



Lamb Tail Docking:

Again, the show ring is creating an animal welfare issue. Lambs have their tails docked shortly after birth to reduce issues with fly strike (maggots) from manure buildup on the tail and amniotic fluid during lambing. It is a well-accepted method to reduce disease risk. However, in the meat animal show ring there has been a tendency to believe that lambs with shorter and shorter tails do better because the rump appears to be more muscled. The problem is that as the tails get shorter, there are more rectal prolapsed issues, and research has proven this. The tail should be docked at the distal end of the caudal tail folds. No shorter or you get a fourfold increase in prolapsed rectums. The most cost-effective treatment for rectal prolapsed is to butcher the lamb immediately; many people want to see their kids lamb get to the fair. Unfortunately, the veterinarian will try but it is a short lived repair, which often results in a veterinary bill and a dead lamb. Let's prevent as many as possible and leave the tails longer and maybe we can get judges to place short tail lambs at the bottom of the class.

castrated, and dehorned right off the truck. Over the next three weeks we went to the feedlot almost daily treating a pneumonia outbreak that killed about 50 animals. We posted a lot of them, looked for viruses and bacteria and tried different drugs. But the take home for me was that every dead animal was a castrated bull, even though half the original animals were heifers.



HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

DR CASS HAS A NEW ADDITION- FEB 8, BABY BOY -EMMETT 6LBS 14OZ - CONGRATS!!

Drug Residue Issues:

When a drug is approved, and a withdrawal time is established it is accepted that a small number, one in one thousand animals will be positive at the end of the established withdrawal time. The reason is that every animal has slightly different genetics, feed environment, and there are just too many variables. The problem is that you, the producer, and us, the veterinarians, are held responsible for the residue. Most of the cases of residue problems that we have been involved in, the animal was sick, treated, and didn't respond. We waited for the minimum withdrawal time, sent the animal and it was positive. Most drugs are either broken down in the liver or secreted by the kidneys or a combination of both. If these organs are compromised, a residue problem can be expected. Even a dehydrated animal with poor blood flow to the kidneys is at risk.

There are three considerations for minimizing your risk. First, think real hard about whether you want to treat an animal. The thought process that 'if she doesn't respond I'm going to ship her' is not the correct train of thought, 'if she doesn't respond I'm going to send her to the renderer' is the correct thought process. This might make you decide to not treat in the first place.

The second consideration is that sick- looking animals should have extra time added to their withdrawal times. Remember 'if she doesn't respond I'm going to send her to the renderer' is a decision you already made.

Third, we can run a urine antibiotic residue test for a select group of drugs and get a good estimate of whether the drug has cleared.

From a recent Implant meeting:

Research shows that early castration and implanting is superior to later castration because the older the animal is when castrated, the more the animal is set back. Castration is a huge stressor in older animals. In 1977 when I was interning in Lodi, we had a group of mixed heifers and steers, (400 weight), come into a feedlot from out west and they were so tired they were lying down in the truck. They had probably been through a couple sale barns and sorted and mixed two or three times. They probably weren't given good feed or adequate water for a couple days, really stressed. We vaccinated,

Somatic Cell Counts:

Right now most of the milk plants are no longer paying much of a premium for low SCC, and if they do, it probably is going to shrink soon. Blame excess milk from Michigan. However, you don't need a premium to make money from a low SCC. A low SCC is indicative of a low new infection rate in your herd, and each new infection, (even if you don't treat it) costs over \$200.00 in lost milk. Every study ever done supports this. Two thirds of lost milk come from sub-clinical or unseen mastitis. If you have a high SCC you are losing milk, end of story. It's like a heavy rootworm infection in a corn field that you don't see because you don't walk in the field. To see the subclinical mastitis, you need to DHIA test or use a CMT paddle. Striving for a lower SCC is something that takes effort by the producer and his employees, a change in habits, but usually not a large financial investment. There are many really large dairies targeting 100,000 SCC.

A plan for elevated bulk tank SCC starts with a bulk tank culture to get a handle on what organisms are involved, with a special emphasis on contagious organisms that are transmitted from cow to cow. Then a milking equipment check is needed and should be done at least every six months to be sure mastitis isn't being caused by equipment. The third issue, and actually the hardest to address, is employee and owner training in proper technique. Old bad habits die hard. I'm a huge proponent of consistency, especially with regards to timing, so every cow should always be prepped the same, and every unit put on the same every time. Again, lowering SCC can make you money without investing in expensive equipment, it's investing in attitude and training.



WOW

Plenty of inventory and three different teat sealants products available for drying cows off!

U.S. EXPORTS AS % OF PRODUCTION				
	December	yr ago	Jan-Dec 17	yr ago
NDM/SMP	63%	49%	57%	57%
Total cheese	5.5%	5.9%	6.0%	5.2%
Butterfat	3.6%	3.2%	3.3%	2.9%
Dry sweet whey	54%	53%	46%	44%
Lactose	82%	74%	70%	73%
Total milk solids	16.4%	14.5%	14.7%	14.2%

Lice:

Lice are again becoming a problem. Short cloudy days, lots of time spent indoors by cattle, long hair on cattle means the lice are healthy and reproducing because their enemy is sunlight. If you think about control, it's pretty easy. For lactating cattle and heifers there are many formulations of Permethrin and Piperonyl Butoxide that are approved. Make sure that Piperonyl Butoxide is present in the product because it significantly enhances the effectiveness. This chemical has been around for years and although flies are getting resistant, lice are pretty wimpy. There are concentrated forms where you pour-on an ounce (30) ml for an adult cow, and less concentrated forms where you pour on 5 ounces. The cost of both should be just under a dollar a cow. Also, there is a product called Cylence which is a different chemical and only slightly more expensive. If you go with the pour-on wormers, it will cost you five to eight times as much, and if you don't have any internal parasites, (which most of your cattle don't because of the modern production systems) it is a complete waste of your money.

Try to treat all the animals in a group at the same time because the lice on the animals you miss are still laying eggs and they will crawl over to the treated animals in a week or two.

With lice, the eggs are not affected by the insecticides, so it is ideal to treat the cattle exactly two weeks later. However, in reality, I've seen single treatments do a great job controlling lice for the rest of the winter as long as every animal is treated.