

Health Management for Stocker Cattle

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University of Georgia Extension

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Objectives

Profitably raise weaned calves to target market weights

Manage cost of production

Manage feed and land resources

Upgrade cattle market value

Assure feeding/breeding performance

Beef quality assurance



Cost-effective program with successful outcomes

Successful Stocker Programs

- × Cattle management PLAN
- × Forage, feed and water management PLAN
- × Labor and facilities PLAN
- × Health management PLAN
- × Marketing PLAN
- × KEY: A planned program



Stocker Health Management

- × Categorize cattle "RISK" at the start
- × Planned receiving program
- × Sound vaccination program
- × Simple and applicable treatment programs
- × Practice "low-stress" in all programs
- × Workable facilities and labor
- × Preparation and planning for success

Risk Categories for Stocker Calves

Low – yearling and weaned, preconditioned calves on sound nutritional programs

High – Unexposed

Fresh, weaned calves from single source and naïve to environmental and health risks

High – Exposed

Recently weaned, multi-source, commingled calves from auction markets under high stress

- × Shrink – purchase weight loss, >7-8% BEWARE

Receiving Program

- × First 2-4 weeks after arrival is most critical
- × Stressors:
 - Market - handling – trucking – processing
 - Environmental changes – physical adaptation
 - Nutritional changes – rumen function
 - Disease challenges – immune system
 - Social adjustments – commingling
 - Human and Cattle dispositions

Best Management Practices (BMP)

- ✦ Receiving feeds and rations
 - High-quality grass hay and fresh, clean water
 - Clean, quiet, uncrowded receiving pen
 - Rest and adaptation
 - Limited, highly palatable, high-TDN feeds
 - Utilizable protein and minerals/vitamins
 - Adequate bunk space
 - Early observation for health and feed intake

Best Management Practices (BMP)

- ✦ Disease prevention
 - Pull and isolate sick and injured animals early
 - Vaccinations
 - Metaphylactic antibiotics
 - Feed-medications for coccidiosis
 - Internal and external parasite control
- Record-keeping of all procedures/treatments

STOCKER VACCINATIONS

- ✦ BMP – *vaccinate 24 to 36 hrs. after arrival*
DO NOT DELAY PROCESSING

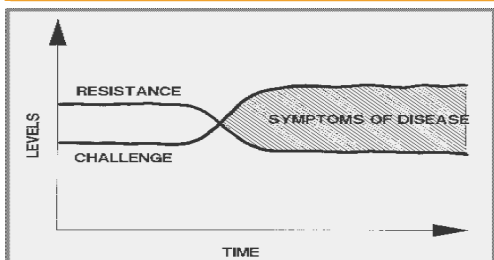
Vaccines: *Highly recommended*

IBR – PI3: Intra-nasal and systemic, MLV
 BVD – type1 and 2, MLV
 BRSV - MLV
 Mannheimia-Pasteurella: Toxoid-Leukotoxoid
 Clostridial +/-

VACCINATION STRATEGIES

- ✦ Consult with veterinary services to develop a comprehensive , risk-based vaccination plan
- ✦ Categorize disease risk for groups of calves
- ✦ Proper vaccine selection, handling and administration
- ✦ Low-stress handling
- ✦ Establish reasonable expectations for vaccine efficacy and time for response
- ✦ Booster viral vaccines in 10 to 21 days

Immunity to Disease
 Vaccines attempt to enhance immunity but are not retroactive



Management of newly received or weaned calves during the first three to four weeks may very well determine the profit or loss of a stocker cattle enterprise.

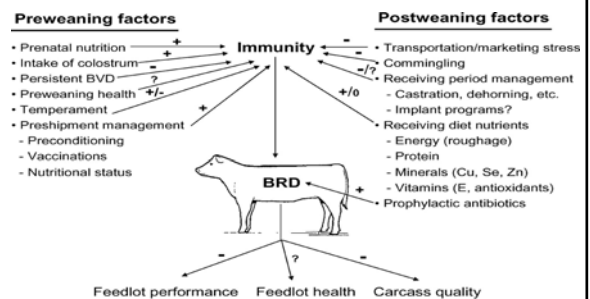


Figure 2. Receiving calf health program.

Point of origin	Receiving pens	2 to 4 weeks after arrival
	Metaphylactic Antibiotic*	
	ID and records	
	IBR, PI ₁ , *(IN)	
	MLV-killed vaccine (IBR, PI ₁ , BVD, BRSV)	2nd MVL-vaccine
	Pasteurella*	Pasteurella*
	Clostridial-5-way or 7-way	Clostridial
	Tetanus Toxoid**	Dehorn*
	Treat for internal and external parasites (products should control lungworm)	Castrate*
	High quality, palatable feed and hay (the feed should contain coccidiostat)	Implant
Remember. Always follow Beef Quality Assurance (MS-BQA) guidelines.		
*Decision should be made by your veterinarian when you plan your health program.		
**If you use banding techniques for castration or if there is a history of livestock deaths because of tetanus on the farm.		

