LSU AgCenter Research & Extension BEEF update

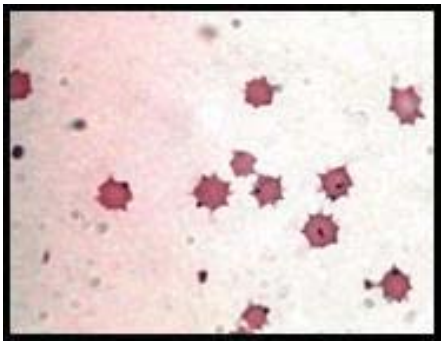
Newsletter: May, 2008

May Announcements

Thank you to all of those who participated in the April Calf to Carcass Program Tour, and a special thanks to our **s**ponsors, The Louisiana Cattlemen's Association, Mr. Rayburn Smith, Lone Star Feed, the Hitch family, Express Ranches and Purina, for making this trip possible.

Thursday, May 8th - 2008 Hay/Forage Day at the Southeast Research Station near Franklinton, LA
From 8:30 AM - 4: 30 PM, the 2008 Southeast Research Station Hay/ Forage Day will emphasize forage planting (especially legumes), harvesting and quality.

Animal Health - Anaplasmosis



Anaplasmosis: Prepare a prevention plan now.

Anaplasmosis is disease of cattle that is caused by the blood parasite Anaplasma marginale. This organism infects red blood cells, which leads to anemia. A. marginale can also infect sheep and goats and some wild ruminants, including white-tailed deer. These animals don't usually show signs of disease, but can possibly serve as a reservoir for the disease. This disease is endemic in some parts of Louisiana, meaning that it occurs regularly and is basically "native" to the area. Be aware that due to increased movement of cattle in previous years, some areas that have been considered non-endemic in the past may now have more anaplasmosis. With cattle moving in and out of hurricane and drought ridden areas, the possibility of introduction of diseases, including anaplasmosis, increases.

Transmission

Anaplasmosis is transmitted by insects or people. Horse flies, and some species of ticks are the main insect vectors. Spread by other biting flies (such as stable flies), horn flies and mosquitoes is unlikely, but possible during severe infestations. People can spread anaplasmosis through reuse of needles, and improper cleaning of instruments during dehorning, castration or tattooing. In one study, if a needle was used on an infected cow, the next animal had about a 60% chance of getting infected if the same needle was used.

Clinical Disease

Once the Anaplasma organism infects an animal it usually incubates in the body for 3-5 before the animal actually gets sick. Cattle less than two years of age rarely show any signs, even if they become infected. Cattle older than two years of age have more severe disease and are more likely to die. Whether or not an animal shows any signs, if it becomes infected, it is usually infected for life. These carrier animals are immune to future disease, but become a source of infection for other cattle.

May Checklist

May Spring Calving

- Castrate and dehorn any calves missed at birth
- Check out condition of bulls during breeding season. Provide supplemental feed if necessary
- Monitor cows to make sure females are breeding and conceiving.

General Recommendations

- Control pasture weeds by herbicide or clipping
- Fertilize summer pastures according to soil test recommendations
- Check out hay equipment and ensure it is operable
- Control Flies
- Mob graze remaining winter annual pastures or cut hay to ensure that summer pasture can grow

Animal Health - Anaplasmosis, Cont'd from Page 1

Outbreaks of anaplasmosis usually occur in summer and fall. Some of the common signs are fever, weakness, depressed attitude, decreased appetite, decreased milk production, and a white or yellow color to the gums, white of the eye, or vulva. Aggressive behavior is also common, especially in beef cattle. Abortions may occur in females and temporary infertility can occur in males. Animals with severe disease may die. If they survive, they are likely to be "poor-doers". Infected animals with less severe signs or no signs at all can have drops in milk production and infertility/ embryonic death. This leads to decreased numbers of calves born and decreased weaning weights, both of which add to the financial losses due to anaplasmosis. In endemic areas, some herds may only suffer these less noticeable problems without having the very obvious illness and deaths This makes the disease harder to recognize but financial losses can still be severe.

Diagnosis

If anaplasmosis is suspected, producers should contact their veterinarian to confirm the diagnosis. There are other diseases such as "red water" (caused by a Clostridium), and leptospirosis that can appear similar. There are tests to find carrier animals. A new test called the competitive ELISA ("cELISA") appears to be the best. Just beware that in the first days after infection, the test may be negative, even though the animal is infected. So re-testing is sometimes indicated.

Treatment

Treatment of cattle with long-acting formulations of injectable oxytetracycline can be beneficial if done in the very early stages of the disease. Many times cattle aren't recognized as infected until they are severely anemic, and treatment may be too late. In fact, the stress of treatment may kill the animal, so it's sometimes best to leave them alone. A blood transfusion could be considered in valuable animals, but still may not prevent death. Treatment is best reserved for the remainder of the herd to stop any early infections from getting more severe. Treatment of carrier animals to clear them is not usually effective so should not be attempted.

Prevention and Control

For herds in endemic areas there is constant potential for exposure, and total prevention or elimination of the disease from a herd is not realistic. Therefore, the goal is to prevent and minimize clinical and subclinical disease and production losses. Producers in endemic areas should assume there is a good chance they have carrier animals in their herd that look perfectly healthy but can be a source of infection, so practices that could potentially spread the disease (such as reusing needles) should be eliminated.

