



A Good Health Program Pays

This month cattle producers will make their trek to the Cattle Industry Annual Convention and Trade Show in Reno, Nev., Feb. 6-9. It's an event I enjoy going to as a journalist and as a cattle producer. I always come home feeling "more educated" about what's going on in our ever-changing industry.

My favorite part of the convention is the Cattlemen's College® sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health. It's a daylong educational symposium. Attendees can pick which tracks or sessions they want to attend.

During last year's Cattlemen's College, I attended the session titled "Your Vet — A Valuable Asset." As a journalist, it was one of those sessions I wish I could print word-for-word. The take-home message was one for all producers to consider and implement.

Veterinarians Arn Anderson and Glenn Rogers stressed the importance of developing a relationship with your veterinarian, not just calling him or her when an emergency arises.

Anderson compared veterinarians to fire fighters: when a problem arises, they show up. He suggested producers use sight, smell, sound and touch to determine the severity of a situation before calling the vet.

Rogers encouraged producers to meet with their vet to establish herd health plans. He said many cow-calf

producers have not taken the steps necessary to look at the health goals of their operations and develop tangible documents that summarize the planned herd health activities on an annual basis. See "Nine step health planning."

"By having a health program and looking beyond vaccinations, you can hopefully prevent problems. Then if you do have problems, you know how to fix things specifically for your ranch," Anderson said.

In this issue

This month we take a look at a variety of animal health issues and management strategies that face cattlemen. The section that starts on Page 26 includes articles about preconditioning, tips for handling and administering of vaccines, castration dos and don'ts, information about the costly disease "trich" and tips to prevent scours.

On Page 32 is an article about controlling foot-and-mouth disease. The simulation model in the article demonstrates the importance of developing an animal traceability system in the U.S.

I hope the animal health information presented provides you some tips, but most of all, I hope you take the time to sit down with your veterinarian this winter and develop a health program. Remember, practice prevention for profit. **HW**

Nine step health planning

A health program is essential for improving efficiency on any cow-calf operation, including evaluating herd health goals and developing a written document that summarizes the needs of the operation. This process of planning health needs for the entire year can result in considerable cost savings and assures product availability by contracting arrangements with animal health suppliers.

The following steps from Glenn Rogers, veterinarian and Pfizer Animal Health cow-calf veterinary operations manager, can guide producers through developing health plans to fit the goals of their operations:

1. Work with a local veterinarian. A veterinarian will help you tailor a plan to fit your specific operation's goals.
2. Determine the optimal time of year for calving/breeding season. Because the circumstances are always changing, the season should be periodically reevaluated.
3. Determine the optimal length for calving/breeding season. This depends on the goals of your operation, management resources, geography, breed and other factors.
4. Research diseases and parasites significant in the region. Local veterinarians are knowledgeable about regional issues and can help offer the right solutions for your operation.
5. Determine the ideal time to administer preventive measures for each disease/condition. Vaccinating at the correct time can help maximize performance.
6. Determine which health and management practices will require cattle handling. Then, package the health management practices into a limited number of working sessions.
7. Develop a one-page plan summary. Successful planning combines immunology, management and economics into a simple, cost-effective program.
8. Select reputable products that are backed by research results that prove their levels of effectiveness.
9. Periodically update programs. As management changes occur and improved products make their way to the market, the health plan should be adjusted to be most efficient for the operation. **HW**