

As cattle producers, it is wise to do what we can to ensure that costs stay low while production stays high. To do this, we need to maintain proper health, reproductive, and otherwise overall management of our cattle. For the past several weeks we have discussed some of the different health issues that can drastically increase cost and decrease productivity of your herd. We want to continue this discussion and talk about yet another insidious disease that has the potential to create major issues in your operation- BVD PI.

Bovine Viral Diarrhea Persistent Infection, or BVD PI, is a health issue that affects not only the profitability of an operation, but the productivity of it as well. A calf can contract BVD in-utero from its infected dam. Once the virus is transmitted to the fetus, that calf will be born persistently infected with BVD. This means that the BVD PI calves will be infected with BVD for an indefinite amount of time. In other words, calves born to BVD infected dams will be BVD infected themselves, and will never be rid of the disease. Although some BVD PI calves may be easy to detect, as they may be smaller than their herd mates and show repeated health problems, this is not always the case. Some BVD PI calves may not show any symptoms of being sick, and may be the same size as the rest of the calves in the herd. Regardless of whether or not you can spot PI calves in the pasture, it is most important to understand the severity of the disease and know what steps to take to prevent it from spreading and affecting your whole operation.

BVD PI calves pose a great threat to your operation because they have the potential to transfer this disease to other cattle in the herd. They shed the virus particles through their bodily secretion- saliva, urine, and even tears. Therefore, the PI calf may contaminate any area that it comes in contact with, thus opening the door for other calves to contract the virus simply by sharing the same feed or water troughs. Then, once the animal becomes infected with the virus, its immune system will be compromised. This puts the calf at risk for a number of other health issues, which will negatively affect the productivity of your operation. Some producers believe that only calves are susceptible to BVD. However, this is not true. Adult cattle that come in contact with PI calves are also at risk. That is why it is especially important to do what you can to prevent its unfavorable impact on your herd.

To prevent BVD from affecting your operation, it is recommended that any new cattle introduced to the herd be first tested for BVD. By taking a notch from the animal's ear and sending it to the lab, a producer can know for sure if that animal is infected with the disease. It may also prove to be very beneficial to vaccinate your naïve heifers pre-breeding with a modified live virus with fetal protection. After receiving two doses as heifers, adult cows should then receive a booster yearly. This helps protect the cows and their fetuses from being affected by BVD.

BVD PI is a vicious cycle- an infected dam passes BVD to her calf in-utero, the calf is born persistently infected (PI) with BVD, and infects other cattle in the herd. These BVD carrying calves grow up to be adult females, who then pass BVD on to their fetuses, and the cycle continues. As a producer, you should take the necessary steps to keep the cycle from continuing. Vaccinate and test your cattle diligently. The costs associated with prevention of BVD PI pale in comparison to the cost you could be facing if a BVD PI outbreak develops in your herd. For more on BVD PI, the treatment, or prevention, please contact us.

The Oklahoma National Stockyard prices for feeder steers medium and large 1 sold on Monday, September 26, 2016 are as follows: 462lb- \$155.65, 573lb- \$141.00, 674lb- \$137.03, 772lb- \$129.58. The price for October 2016 feeder steers on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was \$126.175 at opening September 28, 2016.

Thanks

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