.

Clinical signs in adult animals include depression, off feed, fever up to 107 degrees F., anemia or paleness and/or yellow mucous membranes, rapid respiration, urine may be yellowish in color, occasional belligerence, dehydration and constipation, and sudden death. Most deaths occur in the later stages of the developmental stage or early convalescent stage.

Be certain to visit with a large animal veterinarian about prevention of the disease in your herd and treatment of any infected animals. Anaplasmosis is a herd problem and should be approached as such. Outbreaks occur when there is no control program, anaplasmosis carriers and susceptible animals are present in the herd, and vectors (mechanical and / or biological) for transmission are present.

Anaplasmosis control is based on preventing the transmission of infected red blood cells from carrier animals to susceptible animals. Strategic environmental management, insecticides and repellents, cleanliness of surgical instruments and changing of needles between animals must be in place to minimize disease transmission.

Chlortetracycline (CTC) consumed at the rate of 0.5 mg / pound cow body weight (1.1 mg / kg) daily during vector season will help prevent transmission of anaplasmosis. CTC may be administered in medicated feed; salt-mineral mixes offered free choice, and medicated blocks. It is imperative that consumption levels are monitored. Effectiveness is dependent on proper intake. Be certain that the mineral or feed mix that you use is labeled for anaplasmosis prevention, AND follow label directions precisely.

Insure that animals have easy access to medication during the vector season Keep all medicated feed, salt-mineral mixes, and blocks out of direct sunlight and rain.