

Make Plans To Immunize Your Cattle This Fall

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As you formulate plans for the fall health program, it is important to include steps that will insure that cattle are immunized, not just vaccinated.

It may seem somewhat confusing to differentiate between vaccinating and immunizing.

Producers spend a lot of money and time injecting vaccines into their animals. That is vaccinating. Immunizing is being sure that the animal responds to the vaccine and will build immunity to a disease. Too many times animals are just vaccinated. There are many factors that determine if a vaccine actually works after it is injected.

First, let's take a look at the vaccine. To get a good immune response the vaccine must have as high a potency as possible. The way that a vaccine is handled from the time of manufacture until use can determine effectiveness. When purchasing vaccine, always ask the retailer (supply store, veterinarian, etc.) if the refrigeration unit used to store the vaccine is working properly and has maintained it in the recommended range of 35 to 45 degrees. Also, ask how the vaccine was delivered and if it was maintained at the proper temperature during delivery. Check the expiration date, and do not purchase vaccines that will expire before you will use them.

Next, be sure that you take proper care of the vaccine. Bring a cooler to transport the vaccine as well as something to place in the cooler to

keep the vaccine from coming in direct contact with ice. Make certain your refrigerator is working properly. A study in Arkansas showed that only 27 percent of refrigerators used to store vaccines on farms stayed between 35 and 45 degrees for 95 percent of the time.

Handle vaccines carefully the day they are to be used. Keep them in a cooler and do not allow the bottle of vaccine to come in contact with the ice. Only remove the vaccine bottle from the cooler when filling the syringe and return it to the cooler immediately after. Place the filled syringe in the cooler if you are not ready to use it. Only mix the amount of modified live vaccine that can be used within 30 minutes.

Other factors can determine if a vaccine actually immunizes an animal. Animals that have a comprised immune system cannot make effective use of vaccines. Also, be sure to handle animals as calmly as possible, not only when working them, but when gathering them. Do not use a "hot stick" unless it is the only option available. Increased stress causes vaccines to work poorly. Use clean syringes and needles, administer the proper dosage, and do not inject into dirty animals and try to work cattle when they are dry.

Some things mentioned may seem very elementary; however, it is extremely important that vaccines administered to animals cause an immune response. Animals must have a good level of immunity developed if they are to resist diseases for which they are exposed. Δ

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