BRD – Respiratory Disease

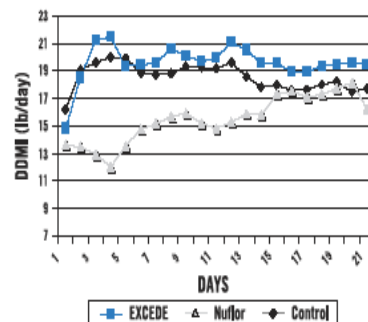
- ✗ Metaphylactic antibiotic treatment
 - Mass medication of all individuals upon arrival
 - Approved injectable antibiotics:
 - Micotil (Elanco) Follow all label instructions
 - Tetradure (Merial) and prescription requirements
 - Nuflor (Schering/Plough)
 - Excede (Pfizer) and consult with veterinarian
 - Draxxin (Pfizer) for proper strategy of use

METAPHYLACTIC TREATMENT

- ✗ Widely utilized in moderate to high-risk calves
- ✗ Proven to be cost-beneficial to reduce BRD, improve performance, and improve outcomes
- ✗ Utilize in a strategic plan to reduce BRD:
 - Cattle risk
 - Operation history
 - Time/labor to treat cattle
 - Value of cattle



Feed Intake in Healthy Cattle



Feed Medication Strategy

- ✗ Coccidiostat medication for prevention/control of coccidiosis
 - Deccox
 - Rumensin
 - Bovatec
- Incorporate in starter/receiving ration for 21 to 28 days
- Cost-effective in most stocker cattle operations

Parasite Management

- ✗ Parasites have impact on health, immunity and performance of young calves
- ✗ Administer upon arrival processing
- ✗ Choice of products:
 - History, source and risk in cattle
 - Targeted parasites – internal/external
 - Method of administration – PROPER
 - Cost and benefit

Treatment Programs - Plan

A successful program for the management of sick stocker calves and yearlings must be simple and systematic: that is, a sick animal must be easily identified, and the treatment must be routine and require a minimum of judgement decisions by the working crew.

The key elements in this program include the following.

Identifying sick cattle as soon as possible.

Keeping adequate records.

Evaluating sick cattle daily.

Changing treatment, if necessary, until an improvement is noted.

Systematic treatment of sick animals.

A stocker operator wanting to use this program should consult a veterinarian prior to implementing these procedures.

Information and Decision Management

- ✗ Record Keeping: Written, Electronic
- ✗ Animals must be individually identified to properly record and use information
- ✗ Necessary to identify all health management procedures and treatment events
- ✗ Necessary to make sound decisions for current and future backgrounding/stocker cattle investments

BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE

Anytime the inappropriate use of medications in meat animals leaves "drug residue," that is WRONG. It is wrong because: many people are sensitive to certain drugs; some drugs can accumulate in body tissues and eventually reach a toxic level; and the consumers of meat and meat products have the right to purchase a clean wholesome product. **A clean wholesome product is one free of "drug residues."** Many times newly arrived sick cattle will not respond to some of the "approved" medications; some sick animals will not respond to the dosages recommended on the label or to the recommended route of administration. Experience has shown that using "unapproved" medications, changing dosages, and even changing the route of administration quite often can save the life of sick animals. Doesn't sound legal, does it? **If you take it upon yourself to use "unapproved" drugs, change the dosage, or change the route of administration it is not legal. However, these procedures can be legal if you follow the guidelines established by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).**

FDA guidelines are very specific as to using drugs in food animals, and cover both "Within Label Usage" and "Extra-Label Usage." FDA Guidelines for "Within Label Usage" restricts the use of a drug to the species of animals for which it is approved (beef cattle can receive only those drugs approved for use in beef cattle). In addition, the drug must be administered by the route(s) stated upon the label, and the drug must be administered at the dosage level stated upon the label. Any deviation from these guidelines will be considered as using a drug "Extra-Label." Extra-Label drug usage is illegal unless the FDA guidelines are strictly adhered to. The "right" to use drugs in an extra-label fashion is strictly regulated by the FDA. Before extra-label usage can legally occur, the FDA requires that the following criteria be met.

PRUDENT EXTRA-LABEL DRUG USAGE

1. Careful diagnosis is made by an attending veterinarian within the scope of a **valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship**.
2. A determination is made that there is no marketable drug labeled to treat the condition diagnosed and that treatment at the label dosage is found to be ineffective.
3. Procedures are instituted to **assure that the identity of the treated animals is carefully maintained**.
4. A significantly extended period is assigned for drug withdrawal prior to marketing the treated animals, and steps are taken to assure that the assigned time frames are met and no harmful residues occur

Stocker Cattle Health Management

- ✗ Summary:
 - Recognize risk-levels of cattle types, ages, background, stocker operation and disease challenges and prevention expectations.
 - Develop and follow a strategic plan for risk-evaluation, disease prevention and treatment, and the influences of your management on outcomes.
 - Consult with veterinary and extension experts to make sound production decisions.