

Forage Facts

Published by the Peace Country Beef & Forage Association

May 2020, Volume 16, Issue 184



Preparing for a Healthy Summer

By: Johanna Murray

For many cattlemen the last big task before the livestock go out to pasture for the summer, is getting your herd vaccinated, and treated with a parasiticide. Control of summer disease and managing parasites is vital to the health and performance of a successful cow herd. Pneumonia, parasites, and wild-life diseases like Lepto, cause weight loss and can interfere with herd fertility, resulting in financial losses.

To protect the herd from summer disease, many producers vaccinate at branding time. However, it's essential to consider how old your calves are when they're vaccinated. Because of the antibodies the calves get from colostrum; some vaccines can prove to be ineffective when given to calves less than 2 months old. There are exceptions, such as the intranasal vaccinations made for differing strains of pneumonia which can be given to calves within a few hours of birth. However, for best immunity, you should follow the recommendations on the bottle, or what your vet suggests. [Source](#)

In addition to timing, the diseases you face in your herd should play a defining role in your vaccination strategy. BRD and BVD are a must for all cattle, calves should get a 7 or 8-way vaccine that includes Blackleg, and your cows might need a leptovaccine. However, your operation might benefit from other vaccines as well, such as pneumonia, pink eye, and others.

It's essential to work with a veterinarian

to identify what your actual problem is. Vaccines work well, but bacteria and viruses are always mutating and evolving. Some examples where it's more useful to identify what type of disease you see in your herd is pneumonia, which can be caused by many different pathogens, both Viral and bacterial or be a symptom of another disease. Multiple viruses, bacteria, and parasites can cause scours as well, which is why vaccinating for scours isn't always effective. A viral vaccine doesn't help against scours caused by bacteria or parasitic infection.



Speaking of parasites, control of parasites can be challenging in the best of times. Wholesale reliance on products such as ivermectin can contribute to resistance in parasite populations. And more specific products can be expensive, or impractical to administer in large herds. Many holistic producers and grazing experts prefer to move away from manufactured parasiticides entirely to preserve or protect the beneficial insects and soil biology and allow their livestock to develop an immunity to the parasites. According to the AHDB, most cattle can become immune to internal parasites such as roundworms and lungworms by continual exposure over 2-3 grazing seasons. [Source](#)

However, regardless of your chosen method of control, timing and dosage

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are vital to the effectiveness of your treatment. Many parasiticides are intended to attack parasites at a specific point in development, meaning that if you dose your animals at the wrong time, it may not produce the results you need. Proper dosage is essential, not only to prevent resistance (low dosage) But also to prevent adverse reactions in your herd (Overdosing).

When considering your herd health plan, there are three main things to remember; Timing of both vaccines and parasiticides can have a significant impact on how ef-

fective your herd health plan is. Veterinarians often know what diseases and parasites are common in the area, and can be a great resource when developing a plan for your herd health plan. Control of parasites and disease is essential for your herd health plan. When in doubt, a call to your local vet's office is an excellent place to start.

Special Thank You to Dr J.M. Posniak at Greenview Veterinary Services in Valleyview for his input on recommended vaccines.

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WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK



It's that time of year again for our Annual Needs Assessment Survey!

Please take a few minutes to help us shape our programming for the next year!

Please scan the QR code with your phone, or visit surveymonkey.com/r/pcbfaAGM



Please Note: PCBFA Staff are Currently Working Remotely

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Living with Wildlife: Mitigating Predation



By: Marianne Krahn

Wildlife Damage Mitigation Practices

The time to send your cattle out on pasture is quickly approaching. For those of you who are dealing with predators, here are a few tips to help mitigate predation

Fencing: Multi-wire electric fencing can deter certain predators like wolves and bears. While it might not be an option for large pastures, it might be a good option around calving pastures or other small areas.

Timing of calving: the calves born before the snow is gone becomes a easy food source available to predators. Calving in sync with wild ungulates means there is a surge in food source available to predators. When given the choice, predators will more likely prey on wild animals.

