

Clostridium

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Did you know you can vaccinate your cattle for “blackleg disease”?

Clostridial diseases are caused by a bacteria called clostridium and it is commonly referred to as “blackleg.” There are 8 different types of clostridia that are deadly to cattle.

These bacteria can live up to several years in soil, water, or decomposing plant and animal material. The “black leg” disease affects cattle (bulls, steers, heifers, and cows) from 6 months to 2 years old and more often in rapidly growing animals on a high plane of nutrition. The bacterium is a gram positive, anaerobe with the ability to produce endospores and exotoxins. It is found worldwide, affects most frequently cattle and sheep, occurs rarely in pigs, equine, and poultry.

To cause disease, the clostridium bacteria needs an opportunity to enter and multiply in the tissue. Wounds from trauma, mild abrasions, use of the same needle, and improper technique put cattle, especially young stock, at risk of the disease, especially in those that are unvaccinated or have not been properly vaccinated. Common procedures that carry this risk include branding, dehorning, castration, and the reuse of

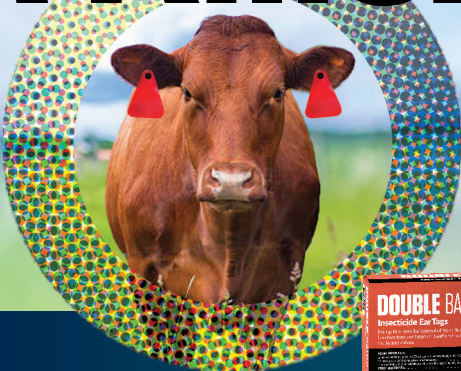
needles when injecting medications (vaccines and dewormers). Typically, you will find the animal dead, and often it is the one in the best body condition.

Proper vaccination schedule following your veterinarian’s recommendation with a 7- or 8-way product is the key. Vaccination is the most effective and economical way to prevent this disease. If it is the first time, all cattle should get 2 shots 3-4 weeks apart then yearly or every 6 months if you ever have a problem.

If a producer suffers the loss of young stock because of blackleg, not only is he/she losing hundreds of dollars from the loss of the weaned calf, but it is also putting the rest of the unvaccinated herd at higher risk to get this disease. The financial loss from one weaned steer would more than cover the costs of the entire herd vaccination.

We at the state veterinary diagnostic laboratory (Auburn, Elba, Hanceville, and Boaz) can help you decide what is the best vaccine product and schedule that fits your budget and management system. Call, 334-844-7226, or you may consult with your own veterinarian about this disease and how to get on top of it.

A Killer Line Up



CONTROL

external pests that stress cattle and threaten herd productivity



EAR TAGS



POUR-ONS

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