

If you are like many producers in our area you may be taking the steps necessary to expand your herd size either by retaining or purchasing replacement females. A few weeks ago we discussed the first of many steps that should be taken if you plan to expand. This week we will discuss the second management procedure that we believe will help you not only expand, but do so successfully and efficiently.

Once you have determined what you can afford to expand your herd size to (for more on this, refer to our March 28 article entitled "Replacement Females- Part 1") you should then develop a health management plan for those animals. We strongly suggest that all females receive a respiratory vaccine that protects against IBR, PI3, BVD, and Lepto. Although modified live virus (MLV) vaccines usually offer better protection than killed virus vaccines, they should not be given to adult cattle that are pregnant or have never been given the same MLV respiratory vaccine before. Therefore, if you are not sure of the female's pregnancy status and vaccination history, it is safest to simply use a killed virus respiratory vaccine.

In addition to the respiratory vaccine, females should receive a blackleg vaccine. A thorough internal and external parasite control program should be put in place for all cattle in your herd, but especially for those that are most susceptible. This includes all weaning age cattle, and yearlings. All preventative vaccinations and measures should take place at least two weeks prior to breeding. Please keep in mind that although Brucellosis Calfhood Vaccination (BCV) is no longer required by the Texas Animal Health Commission, it is recommended and may be given to females between the ages of 4 and 12 months.

It is often cheaper and easier to prevent an issue rather than treat it after it has caused damage. The health of your cattle should be taken very seriously, as calf disease immunity is directly connected to the cow's immunity. Healthy cattle perform better, and produce more productive calves. Take care of your cattle's health and ensure that they are properly vaccinated before breeding season begins. If you have any questions, or would like assistance with developing a health program customized for your herd, please contact us.

Thanks,

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