

Extension Livestock Specialist Offers Prevention Advice For Warts And Ringworm On Cattle

MT. VERNON, MO.

Area cattle owners have probably noticed some funny spots on the head or neck of their cattle from time to time.

According to Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension, novice cattle producers may not recognize those mystery spots as either ringworm or warts.

"Both of those conditions seem to surface in the late winter. That's probably because during the winter, cattle are in close proximity to one another at feed bunks and hay racks. Adult animals seem to have fewer skin problems than calves and yearlings," said Cole.

RINGWORM

Ringworm symptoms are caused by a fungus. The fungus is passed from animal to animal when they come in contact with one another or when they rub on feeders, posts and trees.

"Cattle that are in poor nutritional condition or heavily parasitized are more often affected. A deficiency in certain vitamins can contribute to the skin problem," said Cole.

The ringworm lesions normally clear up in two or three months as warm weather arrives.

"Treatment is not usually necessary unless you have cattle going to a show or sale," said Cole.

Since ringworm is a condition that can be transmitted from animal to animal, veterinari-

ans must complete a health paper. Cole says if the ringworm problem appears active the veterinarian would not be able to complete the health paper.

WARTS

Warts are caused by a variety of viruses. They can spread, like ringworm or humans can aid their spread, if proper sanitation isn't followed.

"A perfect example is placing a tattoo in the ear and when you go back a few weeks and try to read the number you find a cluster of warts in the ear. If the tattoo equipment isn't disinfected several animals will show warts in their ears," said Cole.

Bulls can get warts on their penis, but most warts are found around the head and neck. Some warts are not much bigger than a pea while some grow to fist size or greater. Animals have the ability to develop immunity to the wart virus after exposure to a new strain.

As with ringworm, Cole says treatment is not advised unless the cattle are being moved and require a health paper.

"If the cattle are easy to get hold of, individually removing a few warts can be done. It seems the removal of warts encourages the animal's immune system to create antibodies that help speed the recovery. There are commercial wart vaccines that can be given, but their effectiveness varies," said Cole. Δ