

Make Pre-Breeding Vaccines A Priority



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Spring breeding season is fast approaching, and a healthy cow is essential for reproductive success. The earlier a cow can become pregnant during the breeding season, the earlier she will calve the following year, and an earlier calving date usually corresponds with a more valuable calf at weaning. Vaccinating the whole herd this time of year will not only protect the cows against reproductive diseases prior to the breeding season but will also provide protection to the spring-born calves against potential disease risks. Selecting the correct vaccines is a critical element in developing a herd health program.

Although herd health needs may vary among operations, there are a few standard vaccines that will protect against reproductive loss and poor efficiency in a cow herd that should be included for most herds. For cows and bulls, vaccinate with:

- 4- or 5-way viral vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV)
- Leptospirosis
- Vibriosis
- 7-way clostridial (Blackleg)

Another focus for the vaccination program should be to limit overall calf illness. Some operations should give consideration to the case history of diseases in the herd. If your herd has encountered problems with pinkeye, calf scours or respiratory pneumonia in the past, there are

vaccines for these problems that will help limit future outbreaks. However, the standard annual vaccines recommended for calves should include:

- 4- or 5-way viral vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV)
 - 7-way clostridial (Blackleg)
- If you plan to vaccinate replacement heifers, then consider:
- Brucellosis (Bang's) vaccine between 4 and 12 months of age
 - 4- or 5-way viral vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV)
 - Leptospirosis
 - Vibriosis
 - 7-way clostridial (Blackleg)

Your vaccination program should be viewed as an important part of an effective health management plan that would also include proper nutrition, parasite control and a simple biosecurity plan for your operation. The objective is to maintain a high level of herd immunity to minimize disease outbreak and improve profitability for the operation. Since vaccine needs vary from herd to herd, consider visiting with your herd veterinarian to get input regarding vaccine selection for your operation.

One concern that some producers may question: Is the cost of implementing a vaccine program justified? You should consider that avoiding a potential health disaster in your cattle operation easily validates the cost. Keep in mind the motto: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." In other words, the expense of a disease outbreak will far exceed the cost of disease prevention. Δ

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