

Over the course of the past several weeks we have discussed a variety of diseases and issues that have one major thing in common. From acorn toxicity and BVD to osteoarthritis and Johne's, the common denominator is that these are all considered insidious diseases, proceeding gradually, and with harmful effects. To complete this series we want to discuss one more insidious disease, Neosporosis, and how it can affect your operation.

Neosporosis in cattle is caused by the parasite *Neospora caninum*, which primarily resides in canine hosts such as dogs, foxes, and coyotes. These canines can shed large numbers of the oocytes through their fecal matter, which is how the cattle become exposed to the parasite. If a pregnant cow picks up the parasite and contracts the disease, she may then pass the disease on to her fetus, resulting in an abortion. Typically, Neosporosis is the most risky when the female is pregnant with her first calf after being infected with *Neospora*. After her first pregnancy of being infected with Neosporosis, the female likely will not incur any further issues. However, the *Neospora* parasite will remain in the infected female for life.

Unfortunately, there is no effective treatment for *Neospora* infection in cattle, so the best management step to take is to prevent it from being introduced in your operation in the first place. However, this is not only time consuming, it is virtually impossible. Because *Neospora* is spread by canines, producers would have to restrict all cattle-canine exposure, from feed and water sources to the pastures and pens where the cattle reside. If dogs or coyotes find access to these areas, it is very likely that they are contaminating it, leaving behind the *Neospora* parasite for the cattle to pick up. Thus, perhaps the most efficient way to manage it is to closely watch your cattle throughout the year. Neosporosis generally causes abortion during mid gestation in cattle- at around 5 to 8 months of gestation. If you have a cow abort at this stage, it is wise to have tests done to determine if *Neospora* was the cause. Having this knowledge will help aide in making management and culling decisions for that female. Further, it is possible for an infected female to pass *Neospora* on to her fetus in-utero, and **not** abort. In instances such as this, the live calf would be infected, and may have an abortion herself later in life, or may pass the infection on to her fetuses in-utero.

Although *Neospora* cannot be treated, or efficiently prevented, it is one of the key insidious diseases to be mindful of as a cattle producer. As you continue to manage your cattle in the weeks, months, and years to come, remember this insidious disease and the others discussed, and act immediately if you believe they have started playing a role in your operation. If you have any questions about Neosporosis, or any of the other insidious diseases discussed in this series, please contact us.

The Oklahoma National Stockyard prices for feeder steers medium and large 1 sold on Monday, October 11, 2016 are as follows: 474lb- \$137.45, 573lb- \$125.86, 684lb-\$124.84, 770lb- \$125.52. 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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