

Most ranchers understand the importance of their calves getting sufficient colostrums directly after they are born. They know that if adequate colostrums are not consumed serious and sometimes fatal repercussions may occur if treatment is not given in a timely manner. This week we will discuss one area that will be negatively affected if proper amounts of colostrums are not received.

Navel ill occurs when bacteria enter a calf's umbilical cord soon after birth. Upon entering the umbilical cord the bacteria creates an infection that is confined to the navel region. This can cause an abscess that is swollen and painful for the calf. A high temperature and lack of appetite may be detected. If quick action is not taken to treat the navel infection the bacteria may spread and settle in other areas of the calf's body, such as the joints. This forms a new, more serious issue known as "joint ill". If this occurs, the calf's joints will appear swollen, stiff, and painful. A high temperature, loss of appetite, and depression may also be observed. It is not unusual for the infection to spread to the calf's eyes, creating a white or cloudy appearance. If any of these symptoms occur, immediate treatment should take place to prevent death. Affected calves should be separated and treated according to their symptoms. Because other diseases and issues can have similar symptoms as navel ill, it is best to have a veterinarian examine the calf so that an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan may be made.

Perhaps the easiest method to keep navel ill from negatively affecting your calf crop is to prevent it altogether. One way to do this is to ensure that the calf gets an ample amount of colostrums within the first 12 hours of birth. This means that the cow and calf must be strong enough to stand after birth. In addition, the cow's teats should be small enough for the calf to nurse. Nursing immediately after birth allows the calf to consume colostrums, which provide the calf with bacteria fighting antibodies. It is also very helpful to have good calving conditions available for your cattle. A clean, dry pasture with a good wind break is an example of a good environment for calving. If it is too difficult to provide this type of environment, dipping the newborn calves' navels in iodine is a good back up plan. Iodine aids in reducing the risk that bacteria will enter the umbilical cord and cause an infection.

Symptoms of navel ill may show up as soon as two days of age, so it is critical to closely watch newborn calves for the first several days after birth. As with many illnesses, prevention of navel ill is easier and more cost effective than treatment. If there is any cause for concern, contact your veterinarian immediately so that the issue can be treated before it worsens.

The 27th Annual Southwestern Exposition Invitational Commercial Heifer Sale is Saturday, February 8. Rob Schacher, auctioneer for the sale, says that this event teaches producers how progressive marketing such as proper sorting, conditioning, and advertising can create added value by way of top end prices. He states that there will be "cattle for everybody, from high end club calf producers to half blood ear-tiger stripes". The sale will be held at 3:30pm in the West Arena at the Ft. Worth Stock Show and Rodeo Fairgrounds.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Farm Credit are putting on a two-day East Texas Beef Cattle Short Course February 25th and 26th. Producers have the opportunity to learn more about strengthening their beef herd from speakers such as Dr. Jason Banta, Stan Bevers, Dr. Jason Cleere, Dr. Ron Gill, and Dr.

Navel III

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Vanessa Corriher-Olson. To register for this event, or for more information, contact the Henderson County Extension Office at 903-675-6130.

Thanks,

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