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Processing Newly Arrived Feeder Cattle

Michigan Beef Production

Michigan State University Extension Service

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Processing Newly Arrived Feeder Cattle

by

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Introduction

The objective of this fact sheet is to outline a herd health program for newly purchased cattle coming into the feedlot for the first time.

The authors hasten to point out that there is a variation of opinion on how feeder cattle should be processed. Procedures that work well in one area may not be the best for another. Always consult your local veterinarian before undertaking a new program. The outline presented here represents a maximum program that may be larger in scope than is needed by many farmer feeders in the Midwest. However, it is a program that is known to work.

For information on health programs for calves prior to sale, consult Fact Sheets 3200, 3210, and 3230.

Procedures on Arrival

Health Practices

1. IBR-PI₃ modified live virus vaccine (either intranasal or intramuscular).
2. BVD vaccination is optional, depending upon individual situations. Consult local veterinarian.
3. Blackleg-malignant edema bacterin.
4. Vitamin A injection (1 million I.U.).
5. De-wormer.
6. Implant with growth stimulant.
7. Identify with ear tag (or back tag glued on forehead) to aid in detecting sick calves.

8. Pasteurella hemolytica and multocida bacterin (optional) — variable response.
9. Haemophilus somnus bacterin (optional) — if it is a problem.
10. Lepto pomona bacterin (optional) — if prevalent in area.
11. Enterotoxemia bacterin (optional) — if on high grain ration.
12. Castrate, dehorn and pour-on for grub and lice control (check for safe periods first) if calves are in strong, healthy condition.
13. Try to avoid mixing calves of different origins for first 3 to 4 weeks.
14. Do not shut calves in poorly ventilated building. Calves have less respiratory problems if left outside with a dry bed underneath them.
15. Check cattle twice daily for sickness. Use thermometer, treat cattle over 104°.

Starting on Feed

1. Turn waterers off for first 2-3 hours and force calves to eat before filling up on water. Then turn waterers back on.
2. Start on top quality grass or mixed grass-legume hay.
3. Start corn silage on second day by sprinkling on top of hay. Gradually decrease hay and increase corn silage over next 4 days until desired level of silage is reached.

4. For best results, the eventual starting ration should contain at least 50% concentrate (grain) so that energy level is adequate. Corn silage alone contains about 50% grain on a dry basis.
5. If starting lightweight calves under 350 lbs., feed a higher energy diet (70% grain, 30% roughage on a dry basis).
6. Do not rely on NPN as a sole source of supplemental protein for calves under 600 lbs. Use natural protein supplements such as soy. Start on 1-2 lb. all-natural 40% protein supplement per head per day, depending upon ration.
7. After calves reach 600 lbs., NPN can be used as a sole source of supplementation.
8. If medicated feeds are fed, use for only a short period of time (3 to 4 weeks).

Procedures 3 to 4 Weeks After Arrival

Health Practices

1. Finish practices not accomplished on arrival such as:
 - a. Castrating.
 - b. Dehorning.
 - c. Pour-on for grub and lice control.
2. Booster shots:
 - a. IBR-BVD-PI₃.
 - b. *Pasteurella hemolytica-multocida*.
 - c. *Haemophilus somnus*.
 - d. *Lepto pomona*.
 - e. Enterotoxemia.

Feeding Practices

1. By now, the cattle should be eating at least 2½% of body weight daily in dry matter (500 lb. calf = 12½ lb. dry matter per day).
2. Remove medicated feeds from ration.



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