

drugs, and what time of year we are using our drugs, it has been worth every cent of it.

### **Feedlot**

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I will talk about a few things that the feedlot veterinarian can do and this does not just apply to feedlot veterinarians but to all large animal practitioners and how to deal with the client who does not do all of his own work himself, in other words, he has some hired help. They are going to need some training and some helping. We need to figure out some ways to get veterinary medicine and what it can do for our clients in front of them so that they can realize some of the savings that they are missing out on. Every time I go to one of my feedlots, that I have been to many times, I find some things that they are doing wrong and that need correcting and it takes a constant job of monitoring. Each time you go there you should be able to pay your way many times over. I think sometimes we veterinarians are afraid that it is, maybe, a little unethical to point out anything that we can do to save money for our clients, but I do not think we should be, so this evening I would like to just point out a few things that are real money savers for the client and are real services.

One thing that I think is real important is dip vat management in the feedlot. Many times you go to a feedlot and you just look at the vat and it looks alright and you think that they are getting them dipped and that everything ought to be under control. There is a lot more to it than that. Each vat should have a record and each time you should know the capacity of that vat, what it holds, and have a record there so that each time water is added to it you will know how much is added, and each time a new batch of insecticide is added to bring it up to strength, you will know how much that is. Then you should test that each time you are there. Check it out, see how many cattle have been there, if they are changing it as they should be. Take a sample and check for concentration. Chemagro, Bayvet, puts out a test kit for their corral and you get it from them if you are testing vats. Your technician can run a vat check test in about 15 minutes and tell if it is up to concentration. Unfortunately, some people do not feel that veterinarians are smart enough to run a dip vat test, and it is very difficult for a veterinarian to get one of those kits. However, the lay drug salesman can get them. You might be able to find a drug salesman and get one from him. When you are pulling samples from those vats, do not just skim a little off the top, rig up some type of little dipper that you can get down about three or four inches below the surface to pull your sample. One problem has been in stirring up the vats and getting drugs from settling. One thing that I have found that really works well in getting these cage vats stirred up is going to a used machinery pile and picking up about three old used discs and weld a little bolt on to them and mount them on the bottom of the dip vat cage, concave down, and

then when you run that cage up and down, that concavity of those discs bolted on the bottom of the cage as they slosh up and down really stirs the water. I have tried them after they have set for a week and not been used and in three minutes you can have them back into solution and up to test. Corral puts out some good information and you can get it from them about methods of stirring the jump through a walk through type vats.

I would like to talk just a little about starting new calves. I am talking about feedlots or backgrounders starting the calves that are 200 to 400 pounds. I think that it has been proven by studies and some of this has been brought up in some of the seminars that we have had so far this week, that the light weight calves need some energy when they come in. I like to see the calf started on rations that are from 50 to 60% concentrate. This is on the light calf - 400 pounds and below. I like to see them when they first come in filled with hay and then given free access to this concentration ration. This would be in a megacal type ration with 40 to 50 megacal per pound dry matter.

I think it is a good thing for a veterinarian to know the feedlot situation about some additives in supplements and how much to put in to control certain things. One is the urinary calculi problem and ammonia sulfate is the additive of choice. Usually if that is put in as one fourth of one percent of the total ration, it will be about the proper level. And the other thing, it has been talked about somewhat here, is the addition of potassium chloride in fighting dehydration and restoring electrolyte balance and getting the calves off to a better start. I think that this is important and the other thing that you should know about is salt. About a fourth of one percent of the total ration is salt and this is important in controlling urinary calculi and water consumption. Another tip that I have and nearly every operator will ask you when you go to his place to set up a health program is that "When I went to school, a long time ago, they said that the idea was to wait two or three weeks until you had them all straightened out, but the studies are now heavily in favor of working these calves just as soon as you get them in. Our policy is that if they are long haul calves we wait one day and let them fill up and rehydrate and then vaccinate them. If they are fresh calves and have not gone far, and that shrinkage is 5% or less, we like to work them the first day that they are in. I think one reason that veterinarians will never be replaced is because we cannot standardize operating procedures and say this is a hard and fast rule, do it that way every time. There are always the exceptions, a few that are too sick to work at all, and that is why we have veterinarians.

