

This time of year many cattle producers are busy getting the last of their hay put up, pregnancy checking cows, and weaning calves before winter comes. Along with these management practices, producers should be vaccinating their pregnant cattle now before the spring calving season arrives.

Annual vaccination with a killed virus respiratory vaccine like the recommended ViraShield vaccine will help increase cow health. Because most cow health problems occur around the calving season, the best time to vaccinate cows is at dry-off. This helps build immunity in the cow and protects her at calving. This also concentrates the colostrum which is passed to the calf, increasing its immunity as well.

It is especially important to use a killed virus vaccine on these pregnant cows rather than a modified live virus in order to decrease amount of abortions. A recent study published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA) found that a herd of healthy, pregnant heifers in Wyoming lost 25% of their calves due to IBR abortions and lost pregnancies following vaccination with MLV vaccines. This suggests that MLV vaccines can cause abortion even when administered in accordance with label directions. Though abortion cannot be completely avoided due to unforeseen situations, vaccinating with a killed virus will result in fewer pregnancy losses than if a MLV vaccine were to be used.

For more information concerning the use of killed viruses or modified live viruses, or to purchase vaccines for your herd, please contact us.

Thanks,

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