



Great Plains Livestock Consulting, Inc.

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# The Great Plains News Feed



*Great Plains Livestock Consulting, Inc.*

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September/October  
2009

## The Latest across the Plains



### **A New School Year Has Arrived**

As the fair season is coming to a close, it is just about time to say good-bye to summer and hello to fall. The school year is starting up and the chilly air will arrive before we know it! This time of year also brings on weaning calves and feedlots will start to fill up quickly. Please remember Great Plains Livestock Consulting, Inc. can help you with any of your weaning and feedlot nutrition needs and we wish everyone the best of luck this fall!

### **Agriculture Link and Livestock Source Updates**

We would like to invite everyone to check out our *Ag Link* and *Livestock Source* pages on our website at [www.GPLC-Inc.com](http://www.GPLC-Inc.com). The *Ag Link* page features several links for everyone interested in the agriculture industry. Some of these links include several associations such as the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, American Society of Agronomy, and the National Corn Growers Association. We also feature several government links to the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We are continually updating our *Livestock Sources* page to supply you with a variety of contacts in the beef, swine, sheep, and grain industries. This page features contact information for cattle buyers, seedstock producers, feedlots, auction barns, and ingredient sourcing from all over the United States.

### **New FREE Service**

Great Plains Livestock Consulting, Inc. is proud to introduce its new feedlot monitoring program. This new service will be offered **FREE** until September 2010. As the old adage goes "you can't manage what you don't measure" and our staff has made a collaborative effort to design a program to help producers measure the performance of their feedlot cattle. For more information contact our office or your nutritionist.

## Staff



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### **Brent Nelms**

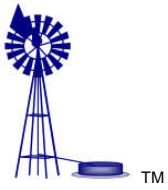
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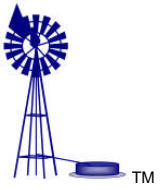
## Calendar of Events



- **Sept. 11-20** Kansas State Fair, Hutchinson, KS
- **Sept. 13-17** 2009 NCBA Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C.
- **Sept. 15-17** Husker Harvet Days, Grand Island, NE
- **Sept. 17-27** Oklahoma State Fair, Oklahoma City, OK
- **Sept. 24** K-State Beef Stocker Field Days, Manhattan KS
- **Sept. 29-Oct. 3** World Dairy Expo, Madison, WI
- **Oct. 2-4** Ozark Fall Farmfest, Springfield, MO
- **Oct. 9-10** Nebraska Sheep & Goat Producers & Nebraska Dairy Goat Assoc. joint convention, Wahoo, NE
- **Oct. 27-Nov. 1** American Royal, Kansas City, MO
- **Oct. 21-24** National FFA Convention, Indianapolis, IN



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## Timely Reminders

### General

- ✓ Be sure to get your commodities and byproducts booked and contracted.
- ✓ Have us sample hay and silage (silage greater than 4 weeks after harvest).

### Beef

- ✓ Prepare supplies and pens for weaning calves

### Swine

- ✓ Check ventilation and heater settings for winter months

### Unused Feed

- ✓ Behind every successful rancher is a wife who works in town.

## Weaning Nutrition



by Dr. Jeremy Martin, Ruminant Nutritionist

School is back in session and many children have recently experienced the stress of their first trip to school. Undoubtedly, both parents and children experience a certain level of stress the first day they have to go their separate ways. Children are exposed to a variety of new people, new experiences, and new challenges. Perhaps it is not the perfect metaphor for weaning calves, but there are some similarities. Is it any wonder that the stress and exposure can lead to a rash of sickness in both cases? The following are suggestions for managing the weaning phase to improve profitability, quality of life, and reduce morbidity and mortality. As for the children, mother knows best; if she doesn't, mother-in-law probably does.

Research has proven time and again that getting calves off to a good start pays big dividends throughout their lifetime. The first step to getting calves started correctly is to have a plan. You should know what feed ingredients you will have on hand prior to receiving cattle and what you may need to purchase. They should be mixed for receiving and starting cattle. I know it sounds simple, but being adequately prepared to receive cattle is the first step that must be successfully completed. Discuss receiving strategies and intake targets with your nutritionist so you can monitor performance of incoming cattle.

Aside from being highly palatable, receiving rations should be nutrient dense since intakes will likely be low during the first few days, particularly on bawling calves. Rations for incoming cattle should generally be at least 14.5% crude protein, 40% moisture or less, and 35 to 65% roughage. Fermented forages should be introduced slowly, after the calves are readily coming to the bunk. We recommend receiving cattle with high quality grass hay in the bunk, and top-dressing 5 lbs of dry matter of starter ration over the hay 4-12 hours later. Within 3-4 days, the hay should be completely replaced by the starter ration.

Nutrient intake is a direct function of dry matter intake, so achieving target dry matter intakes is essential for keeping cattle healthy and getting adequate protein and energy into them. In the front of all GPLC ration books are intake guidelines for cattle of different sizes. Healthy, fresh calves should achieve the target intake within 7 to 10 days of receiving. High-risk cattle with inherent health issues may take substantially longer to achieve target intakes. There may be some benefit in limiting high stress cattle to 80% of the target intake so sick cattle can more easily be identified. Please discuss this option with your GPLC nutritionist to insure the diets provide adequate nutrient intake at 80% of the target intake.