Another tip that has helped me a lot in serving my clients is to have training sessions for the health crews, the pen riders, the doctoring crews, the processing crews, and have them over dinner and maybe have something that they are interested in, like a film on team roping. In conjunction with that we have a little session on a current problem that is going on in the feedlot, maybe communication from pen riders to doctoring crew, this type of thing. I think that it is

very important to communicate with the people that we are working with. So many times veterinarians will communicate with the people they are working with but they do not communicate with the management or the people who are really paying the bills. I think that it is nice in these types of situations where we have consultation reports that each time we are there we write down what we have done and the things we have checked and point out the things that we have saved them money and how we have paid our way because if we do not tell them, no one else is going to and they like to know what they are spending their money on. I think that this is a good tip, if you will just take time to make yourself out a little professional form and leave that for those people when you leave, I think it will help a lot. Along with that, I recommend a monthly consultation form so that you can summarize all the things and they can see what is being done. Take part in their management meetings and their foreman meetings so that you can have some input and they can realize what really you can do for them.

#### **Cow/Calf**

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One of my real interests is what has been called herd health management. I do not care what you call it, it is involvement with your client. Involvement to the extent that you know what their program is and you know what their problems are and you can get a handle on their problems and offer them advice that will economically benefit them because as their returns on investments become smaller and smaller and the veterinarian's costs become higher and higher, we are going to lose our place in agriculture if we do not try to shift the way we practice so that we are an economic advantage to our clients. To me in a beef herd health program, what we are trying to achieve is maximizing the pounds of calf that the rancher has to sell at the end of his production year. There are only two ways that I know that you can achieve this. One is to increase the number of calves and the other is to increase the weight of those calves. I am not interested tonight in this short period of time in discussing the methods of doing either of these. Rather, I would just like to suggest some information which should be reflected in herd records that will help a practitioner and his client put a handle so to speak on reproductive efficiency in his herd. Something that you can really sink your teeth into. Information that will tell you not only what you have but where you are headed, information that you can use before it is too late. These are really pretty simple things but I wonder how often we fail to look at them in an analytical manner. Let me just list them for you.

First of all, the percent cows found to be bred at pregnancy diagnosis. Second, the percent calf crop after the first 20 days of the calving season. Third, the percent calf crop final. Fourth, weight of cows. Fifth, weaning weights of

the heifers. I think these five things used together and given some thought can go a long way to tell you if you are having a problem now or if you are going to have a problem in the future; in the next production year. Let's just look at them again, very shortly, individually.

*Percent cows bred at pregnancy diagnosis.* So many times when veterinarians do pregnancy diagnosis, they go out, they go through the procedure, tell the man how many bred cows he has, and he leaves. When you find a herd that has a low conception rate on pregnancy diagnosis, this is the ideal time to talk herd health management. He has a problem, it is apparent, and it is a time that he is going to be most receptive to suggestions for improvements in his operation. What are the reasons that you have a low conception rate or a low pregnancy diagnosis? There are lists of them and they involve a whole scope from nutrition to re-production disease to infertile bulls, to poor management, too long a breeding season, they are tremendous. This one thing in itself does not help you limit or help you diagnosis the problem. You have to have more information. *Percent calf crop*, in the first 20 days, is also a big help. It becomes more of a help every year you have this recorded, because if your percent calf crop the first 20 days one year was 50% and the next year it is 30, then you had better start looking pretty quick because the next year it might be 20%. You may have a reproductive disease, you may have a nutritional problem, but you had better start looking and if you look at that period of time, the first 20 days of the calving season, you can probably make some management changes or some preventative medicine changes within that herd that will help you bring this back up next year. Because you still have time from the first 20 days of your calving season to the beginning of your breeding season where you can make some very significant changes in the health of the herd, be it nutritionally or testing your bulls or whatever it may need to be, you have time to do it. *Percent calf crop final* is something that I do not think people understand. I think I talked to so many people who said "I got a 98% calf crop doc," but when you talk to them that is after they have culled their cattle after pregnancy diagnosis, or they did not count those cows that they culled during the middle of their breeding season because they had lameness problems or death losses or whatever. They only counted the number of cows they had when they weaned their calves. This is not calf crop percentage. The true definition of calf crop percentage is the number of cows at the beginning of the breeding season divided by the number of calves weaned alive. This will give you more information so that when you put it together with your other data it starts to make a little more sense. If your calf crop percentage the first 20 days is down, but your average calf crop percentage for the year is stationary, to me that is very suggestive of a nutritional problem but possibly a vibrio problem. If it is a vibrio problem, it is probably one that has been in the herd for a while. Probably there is a certain degree of immunity in that herd or you would see substantial losses at the end of your calf crop. What about