by **Angie Stump Denton,** *editor*

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How Are Your Manners?

Producers should watch their "p's and q's" when chuteside.

Angie Stump Denton

"Doing *nearly* everything right with a vaccination program can cause you some real problems," says Ron Gill, Texas A&M University Extension livestock specialist. Gill gave a presentation on chuteside manners, including proper vaccination strategies, during the 2006 Cattlemen's College hosted in conjunction with the Cattle Industry Annual Convention and NCBA Trade Show.

Gill says most vaccine failures are caused by mishandling the product prior to use. He disagrees with people who blame nutrition, stress or the vaccine for immunity problems.

Gill explains that vaccinating and immunizing are two different things. Vaccination refers to the process of giving the vaccine. Immunization refers to the process whereby the immune system recognizes the various foreign proteins or antigens present in the vaccine and produces antibodies and/or other aspects of the immune response against those antigens. This immune response provides protection against the specific infectious agent. The hope is that all vaccinations will result in immunization, but this is not always the case.

Gill says producers need to do their part in making sure the vaccinations result in immunization. "Reading the label is important," he says. "But what is even more important is following the instructions."

Following are a few of Gill's own instructions:

- Prevent exposure of vaccine to heat and light.
- Use only sterile needles and syringes.
- Administer proper dose.
- Use proper needle size.
- Administer in recommended route — intramuscular (IM) or subcutaneous (sub-Q).
- Administer in recommended site — the neck, especially for IM injections.
- Change needles often to reduce tissue irritation, at least every time you fill the syringe.
- Booster vaccines when label requires it.
- Write on or color code syringes and bottles to help keep vaccinations straight.
- Keep good records of vaccinations administered, including location given, amount and lot number of vaccine.

A few don'ts he also shares:

- Don't suck dirty air into the syringe and then put it in the bottle.
- After filling the syringe, don't shoot the excess air into the air and waste vaccine. Instead shoot the air into the bottle.
- Don't use disinfectants to clean syringes and needles to be used with modified-live virus (MLV) vaccines. The only way to properly clean a syringe is to take it apart and boil the pieces.
- Don't buy a big volume bottle of vaccine if you don't plan on using it all at one time.
- Don't leave a needle in the bottle. This practice sucks contaminated air into the bottle.
- Don't store opened bottles of MLV vaccines.
- Never leave vaccines in direct sunlight or ultraviolet (UV) light.
- Never leave vaccines unrefrigerated. Take a Styrofoam cooler and cut holes in it. Place the syringe in the cooler between vaccinations.
- Never inject a vaccine in the hip or upper round.

Follow these suggestions and more of your vaccinations should result in immunizations. Gill says the bottom line is to never assume anything, always check. Just because you've administered a vaccine one way for 20 years doesn't mean it's the right way. Read the label.

Visit with your local veterinarian regarding vaccination questions and work together to develop a vaccination program to fit your farm or ranch.

This issue

This month we focus on animal health. Inside you'll find three articles by Heather Smith Thomas that take a look at bovine viral diarrhea (BVD), coccidiosis and winter parasites. Each article has some good tips; even the most experienced cowboy can pick up a few good ideas.

Also in this issue you'll find the American Hereford Association's *Annual Report*. I encourage you to take time to read what's going on in your Association. It's an exciting time to be a Hereford breeder. **HW**

Animal Health INSIGHT

Ron Gill, Texas A&M University Extension livestock specialist, demonstrated proper vaccine handling during the 2006 Cattlemen's College. Here you see an example of how to keep vaccines cold by cutting holes in disposable Styrofoam coolers.