

Why Treat The Cow?

Parasites can draw down cows in body condition and affect immunity and reproductive performance.

Story & photo by **Kindra Gordon**, field editor

When cow-calf producers think about management efforts to boost herd fertility and reproduction, parasite control may not be at the top of the list. However, it needs to be on the list and addressed, according to Merial technical services veterinarian Tony Moravec. He shared remarks with producers during a Learning

Lounge educational session at the 2017 Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show hosted Feb. 1-3 in Nashville, Tenn.

Moravec emphasized that timely deworming for parasite control among cow herds is essential, not only to the health and performance of the cow, but also to the performance of her calf, and even

the performance of her next calf — thus, affecting three generations.

He explained that with the 21-day life cycle of worms, cows that do not receive parasite-control treatment can continuously be infected through the grazing season. Cows may ingest larvae on blades of grass; those larvae not only infect the animal, but are also passed through the cattle manure. Once they mature, they lay more eggs to continuously infect pastures and be ingested by grazing animals.

Once cows are infected with worms, this can ultimately hinder their immune systems and can be detrimental to body condition, as well as the cows' ability to breed back. Plus, as the beef industry learns more about fetal programming, researchers are finding that health stresses to the pregnant cow can negatively impact the calf *in utero*. These negative impacts can have long-term impacts to that calf with regard to health, gain, carcass performance or reproductive efficiency.

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Moravec noted that spring deworming of the cow can help protect her and reduce the cycle of worm and larvae populations on pastures, which can reduce the worms that may also be ingested by young calves at the cow's side and impact their performance.

Merial's Longrange® injectable dewormer provides an extended period of protection — up to 150 days — compared to other dewormers on the market, according to Moravec. He encouraged producers to work with their veterinarian to develop an effective dewormer protocol and appropriate administration timing to their herds.

Learn more about Merial's Longrange product at <http://thelongrangelook.com/>.



Editor's Note: Kindra Gordon is a freelance writer and cattlegirl from Whitewood, S.D. This article was written as part of Angus Media's coverage of the 2017 Cattle Industry Convention. For further coverage, watch future issues of the Angus Journal or visit www.angus.media.



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Value of Vaccinations

Earlier vaccination on the ranch pays dividends down the line.

by **Kindra Gordon**, field editor

To producers who are thinking about cutting costs, Doug Ensley emphasizes that administering vaccines is not the place to cut corners.

“Not vaccinating cattle is not a good idea for cattle health — especially as antibiotic use for treatment of sick cattle is becoming more limiting,” the veterinarian for Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica Inc., told attendees Feb. 2 at an NCBA Learning Lounge educational session during the 2017 Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show in Nashville, Tenn.

He noted that disease prevention — through management protocols like vaccination — is a direct contributor to herd performance of both cow and calf, and thus, ultimately impacts profitability.

Regarding replacement heifers, Ensley emphasized that a vaccination program early on can set those animals up for long-term reproductive success. From earlier breeding

to a shorter calving season, he noted that vaccinating heifers can help ensure they perform and stay in the herd a long time.

“That’s the premier goal,” he noted.

Regarding calf health, he shared research that showed as high as 10% of calves experience bovine respiratory disease (BRD) within their first 100 days. Thus, said Ensley, “Waiting to vaccinate when they get to the feedyard is not soon enough. We have to do a better job of taking care of calf health . . . We’ve got to think about doing it on the ranch.”

Ensley shared research data that shows early vaccination — at about 60 days of age — may be a way to enhance calf health. An Arkansas study found an injectable vaccine administered at 62 days of age didn’t harm calves or cows, and calves thereafter had no incidence of disease.

He also underscored that preconditioning protocols prior to and at weaning are proven to help garner premiums for calves in the

marketplace, so they should be considered. Currently only about 30% of producers nationwide utilize this management practice.

In closing, Ensley advised that cow-calf producers should work with a local veterinarian to design a program that fits their operation.

“Build a relationship with them so they help grow your herd and keep it healthy,” he encouraged. Develop a herd health calendar to track what is being done in the herd, its timing and how it is working.

Additionally, Ensley advised selecting animal health products based on research results, monitoring nutritional status to the herd, and continually improving genetics to maximize productivity.

“Keep excellent records,” he concluded. “If you don’t keep records, how do you make your decisions?”

