

We recently began a new series in which we will discuss various insidious diseases. These are the diseases that are especially dangerous because they can sneak up on you and cause irreparable damage before you realize what is going on. Last time, we introduced the first insidious disease- acorn toxicity, and this week we will discuss another potentially fatal disease that may affect your cattle operation- Johne's Disease.

Johne's Disease is particularly harmful because it is slow and progressive, but also contagious and untreatable. Johne's is a disease caused by a bacterium related to the same bacterium that causes tuberculosis in humans. This bacterium infects the intestine in the cattle, causing inflammation. Once the intestine becomes inflamed, the intestinal wall thickens which restricts nutrient absorption. As a result, the cattle will have diarrhea and will begin losing weight. They will also be *non-responsive* to treatment. This disease may be difficult to detect initially because the cattle will typically continue to appear healthy- feeling good and showing a good appetite.

Because there is no effective treatment for Johne's, it is best to do what you can to prevent it from ever taking root in your operation. To do this, it is wise to first have a thorough understanding of how this bacterium introduces itself in an animal. Since the bacteria lives in the intestines, it makes sense that infected cattle shed the bacteria in their feces. This leads to contamination of feed and water sources, which creates the most common method of infection- ingestion of the bacteria. It is also common for infected animals to pass the bacteria through their milk and colostrums to their offspring. Infected dams can even pass the disease to their offspring while they are still in utero.

Learning how Johne's presents itself in an animal shows us that it is critical to implement certain management measures to prevent it from becoming an issue in your operation. The best way to do this is to be sure that new cattle brought into your herd are not infected with this bacterium. This may prove to be easier said than done, so there are some other management measures that may be taken to help keep Johne's from affecting your cattle. 1.) Avoid manure contamination of the animals' feed and water sources. 2.) Feed the cattle in clean feed bunks, and use water troughs if possible. 3.) Identify and remove all test-positive animals in your herd. 4.) Cull the offspring of known infected dams as soon as possible. Because Johne's Disease can so greatly impact an operation, we should do all that we can to prevent it from taking place in our cattle. How are you keeping Johne's from affecting your cattle operation? To learn more about Johne's Disease, contact us or visit: <http://www.johnesdisease.org/>

The Oklahoma National Stockyard prices for feeder steers medium and large 1 sold on Monday, August 15, 2016 are as follows: 490lb- \$170.16, 581lb- \$161.81, 666lb- \$158.26, and 781lb- \$149.52. The price for September 2016 feeder steers on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was \$146.8 on closing Monday, August 15, 2016.

Thanks,  
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