



## Maximum Health Program for a March Calving Beef Cow Herd

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### Introduction

This fact sheet outlines a maximum herd health program for beef cow-calf producers. The schedule is based on a March calving situation. However, it can be adjusted to fit other calving times. Some of these practices may not be needed in all herds. Nevertheless, they are presented for those producers who have requested a program that provides maximum protection against common cattle diseases.

For a minimum herd health program, refer to Fact Sheet 3200 (Extension Bulletin E-1686).

### December-January-February (Late Gestation)

1. Check your free-choice mineral mix to be certain it supplies 8% phosphorus and a minimum of 40 ppm selenium (60 ppm is preferred). Feed year-round to the breeding herd.

2. If selenium deficiency has been a severe problem in the herd, consider administering slow-release selenium boluses to pregnant cows.
3. If lice are a problem, apply an approved pour-on.
4. Vaccinate replacement heifers when 9 to 12 months old with IBR-BVD-PI<sub>3</sub> killed virus, Lepto-5 bacterin, and Vibriosis bacterin.
5. If scours has been a problem in past, vaccinate the cow herd twice (3 weeks apart) with rota-corona-E. coli vaccine; second shot should be within 2-3 weeks of calving. Re-vaccinate annually.
6. Inject cow herd with 2 million IU of vitamin A if forage is apt to be deficient in vitamin A.

### March-April (Calving Season)

1. Calves at birth:
  - a. Orally vaccinate calf with rota-corona vaccine if the cow herd was not vaccinated (see previous section). Do this within 12 hours after birth.
  - b. Make sure calves get colostrum within 1 to 4 hours of birth. Have frozen colostrum available for calves that are slow to nurse. Frozen colostrum should come from older cows.
  - c. Dip navel in 7% iodine.
  - d. Give selenium-vitamin E injection. Repeat in 2 to 4 weeks if white muscle disease is a problem.
  - e. Give Vitamin A injection, 1 million IU.
  - f. Vaccinate calves with intranasal IBR-PI<sub>3</sub> if the cow herd is not vaccinated and you expect IBR to be a serious problem.

- g. Implant all calves destined for sale with a growth stimulant. **Do not** implant potential replacement heifers or bulls.
  - h. Identify calves with ear tags.
  - i. Castrate (optional).
  - j. Dehorn (optional).
2. Scours and death losses from cryptosporidiosis are becoming more prevalent in beef herds. There is no known cure for "crypto." Bolstering the calf's immune system with colostrum antibodies provides the best protection.
  3. Vaccinate the cow herd and replacement heifers twice the first year and annually thereafter with the following:
    - a. IBR-BVD-PI<sub>3</sub> killed virus vaccine.
    - b. Haemophilus somnus bacterin.
    - c. Lepto-5 bacterin (may have to vaccinate twice a year if lepto is a severe problem).
    - d. Vibriosis bacterin.
  4. Deworm the cow herd before going to pasture (if not done in fall).

## May-June-July (Pasture & Breeding Season)

1. Calves at 2 to 4 months old:
  - a. Bang's vaccinate replacement heifer calves from 4 through 8 months old (age varies by state).
  - b. Give blackleg-malignant edema bacterin. If a

serious problem in your area, vaccinate at 1 month and repeat after 5 months old.

- c. Nonreplacement calves implanted at birth with 100-day growth stimulants should be reimplanted.
  - d. Castrate and dehorn if not done earlier; beware of fly strikes in wounds.
2. Have your veterinarian palpate cows with potential reproductive problems: retained afterbirth, abnormal discharge, erratic cycles, repeat breedings. Treat if necessary.
  3. If pastures contain a high percent of alfalfa, put out poloxalene bloat blocks.
  4. If grass tetany is a problem, feed high magnesium salt or supplement.
  5. Provide fly control.
  6. Consider mid-summer deworming of cows and calves on parasite contaminated pastures.

## August

1. Vaccinate those calves that are 5 months old or older with:
  - a. IBR/PI<sub>3</sub> modified live vaccine if cow herd was vaccinated; if not, used either killed or intranasal vaccine.
  - b. BVD killed vaccine.
  - c. Haemophilus somnus bacterin.
  - d. Clostridial 7-way bacterin.
  - e. BRSV modified live vaccine.

f. Consider vaccinating with Pasteurella haemolytica toxoid (e.g., Presponse).

2. Bang's vaccinate replacement heifer calves if not done earlier.
3. Castrate and dehorn if not done earlier.
4. Beware of late-summer pink eye. Use eye patches if necessary.

## September

1. Wean those calves that are 6 months old or older. Do this no later than 1 month before sale time.
2. Get calves accustomed to eating grain or silage out of a feed bunk.
3. Provide hay free-choice.
4. Give booster vaccinations for IBR, PI<sub>3</sub>, BVD, Haemophilus somnus, Clostridia, BRSV, and Pasteurella haemolytica.

## October-November (Sale Time)

1. Cow herd:
  - a. Provide grub and lice control (observe cut-off dates).
  - b. Deworm.
  - c. Pregnancy check and cull open cows.
  - d. Give annual vaccinations, **if not done before breeding season:**
    - (1) Annual IBR-BVD-PI<sub>3</sub> killed virus vaccine.
    - (2) Annual Haemophilus somnus bacterin.

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(3) Annual Lepto-5 bacterin (may have to vaccinate twice a year if leptospirosis is a severe problem).

(4) Annual Vibriosis bacterin.

e. Vaccinate the cow herd annually at this time with 7-way Clostridial bacterin to protect newborn calves.

f. If quality of harvested forages is low and apt to be deficient in vitamin A, inject

cows with 2 million international units (IU) or add to diet in supplemental form. Repeat injections in 90-100 days.

2. Calves at sale time:

a. Haul sale calves to yards. Minimize stress.

b. Calves kept for replacements and/or later sale:

(1) Wean younger calves not weaned earlier and start on feed.

(2) Give booster vaccinations for IBR, BVD, PI<sub>3</sub>, Haemophilus somnus, Clostridia, BRSV, and Pasteurella haemolytica if not done earlier.

(3) Deworm if not done earlier.

(4) Provide grub and lice control.

(5) Reimplant non-replacement calves with a growth stimulant.



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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Gail Imig, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824.

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Revised 1:92- 2.5M-TCM-BP-Price 30 cents. FILE 19.143 - (Beef - Commercial)