

Last week we discussed the importance of proper vaccination and arrival protocols when dealing with high-risk calves. Though these are imperative protocols to have in place, it is of equal importance to ensure that adequate nutrition and husbandry tactics are also in place for the days and weeks that follow the calves' initial arrival at the ranch.

During the two week quarantine period, high-risk calves should be fed 1-2% of their body weight in a 12-14% protein medicated feed twice a day, along with free choice hay. Because calf history is often unknown, it is best to assume that they are not accustomed to human interaction, and have never been exposed to feed or water troughs. To aide in this transition period, we recommend placing the feed and water troughs on one side of the pen. Then, stand opposite from where the troughs are placed in order to gently ease the calves to their food and water, a multi-beneficial process which allows the calves to learn where their food and water are. Additionally, standing in the pen for long periods of time (up to two hours at a time at each feeding) teaches the calves to get used to people, and allows you to see which calves, if any, are not going to the troughs to eat. This process should be done at morning and evening feeding for at least the first three days.

Most illnesses in high-risk calves will occur in the first 3-5 days following ranch arrival. That said, it is important to note that nasal discharge should not be the only symptom to look for when diagnosing sick calves. If calves have been vaccinated, but have a morning nasal discharge, yet are eating and acting normally, there is no reason to treat these cattle. However, if the calves have a nasal discharge combined with lack of appetite or energy, or other symptoms indicating illness, they should be treated.

As stated last week, this post-arrival care and management of high-risk calves is pivotal as the greatest potential for loss occurs in the first two weeks after arrival. For more information concerning backgrounding tips for high-risk calves, please contact us.

We have a client that has a small herd of Angus and Brangus cattle for sale, including some registered cattle. He also has six breeding age Angus bulls for sale. Please contact Laura at Henderson County Veterinary Hospital (903-675-5613) for more information.

Thanks,

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