2008 Louisiana Calf to Carcass Program Tour

The 2008 Louisiana Calf to Carcass Program had another educational and enjoyable trip recently. Participants were picked up in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Alexandria, Shreveport and we even picked up two riders on the side of the interstate between Natchitoches and Shreveport. As usual, Ms. Sandi Segrera and Vermilion Tours did an outstanding job of making the trip even more successful.

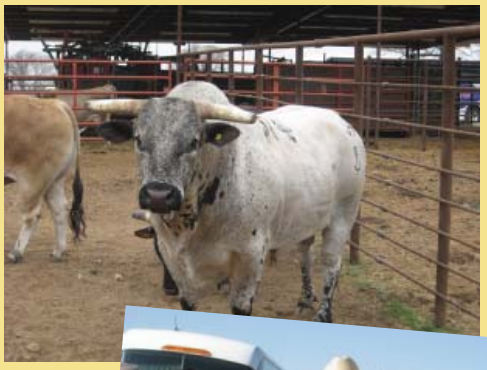
Our first stop was at D & H Cattle Company near Ardmore, Oklahoma. Dillon and H.D. Page have been named the top bucking bull contractor of the Professional Bull Riders Association for the past 5 years. If anyone is interested in purchasing some of their heifers, we were informed that at their last sale their heifers averaged a mere $17,000 a head. We departed D & H and went to the United States National Postal Training Center (hotel and complex) in Norman, Oklahoma to spend the night. The following morning we stopped by the Oklahoma City Memorial commemorating the people that died during the bombing of the federal building. Next, we headed to Yukon, Oklahoma to tour Express Ranch located on land that the old Chisum Trail went through. They are one of the largest seedstock suppliers of Angus and Limousin cattle in the country. After a unique tour of their cattle operation, black Clydesdale operation, genetics and embryo lab, and seeing Mr. Bob Funk's (owner) 43,000 square foot house, Express Ranch treated us to a rib-eye steak lunch.

After lunch we headed across the Oklahoma panhandle to Guymon and Hitch Feedyard. We toured our nine pens of cattle on feed and also looked at a good number of pens from other Louisiana producers. We also got a short tour of the Hitch Ranch and their cattle horse operation. Hitch fed us an outstanding barbecue dinner that night. On Tuesday morning we drove to Hereford, Texas to tour the White Energy Ethanol Plant that produces ethanol and distiller grains (DGs). There are 11 cattle feedlots in Hereford and there was a steady stream of trucks coming through to pick up DGs.

That afternoon we traveled to Wichita Falls, Texas to eat at Fat McBride's Steakhouse and spend the night. Wednesday morning we rode to Saginaw, Texas to tour Standard Meat Company. They cut and process steaks for the Outback Restaurants in the United States. After the tour we went to the Fort Worth Stockyards to eat lunch and then started our long drive back home.

I would like to thank our sponsors that helped alleviate some of our expenses. Those sponsors were the Louisiana Cattlemen's Association, Mr. Rayburn Smith, Lone Star Feed, the Hitch family, Express Ranches and Purina.

Dr. Tim Page, LSU AgCenter



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Supplying tetracycline products in feed or mineral supplements will not totally eliminate problems, but will greatly reduce them. Tetracycline is added to these supplements at different levels, so make sure that the supplement is labeled for the "prevention of anaplasmosis" to assure a high enough dose. Control of ticks and flies will also decrease spread of the disease. One of the most effective means of prevention is vaccination. The only vaccine currently available is from University Products, L.L.C. (anaplasmosis.com) and not all states have approval to use this vaccine. This product is relatively expensive compared to other vaccines, but when the costs of deaths, chronic poor-doers, abortions, and milk production decreases are all considered, the vaccine may very well be cost effective in herds in endemic areas. The time to vaccinate is in the early spring. Producers should talk to their veterinarian about the availability and cost effectiveness of this vaccine in their herds.

In non-endemic areas, prevention of infection may be possible with biosecurity measures, especially testing of herd additions with the cELISA. However, since this test may miss animals in the very early incubation phase, single use needles, proper cleaning of equipment, and vector control are important just in case a carrier slips into the herd undetected. Vaccination of valuable animals should also be considered.

Introducing cattle from non-endemic areas to endemic areas should be done carefully. If possible, introduce new animals during the non-vector season (if there is one). Consider vaccination on arrival. If vaccination is not available, consider treatment of the new animals with long acting oxytetracycline 2 weeks after the vector season starts, or 2 weeks after arrival if introduced during the vector season.

Hay and Feed Supplier Directory

LSU AgCenter is still collecting infomration from Hay and Feed Suppliers around the state. You can find this information on our website at: www.lsuagcenter.com/beef

If you or someone you know would like to be listed on the Louisiana Hay and Feed Supplier Directory, send your information to: jtlackey@agcenter.lsu.edu with your Address, Parish, Telephone Number and Resources Available.

Louisiana Market Report - April 2008

Cattle receipts for the month of April were 13,692 head, compared to 14,994 in March and 20,633 head reported in April, 2007

Feeder steer prices were mostly 5.00 - 7.00 lower, feeder heifers 4.00 - 8.00 lower. Boning cows sold steady to 3.00 lower.

Price Comparisons:	**Late April**	**Late March**	**Year Ago**
500-550 lb steers	102.00-112.00	102.00-117.00	110.00-120.00
550-600 lb steers	91.00-105.00	95.00-101.00	100.00-110.00
500-550 lb heifers	92.00-109.00	94.00-100.00	104.00-118.00
550-600 lb heifers	90.00-101.00	94.00-107.00	100.00-110.00
Boning Cows	50.00-56.00	50.00-59.50	47.00-55.00

Article Written by Taylor Cox, USDA Market News.

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