

Don't Overlook Blackleg Says Extension Livestock Specialist

SPRINGFIELD, MO.

When planning a herd health program for your cattle, don't overlook blackleg vaccination says Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension.

The disease is caused by *Clostridium chauvoei* which occurs naturally in the animal's intestines.

"It can remain viable in the soil for many years. It normally shows up in the summer and hits cattle that are in the six month to two year old range," said Cole.

However, much younger calves and even adult cattle can be stricken, according to Cole.

Excellent protection against the disease, which commonly results in death, can be at-

tained by vaccination.

"The vaccine is relatively inexpensive and very effective," said Cole.

If vaccinated for blackleg before 3 months of age calves should be revaccinated at four to six months of age or at weaning. A booster is suggested in the two to six week range. The cost of the vaccine varies from 25 to 50 cents per dose.

Death losses from blackleg generally occur without warning symptoms unless the cattle are being observed closely.

"A veterinarian's diagnosis is helpful in determining the cause of sudden mystery deaths and should be sought when an animal is found dead," said Cole. Δ