

For the past several months cattle prices have continued to amaze producers by reaching record highs. Many producers view this as an opportunity to purchase calves from the sale barn, then feed them out, and resell them for a large profit as yearlings. This plan has many desirable aspects, but involves special care that should be considered beforehand. Failure to do so efficiently may result in holes below the waterline in your operation.

High-risk calves are those with an unknown history that are often purchased from unknown sources. Calves from a sale barn usually fall into this category. Because the origin of the calves is unknown, it is likely that vaccination records and procedures done are also unknown. If high-risk calves are purchased, proper protocol for backgrounding these calves should be followed to ensure they are healthy before they are integrated with the rest of your herd.

Upon arrival at the ranch, all high-risk calves should receive a round of vaccinations. This should include blackleg, a respiratory vaccine that targets IBR, BVD, PI3, and BRSV, and a long acting antibiotic. Calves should also receive a dewormer. All of the newly acquired calves should be quarantined from the rest of the herd for two weeks. During this time, a feed supplemented with antibiotics can be provided to aide in calf health and immunity. It is critical that the calves learn to eat and drink from troughs the first 24 hours upon arrival. After the two week quarantine period, if call cattle are doing well with no evidence of contagious disease, they may be commingled with the rest of your herd.

If you plan to manage high risk calves to later resell them for a profit, take good care of the cattle. Improperly caring for high risk calves in a yearling operation is one of the quickest ways to lose profit, and put a hole below the waterline of your operation. When making management decisions regarding high-risk calves, remember to ask yourself "Can I prove my actions are safe?" If you have any questions about management of high-risk calves, please contact us.

Because Superior Livestock Auction did not hold a sale this week, we used the market report from the Oklahoma National Stockyards from Tuesday, September 30, 2014. Prices for feeder steers medium and large 1 sold through the Oklahoma National Stockyards are as follows: 483lb- \$279.49, 575lb- \$257.23, 673lb- \$249.48, and 765lb- \$237.17. The price for October 2014 750lb feeder steers on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was \$238cwt on closing Wednesday, October 1, 2014.

Thanks,

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