Value Added Calf Program Returns $94,000 to Producers

The Situation

Calves raised in north central Idaho, southeastern Washington, and northeastern Oregon were identified by livestock buyers as having high morbidity and mortality rates. The Nez Perce County Integrated Resource Management (IRM) Committee began observing less buyer competition and, therefore, lower prices because of the perceived reputation of unhealthy cattle from this area.

Surveys conducted in 1995 and 1996 by University of Idaho Cooperative Extension faculty showed 63 percent of the producers attending educational schools were vaccinating calves for infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), parainfluenza (PI3), bovine virus diarrhea (BVD), bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV), pasturella and the clostridial complex (clostridium chauvoei, septicum, novyi, sordellii, tetanus, hemolyticum, perfringens).

Our response

In cooperation with the Nez Perce County Cattle Association, the IRM Committee, and the Lewiston Veterinary Clinic a herd health and management plan was developed. It is known as PRODUCERS PRIDE.

A brochure outlines how producers can comply with a value added herd health management plan. A herd health form/receipt was also developed so producers could identify management practices they had implemented prior to sale. The herd health form is a receipt in triplicate. One copy goes to the new buyer, one copy stays with the sale yard veterinarian, and one copy is the sellers.

This program was presented at six seminars, with a total of over 600 people in attendance. Awareness of this program was also achieved through two news columns in the Lewiston Morning Tribune, an article in the Idaho Farmer Stockmen and a newsletter distributed to more than 400 people in north central Idaho.

Brochures and health forms were distributed, with a cover letter, to more than 60 veterinarians and 40 feedlots in Idaho, Washington and Oregon. Also, extension educators in nine Idaho counties, six Washington counties and three Oregon counties have received Producers Pride Value Added Calf brochures and herd health forms.

The brochure is updated annually. A 4- by 8-foot sign was professionally produced and placed in the Lewiston Livestock Sales ring.
Achievements

Below is information from the Lewiston Veterinary Clinic showing the increase in the amount of vaccine sold and calves vaccinated between 1991 and 1997.

Because many of the producers vaccinate at branding and weaning time, the number of animals vaccinated is estimated to be two-thirds of the vaccine number reported. Producers who purchased vaccine from the Lewiston Veterinary Clinic vaccinated approximately 25,000 head of calves in 1997 compared to 10,000 in 1991.

In the fall of 1997 sale yard personnel, livestock buyers, veterinarians and producers acknowledged that Producer Pride Value Added Calves were bringing 4 cents more per pound than non-weaned and non-vaccinated calves. In dollars, this amounts to an average of $20 more per head for a 500 pound calf. The producers completing the VAC health forms sold 4,700 head of cattle resulting in an additional income of $94,000 ($20 x 4,700 = $94,000). The sale yard also benefits because their commission is associated with gross sales.

Feedlot managers are reporting low herd health problems in cattle purchased from this area, resulting in an increase in the number of buyers purchasing cattle here.

Buyers, sale yard personnel, veterinarians, feed dealers, pharmaceutical companies and producers are complimenting this program.

Cooperators

University of Idaho Cooperative Extension Systems in Nez Perce and Idaho counties; Nez Perce County Cattle Producer's Integrated Resource Management Committee; Lewiston Veterinary Clinic; Intermountain Feed; Lewiston Livestock Market.

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Producer's Pride Value Added Calf Vaccination Summary
October 1, 1997

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IBR, PI3, BRSV, Killed BVD, Live BVD</td>
<td>10,092</td>
<td>21,923</td>
<td>37,350</td>
<td>41,800</td>
<td>43,150</td>
<td>35,331</td>
<td>36,109</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intranasal</td>
<td>10,302</td>
<td>18,650</td>
<td>23,800</td>
<td>27,500</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>24,871</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pasturella</td>
<td>9,436</td>
<td>17,800</td>
<td>28,300</td>
<td>20,900</td>
<td>21,750</td>
<td>23,910</td>
<td>16,651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Decreases in intranasal and pasturella for 1997 were due to new vaccine combinations with IBR, BVD, BRSV, and PI3. Low cattle prices in 1996 resulted in a reduced number of vaccinated calves.*