

The impact that parasites can have in your operation is one that may leave a mark productively, reproductively, and especially financially. The best way to prevent parasites from affecting your cattle is to have a basic understanding of their life cycle, then find a way to break that cycle. This week we will briefly discuss these things, and offer ways to prevent parasite infestations from taking over your herd.

Although cattle serve as hosts for a variety of parasites, the internal parasitic nematodes present the greatest threat to the health and performance of cattle. If they are not controlled, these parasites can irritate and even damage the linings of the intestine, causing digestive problems. This results in reduced feed intake and efficiency, which limits the amount of weight that the animal will gain, and ultimately the amount of money the animal will sell for. Failure to control internal parasites has also been shown to delay puberty and decrease fertility in replacement heifers. Because parasitism can so negatively affect an operation, it is wise to do what you can to lessen the impact it may have in your herd.

Infected cattle pass eggs in their manure, and in fourteen days those eggs hatch and develop into infective larvae. The larvae then move from the manure pile and up the blades of grass, where they remain until they are consumed as the cattle graze. Two to four weeks after being eaten the larvae mature into egg-laying adults, and the cycle continues. Nematodes thrive in mild, wet weather, similar to that which we have been experiencing. Therefore, special care should be taken when these conditions exist. Further, parasites are prone to invade and overtake cattle with weak immune systems, most specifically young, diseased, or very old cattle. Calves and yearlings are more susceptible than adult cattle, as the worms are able to propagate more in yearlings.

The most effective way to prevent parasite infestation is to treat it in a way that interrupts the life cycle of the nematode. Though many types of dewormers are available, we encourage the use of LONGRANGE injectable dewormer. This dewormer is ideal for calves and yearlings, and is recommended primarily for its length of efficacy compared to other dewormers on the market. With up to 150 days of parasite control in one single dose, producers can feel confident that LONGRANGE will break the parasite life cycle, resulting in fewer parasites in the herd. Not only does LONGRANGE last longer than other dewormers, but cattle given this product proved to perform very well. Recent research at various locations across the United States showed an average of a 28 pound gain per animal over a 150 day period in cattle that were given LONGRANGE compared to cattle given conventional dewormers. This could equate to a \$60 increase in revenue per calf.

Understanding the life cycle of parasites in cattle, and taking the time to prevent parasitic infestations simply makes sense. Use the resources available to you to prevent any infestations from occurring in your herd. If you would like to purchase this product to use in your operation please contact us.

Prices for feeder steers medium and large 1 sold through the Oklahoma National Stockyards on Tuesday, April 21, 2015 are as follows: 476lb- \$291.32, 586lb- \$260.02, 672lb- \$236.78, and 789lb- \$208.08. The price for May 2015 750lb feeder steers on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was \$208 at closing Tuesday, April 21, 2015.

Thanks,
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