

Effects Of Commingling Beef Cattle

Management tips to help producers increase economic investments

DULUTH, GA.

Commingling beef cattle or mixing cattle from multiple sources is a common practice among producers today. However, it does pose some potential cattle health risks, like bovine respiratory disease (BRD), which continues to cause severe economic loss for producers.¹

A study showed that when calves are commingled from various sources and transported to different locations, it can result in varying periods of stress, nutritional deficiencies and exposure to infectious agents,² all of which can rob producers of profits and ultimately affect their bottom line. The following are management strategies for producers to help decrease the risks of commingling and protect economic returns.

Consider a preconditioning program

The management of cattle prior to transport or arrival at feedyards plays an important role in their overall health and performance.³ In a study conducted at Oklahoma State University they were measuring average daily gain and suggested ranch calves that were weaned, transported and commingled potentially endured a greater amount of stress compared to ranch calves that were preconditioned, transported and commingled.²

“Preconditioning programs, such as the MERIAL® SUREHEALTH® Calf Preconditioning Program, are a great way for cattle producers and feeders to extract more profit from a calf crop,” says Marc Campbell, DVM, veterinary technical services, Merial. “Preconditioning programs are designed to help reduce stress for calves at weaning and also improve their immune systems by deworming and getting rid of suppressive effects of worms, which helps them to perform better postweaning.⁴ Plus, the SUREHEALTH Limited Health Warranty takes away some of the potential risk for feeders.”

The MERIAL SUREHEALTH Calf Preconditioning Program is the only nationwide, veterinarian-certified preconditioning program. SUREHEALTH protocols include parasite control with an IVOMECS® (ivermectin) Brand Product; two rounds of vaccinations; a Pasteurella vaccination with RESPISHIELD® HM; a 45-day weaning period; and other best management practices, such as castration and dehorning.

“The great thing about the SUREHEALTH Program is that many producers likely already meet most of the protocols for certification,” Dr. Campbell says. “By making a few adjustments and taking advantage of the program, they can improve the marketability of their calves and their profit margins.”

Dr. Campbell adds that another management strategy producers should consider to minimize the effects of commingling is prevention.

Use precautionary measures

“The causes of BRD are numerous and complex, and stress is considered a critical component,”¹ Dr. Campbell says. “The majority of deaths due to BRD occur shortly after arrival to the feedlot or within the first 45 days.”^{5,6}

Producers receiving cattle from various locations can reduce the likelihood of their cattle developing BRD by treating cattle upon arrival with a rapid response antimicrobial like ZACTRAN® (gamithromycin) from Merial.

In a 10-day BRD control study, ZACTRAN controlled BRD in the majority of lightweight, long-haul, high-risk cattle for the duration of the study.⁷ Dr. Campbell adds that producers should work with their veterinarian to find a treatment program that best fits their operation.

ZACTRAN is a prescription product and is administered subcutaneously (SC) at a dose of 2 mL/110 lbs.⁸

Producers can learn more about the MERIAL

SUREHEALTH Calf Preconditioning Program by contacting their local veterinarian. Visit www.ZACTRAN.com for more product information.

ZACTRAN IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: For use in cattle only. Do not treat cattle within 35 days of slaughter. Because a discard time in milk has not been established, do not use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older, or in calves to be processed for veal. The effects of ZACTRAN on bovine reproductive performance, pregnancy and lactation have not been determined.

IVOMECS Plus (ivermectin/clorsulon): IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: Do not treat cattle within 49 days of slaughter. Do not use in dairy cattle of breeding age or in veal calves. **IVOMECS (ivermectin) Pour-On IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:** Do not treat cattle within 48 days of slaughter. Do not use in dairy cattle of breeding age or in veal calves. **IVOMECS 1% Injection for Cattle and Swine IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:** Do not treat cattle within 35 days of slaughter. Do not use in dairy cattle of breeding age or in veal calves. Do not treat swine within 18 days of slaughter. **IVOMECS EPRINEX® (eprinomectin) Pour-On for Beef and Dairy IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:** No meat or milk withdrawal is required when used according to label. Do not use in calves intended for veal. **All IVOMECS Brand Products:** Do not use in other animal species not on the label as severe adverse reactions, including fatalities in dogs, may result.

About Merial

Merial is a world-leading, innovation-driven animal health company, providing a comprehensive range of products to enhance the health, well-being and performance of a wide range of animals. Merial employs approximately 5,600 people and operates in more than 150 countries worldwide. Its 2012 sales were \$2.8 billion. Merial is a Sanofi company. For more information, please see www.merial.com.

¹ Bagley CV, Bovine Respiratory Disease, Utah State University Cooperative Extension, 1997;4:1-4.

² Step, D L, et al. Effects of commingling beef calves from different sources and weaning protocols during a forty-two-day receiving period on performance and bovine respiratory disease. *J Anim Sci.* 2008;86(11):3146-3158.

³ Abidoye B, and Lawrence JD. 2006. Value of Single Source and Backgrounded Cattle as Measured by Health and Feedlot Profitability. Proceedings of the NCCC-134 Conference on Applied Commodity Price Analysis, Forecasting, and Market Risk Management. St. Louis, MO. Available at <http://www.farmdoc.uiuc.edu/nccc134>. Accessed May 7, 2013.

⁴ Avent RK, Ward CE, Lalman DL. Economic value of preconditioning feeder calves. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service AGEC-583. Available at: <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document1969/AGEC-583web.pdf>. Accessed May 20, 2013.

⁵ Edwards, A. J. Respiratory diseases of feedlot cattle in the central USA. *Bovine Pract.* 1996;30:5-7.

⁶ Loneragan, G. H., D. A. Dargatz, P. S. Morley, and M. A. Smith. 2001. Trends in mortality ratios among cattle in US feedlots. *J Am Vet Med Assoc.* 2001;219:1122-1127.

⁷ Lechtenberg K, Daniels CS, Royer GC, et al. Field efficacy study of gamithromycin for the control of bovine respiratory disease in cattle at high risk of developing the disease. *Intern J Appl Res Vet Med.* 2011;9(2):189-197.

⁸ ZACTRAN product label approved 2012.