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 **AgriLIFE EXTENSION**
Texas A&M System

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As spring rolls around parasite populations that negatively effect the cow herd will begin to increase in number. Most producers take action against these parasites by de-worming their cattle. However, I have always heard of people who choose not to. The article below, from Drovers, shows how much more efficient you calves can be by de-worming. Also, take note that the prices listed in this article are lower than what prices are now. Therefore, one can expect to receive an even larger economic benefit from taking action.

Cow Calf: Deworming Your Calves Pays

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Internal parasites are an ever present factor in livestock operations, although it's easy to forget their negative effects because they are often "out of sight and out of mind." According to the USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) data, nearly 40% of all cow-calf operations do not treat their unweaned calves with a dewormer product. This low utilization of parasite control assuredly impacts the overall production of our cattle and decreases their ability to perform.

Performance loss from parasite infections is subtle. We don't typically see overt clinical signs from cattle carrying parasite infections. However, they do continuously rob our animals of optimum performance every day. Worms cause cattle to decrease their feed intake. This lowers weight gain and reduces body condition, potentially leading to lowered reproductive performance, and decreases milk production, causing reduced weaning weights. Internal parasite infections also cause intestinal tissue damage and blood loss, leading to poor nutrient absorption, lowered feed conversion and reduced immune competence. All of these negative effects lead to increased costs to the producer and cause poor productivity.

Knowing that parasites cause substantial economic loss to your operation each year, the next question is, "How much will my calves benefit from controlling worms?" Recent research completed at the University of Arkansas demonstrates the impact of deworming calves prior to weaning. This study was undertaken to compare the performance of calves that received dewormer prior to weaning versus calves that did not receive dewormer. Eighty-seven fall-born beef calves from the University of Arkansas beef cow herd were utilized in this study. Calves had average body weights of 310 pounds and were randomly allocated to treatment groups. The two treatment groups were examined over an 85-day preweaning phase and included: (A) calves injected with Cydectin[®] at 85 days prior to weaning and (B) a negative control group (Table 1).

Table 1. Treatments and performance were as follows:

Group	Description	ADG
(A)	Dewormed 85 days prior to weaning	1.82
(B)	Negative Control	1.70

Results showed that the calves that were treated during the pre-weaning phase had significantly better average daily gain (ADG) up until weaning when compared to the untreated calves during the same period (1.82 vs. 1.70 lb/day). Average cost of treatment for calves at 85 days prior to weaning was less than \$0.90/head, and treated calves would have been worth approximately \$13.00 more per head than untreated calves at weaning due to their body weight advantage.

These results indicate the importance of deworming your calves and the impact it can have on gain performance. Current recommendations suggest that producers treat all calves over 220 pounds to improve weaning weights. Always remember to use all products as specified on the label. If you reduce the dose or give the product in a nonindicated fashion, the effectiveness of the product will be diminished. However, utilizing proper deworming practices on your farm will increase your overall productivity and efficiency.

Source: Jeremy Powell, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture

Pasture Management in the Early Spring

As everyone knows, Spring is when all the vegetation around here starts to change from a lifeless brown color to that bright green that is much easier on the eyes. However, that green that you see isn't all grass and high quality forage for your cow herd. The truth of it is; the more weeds you have in your pasture, the more money you are cheating yourself out of in the long run. Weeds rob grass of water and nutrients which then in turn increases stress on cattle by giving them less available forage per acre to utilize. This unfortunately results in cows being in a lower Body Condition Score, and calves having decreased rates on Average Daily Gain.



There are many options when it comes to pasture maintenance, some work more efficiently than others, some cost more, some are better employed in the dormant season. But, the one thing that they all have in common is that they make YOUR operation more efficient in the long run. Many people will make the argument "It costs too much to spray my pasture." I can't argue that some management options are simply not in everyone's budget. However, if we think outside the box we can possibly

come to a viable option for your scenario. For instance, let's say you have 100 acres that you currently have cattle on and it has a serious problem with broadleaf weeds. Instead of trying to tackle all 100 acres in year 1 treat just 25 acres. Then repeat the process for the other pieces until it is all complete. You will no doubt have to come back through and maintain what you have already treated but, it is MUCH easier to maintain a manicured pasture as opposed to clearing out a piece that has been completely over-run. There is a wide range of products that are available to be utilized that can work for every scenario and I strongly encourage each of you to seriously consider managing your weed populations in some form this year. Even if you lease the property, there are many times that a land owner will work with you in some sort of cost-share situation.

To best sum up my thoughts I leave you with this philosophy: Success and failure in production agriculture doesn't come in a year. Rather, it is the average of several years of operation. If you can do something this year (when we have strong cattle prices) that might cost you a little bit more money but, it will make you more efficient in your drought years you should take action. If you would like for me to come out and work through what we can best do to help your pasture management program don't hesitate to give me a call.



Houston Livestock Show

All Breeds Sale and Educational Event

Every year the Houston Livestock Show hosts their All Breeds Bull and Female Sale. This sale is a great outlet for producers to go get good quality genetics for their commercial operations at a fair price. If you have never been to this sale I would encourage you to at least go through and look at the stock. In addition to the sales there will be 2 different educational opportunities held in conjunction with the sale. THERE WILL BE CEUs OFFERED. Topics will include Banking Options, Industry Trends, Ranch/Grass Raised Beef, Weed Management, Pesticide Water Regulations, Global Market Outlook, and Legislative Updates. The bulls will sale on March 2nd and the females on the 5th. The educational presentations will be on the 1st and 4th. I know many of you plan a trip to the HLSR so you might try to schedule your trip during this time. If you have further questions about this opportunity you can contact me or

check the Houston Livestock Show and

Rodeo website at HLSR.com



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This newsletter is meant to be a tool that Calhoun County Cattlemen can utilize to increase the efficiency and profitability of their operations. If there is a topic that you want to be addressed in next month's issue or sooner, contact Chance Crossland at the Extension Office.