An antibiotic such as CTC can greatly reduce pulls and improve gains. Feeding 1 g/cwt of body weight for 5 days will effectively fight most shipping fever. Start feeding CTC after the calves are bunk broke but before they get sick (around day 4). Then give them a week without any antibiotic. This procedure can be repeated multiple times depending on the health and relative risk of the calves.

Chelated trace minerals, some direct-fed microbials, and Bio-MOS® have all been proven to reduce morbidity and mortality of freshly-weaned calves. Volumes of research are available illustrating the benefits of a quality chelated trace mineral supplement in receiving cattle. Therefore, we recommend using chelates in receiving programs, and do so regularly. Deciding whether to use other additives is not quite so easy and depends on the situation, management, and cattle. All of these products add cost, but that cost is recovered multiple times through reduced morbidity and mortality and increased performance. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss your individual receiving protocol and help develop a program that can add value to your operation.

## Preconditioning



In today's cattle market, a preconditioned calf means more to a buyer than "they had all their shots and wormed" being yelled out to the cattle haulers as they pull away from your corral. No, today the cattle buyer is looking for a calf that is of quality genetics, weaned at least 45 days, bulls castrated and healed, dehorned and healed, has had at least two rounds of MLV IBR, BVD, P1<sub>3</sub>, BRSV vaccine, two rounds of a 7 way clostridial vaccine and a Mannheimia haemolytica vaccine with vaccinations being completed at least two weeks prior to shipment. And they want this calf to weigh 600-700 lbs. at less than 8-9 months of age to qualify for age and source verification. This preconditioned calf should be accompanied by forms that verify this all has been done.

Sounds like a tall order to fill, doesn't it? Yes, but many producers already manage cattle in ways that qualify them to be value-added as preconditioned calves but do not take advantage of the verified programs under which they can be marketed.

"Value-added" is another term that is thrown around in beef articles today. Producers have been working toward growing value-added calves for years, which allow them to stay in business by being competitive. Preconditioning your calves is just one more way to add value to your calves. Other ways are improving genetics, cross-breeding - taking advantage of heterosis, improving nutrition, source and age verification, and the list goes on.

September is a month in which most beef producers have a list of things to do that seems endless, like pre-wean vaccinate calves, pregnancy check cows, cull open cows and/or put cull cows on feed to add value prior to shipping, wean calves, put weight back on spring calving cows before cold weather hits and energy demands rise, prepare to market cull cows & preconditioned calves before seasonal drop in market prices, plan winter forage and book supplements to get you through the winter. This list may seem overwhelming but producers get this done every year like second nature.

A truly preconditioned, healthy, top performing calf gets its start from a well vaccinated, well fed, well managed, top quality mother that supplies a good supply of quality colostrum. It has been shown in research that

a calf that does not receive adequate colostrum will not perform as well through the feeding period as pen mates that did.

So, preconditioning calves starts with a sound management, nutrition, and herd health program. I suggest managing cows in groups that calve within a 60 day period. They will have the same nutritional requirements - with the exception of the two and three year old cows - and you are able to give MLV pre-breeding vaccinations.

In my herd health programs I stress vaccinating open cows prebreeding with a MLV IBR and BVD along with Vibrio Lepto 30 days prior to A.I. or bull turn out. This allows my producers the ability to use a MLV 4 way on nursing calves at two months of age and again at preweaning. Preconditioning in these herds consists of two rounds three weeks apart of MLV IBR, BVD, P1<sub>3</sub>, BRSV, and 7 way clostridial plus histophilus, and one preweaning round of Mannheimia haemolytica +/- pasteurella multocida. I deworm with a quality dewormer at preweaning, steering away from the generic Ivermectin pour-ons. The calves must be five months of age to start on the program to ensure a mature immune system. Contact your herd veterinarian before using a MLV 4 way on your nursing calves for safety purposes.

In a preconditioning program it is important to use clean, accurate, and quality syringes avoiding disinfectants with MLV vaccines. Hot distilled water (>180°F) makes a great cleaning disinfecting solution for cleaning & rinsing syringes. I suggest changing needles each time you fill a syringe and using a 16 ga. 5/8" to 3/4" needle for SQ injections, and a 16 ga. x 1" for IM injections.

It is important to practice low stress handling when vaccinating calves and running them through a working facility. The person in charge of the working crew should ensure this is done while watching for problems which may show up after starting processing. Don't be afraid to stop and make adjustments, because it is not all about the speed of processing calves. Keep good records at the chute with weaning weights being a very important piece of information. Pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed to the bull is a great number to gauge how your herd is performing from year to year.

When weaning your calves, give the 3 week booster vaccinations on the day of weaning if they have not been given already. In a perfect world where cattle are easy to get up and work, you can give the two rounds of preconditioning vaccinations with the second round being 2 weeks prior to weaning - this would give optimal protection at weaning. In the real world it is hard enough to get the calves up twice - once to prewean & once to wean. Provide a low stress environment for weaned calves with plenty of clean water access and a good quality second cutting grass hay for the first week plus adequate protein/energy intake. Work closely with your nutritionist. Avoid commingling - if possible wean calves on separate farms at least 30 days before putting together.

Now you have a value-added preconditioned calf and it is time to market this animal. Contact your buyers, livestock market, and/or feedlot and let them know what you have to offer. Use a preconditioning program that is verified by a veterinarian and document all of your work on the forms provided, including vaccine lot numbers and expiration dates. Contact your veterinarian and they will be able to steer you in the right direction for your herd & your region of the country.

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