Frequent human presence: frequent human presence is a good way to mitigate risk. Predator activity causes livestock to become agitated and restless, informing observant ranchers that predators are around.

Keep moving: some predators like getting to know their surroundings before attacking. Frequent moves of cattle prevent predators to get too comfortable in an unchanging environment.

Keep animals together: A large number of animals kept close together is harder to attack than isolated animals. Animals used to higher stock densities can also develop a stronger herd instinct and be more defensive.

Use proper animal husbandry: Lameness and sick animals are vulnerable and a liability. Provide appropriate mineral supplements. Keep sick or lame livestock off the range, remove deadstock and other attractants. Predated livestock known to be sick or lame should be viewed differently than predated healthy livestock.

Natural selection and culling: By running pairs and yearlings raised on the ranch and selecting replacements from successful mothers, it is possible to promote the transfer not only of genetics but also of

generational knowledge—how to survive on the landscape— passed from mothers to calves.

Even the most vigilant ranchers will lose animal to predation. When you find a dead animal, the first question to determine whether the animal died of a natural death or a predator attack. Bears, wolves, cougars and coyotes can be scavengers as well as predators. Here are some tips to know the difference.

Evidence of scavenging:

- There may be no blood on the ground around the carcass, or blood may have drained onto the ground from body cavities such as the nose.
- Lacerations and puncture wounds found on the hide's exterior do not show corresponding signs of hemorrhaging on the interior of the hide or in adjacent tissue.
- The body may be curled up with the legs tucked in, indicating the animal died of disease or other condition not related to predation.

Evidence of an Attack

- There may be blood on the ground indicating the animal bled when attacked. Blood stains may be spread widely around the dead animal. There may be a blood trail.
- Lacerations and puncture wounds on the hide's exterior will show corresponding signs of hemorrhaging on the interior of the hide and tissue.
- The body may be stretched out in an unnatural position.

The Wildlife Predator Compensation Program

The livestock covered under the program are cattle, bison, sheep, swine and goats. Horses and exotic animals, such as llamas, alpacas or mini-donkeys, are not covered. Producers may qualify for compensation when livestock are killed or injured by a grizzly or black bear, wolf, cougar or eagle. Attacks by coyotes or incidents of post-mortem feedings are not covered by the compensation program. Costs relating to both medications and veterinarian fees can be compensated up to the value of the injured animal. If you suspect that a predator has killed or injured your livestock, call the Report-A-Poacher hotline at 1-800-642-3800 to reach a Fish and Wildlife officer as soon as possible. An in-



Living with Wildlife: Mitigating Predation

investigator will examine the animal. You may be advised to move or cover the animal prior to the investigator's arrival, which will help ensure that evidence is not lost due to scavenging.

Report suspected livestock losses early: Losses must be reported within 3 days in order to be eligible for compensation under the Wildlife Predator Compensation Program. Early detection and reporting allows for more effective mitigation and control actions that may limit further livestock losses. Share information with your neighbours. Communicating information concerning livestock losses to predators may allow for others to increase vigilance, mitigation and husbandry practices and may limit additional livestock losses.

Preserve evidence: While the protection of public safety and property is a priority, if there is a delay in completing the investigation, collection of photographic evidence from the scene may preserve important evidence that can be lost due to scavenging, further decomposition and other environmental factors.

Ensure your safety and do not approach a livestock carcass if it is not safe. Do not disturb the scene or livestock carcass.

For more information on the Wildlife Predator Compensation Program, please check their website: alberta.ca/wildlife-predator-compensation-program.aspx

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Due to restrictions on public gatherings through the summer, we unfortunately will not be hosting events or plot tours through to the end of August.

We are working on self-guided plot tours and more video and webinar content. Keep your eyes open for updates!



If you have any ideas or requests for extension that you would like to see, please give Johanna or Marianne a call at the numbers below!

Connect with Us!

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