

Rich County Extension

The Costly Disease "BRD", and How Cow-Calf Producers Can Decrease It

Reganne Briggs, Extension Assistant Professor

Bovine Respiratory Disease Complex (BRD), Shipping Fever, and pneumonia are all names that are synonymous to a disease that causes an estimated \$800 to \$900 million annually in economic losses to the beef industry. These losses usually come from newly arrived feedlot calves that have undergone a significant amount of stress through weaning and transportation. Sickness in high-risk cattle may be as high as 50% and death 5-10% in the first 45 days of calves entering a feedlot.

The cause of BRD may come through different agents including bacterial, viral, and mycoplasma. The calf itself can also increase the chances of BRD because of increased stress, lack of colostrum at birth, decreased plane of nutrition, and age (younger calves are more likely to get BRD). The environment additionally affects the likelihood of getting BRD.

Overcrowding, inadequate bunk space, recent transportation, mixing of cattle from different groups, rough handling, large fluctuation of temperatures (think spring and fall time), and dirty environmental conditions can all increase instances of BRD.

What's In This Month's Issue:

- The Costly Disease "BRD", and How Cow-Calf Producers Can Decrease It
- Upcoming and Past Events



Hopefully, I have painted a picture of how costly BRD is to the cattle industry, and that several factors play a role in this disease. You may be saying, "Cool, I know the risk factors of BRD, and I know that it causes a huge economic loss, but how does this affect me?". This time of year, several thousand calves are leaving Rich County to be placed in feedlots. The fall weather along with normal stressors associated with weaning and shipping increases the risk of BRD. Although, most of the costs of BRD are incurred by the feedlot, that cost still trickles downstream and is reflected in prices that cow-calf producers receive. Before calves even leave the ranch, producers can do a few things to decrease the risk of their calves getting BRD.



Extension
UtahStateUniversity



The Costly Disease "BRD", and How Cow-Calf Producers Can Decrease It: Cont.

Vaccination protocols are one thing producers can adopt to decrease BRD. Producers should talk to their preferred vet to understand which vaccination protocol best fits their needs. Calves that are also dehorned and castrated well before shipping experience less stress, in turn decreasing BRD.

A more intense practice that producers can adopt is weaning calves 30 to 45 days before shipping. During this time calves may be trained to eat at a bunk and drink from a trough, all of which decreases newness when calves enter the feedlot. This practice is typically referred to as preconditioning. Calves that are preconditioned are 19.5 times less likely to experience sickness in the feedlot compared to non-preconditioned calves. This is a great statistic; however, preconditioning isn't practical for all producers. In this instance, producers that provide consistent vaccinations, adequate nutrition, low stress handling, and general good management practices will have healthier calves enter the feedlot.

If you have questions, please contact me!

(435)757-5237

reganne.briggs@usu.edu



Upcoming and Past Events

Winter Workshops

When: TBA

Watch for upcoming workshops on livestock production, succession planning, and more!



UTAH 4-H JUNIOR LIVESTOCK

COMMERCIAL CATTLE PROJECT

Commercial Cattle Project Workshop

October 3, 2022

This new program will debut at the 2023 Rich County Fair!!

Look for the recording of the meeting in next month's issue.

for more visit: <https://extension.usu.edu/rich/>