



### Four Pillars of Herd Health Success

Fall is a busy time of year on the farm. Many decisions need to be made that will impact the coming year. Pastures need to be evaluated for winter feeding, calves weaned, heifers and cows' pregnancy checked, cattle moved, and the entire herd evaluated for any health issues that need to be addressed before winter.

Healthy cattle are key to the success of any operation, and you can address these needs with plans to **control parasites (external and internal), optimize immunity, and manage growth**. By following this four-pronged approach to herd health, success can be seen not only in the fall but also year-round.

#### Control External Parasites

Comfortable cattle are healthy, growing cattle. External parasites such as flies, ticks and lice can increase cattle stress and, thus, threaten the productivity of your herd. Geographic location as well as time of year will dictate what parasite species are impacting your herd. There are several options for controlling these external parasites including:

- Low volume pour-on insecticides that reduce time and labor and have no preslaughter withdrawal and no milk discard times
- Products for beef cattle and calves to control horn flies and lice
- Ear tags and premise products for ectoparasite control

While getting rid of all external parasites may not be realistic, reducing the number can make cattle more comfortable and more likely to thrive.

#### Control Internal Parasites

Internal parasite control is the cornerstone of an effective herd health program. It's important to understand that a parasite impacts the animal and the environment. Adult parasites in cattle produce eggs that are passed in feces. The eggs hatch, producing larvae that develop and move up onto pasture grasses where cattle consume them. Once inside a new host, the process starts over again.

A strategic deworming program based on the worm life cycle reduces the parasite burden in the herd as well as on pasture. As a rule, cattle should be dewormed after the first frost in the fall. Lower temperatures mean fewer eggs and larvae survive in the grass. This well-timed deworming will help keep cattle clean up until March or April as well as allow for more effective utilization of feed resources.

Managing parasites in cattle can be a challenge, especially if the animals are not regularly handled. Fortunately, there are deworming solutions uniquely geared to reduce the need to handle animals. SAFE-GUARD® (fenbendazole) is available in multiple formulations including feed pellets, blocks, and mineral, making it an effective and convenient choice for any cattle operation.

#### Optimize Immunity - Vaccinate

Herd health programs should also include vaccination plans customized to your operation. Keep the following in mind when choosing vaccines and creating a plan:

- Type of production system
- Age of vaccination
- Previous vaccine history
- Disease pressures geographically
- Effectiveness and safety

Calves often are weaned in the fall and co-mingled with other animals, so boosting immunity on vaccines given earlier is a good production practice.

Cattle face an increased risk for respiratory diseases, pinkeye and clostridial disease in the fall. Vaccination is crucial to protect your herd against various disease-causing agents. Look for the BOVILIS® VISTA®, BOVILIS® NASALGEN® and BOVILIS® VISION® lines of vaccines to provide effective immunity to your cattle.

If your operation struggles with fall onset of pinkeye, then consider the low-stress combination vaccine BOVILIS® 20/20 VISION® 7 with SPUR®, which offers the trusted effectiveness of BOVILIS® VISION® 7 with SPUR® against clostridial disease and pinkeye caused by *Moraxella bovis*.

Work with your veterinarian to determine how to defend your herd against viral or bacterial infections with trusted vaccines.

## Manage Growth

Growth implants maximize cattle performance by making cattle more efficient and more environmentally friendly. Implants stimulate weight gain and improve feed efficiency in pasture and feed yard cattle. Implants are available for different stages of growth and are specially designed for specific ages, sex, or stage of production.

Implanting nursing calves has consistently shown to be an effective and safe way to increase calf weight at weaning time. In fact, to increase weaning weights by 20 to 25 pounds per calf, producers should consider implanting calves with a product such as RALGRO® (zeranol implants). For an investment of approximately \$1.50 per head, implants result in a \$50 to \$60 increase in calf value in today's market.<sup>1</sup>

Implants are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and the only FDA-approved location for placement of an implant is the middle third on the back side of the ear, between the skin and the cartilage. Calves should be on a positive plane of nutrition to receive the full benefit of an implant.

## Take home message

Every season has its challenges and opportunities for keeping your herd healthy. Ensuring that animals are well cared for not only makes good business sense, it's also important for the health of the animal. Following the four pillars — **control parasites (external and internal)**, **optimize immunity** and **manage**

---

<sup>1</sup> Selk, G. (1997) Implants for Suckling Steer and Heifer Calves and Potential Replacement Heifers. Proceedings: Impact of Implants on Performance and Carcass Value of Beef Cattle. Oklahoma State University, P-957. Pg 40.4. Superior Livestock Sale data report 2018.

**growth** — along with having a conversation with your veterinarian can help you plan and implement the right program for maintaining the health of your herd.

Consult your veterinarian for assistance in the diagnosis, treatment, and control of parasitism.

#### **IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:**

SAFE-GUARD®: Do not use in beef calves less than 2 months old, dairy calves and veal calves. A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminating calves. Additionally, the following meat withdrawal and milk discard times apply: SAFE-GUARD Paste: Cattle must not be slaughtered for 8 days. For dairy cattle, the milk discard time is 96 hours. SAFE-GUARD Suspension: Cattle must not be slaughtered for 8 days. For dairy cattle, the milk discard time is 48 hours.

SAFE-GUARD® ENPROAL® Type C Medicated Block: Cattle must not be slaughtered for 11 days. For use in beef cattle only.

SAFE-GUARD® 20% Protein Type C Medicated Block: Cattle must not be slaughtered for 16 days. For use in beef cattle only.

SAFE-GUARD® Type A and other medicated feed products (pellets, cubes, free-choice mineral, or free-choice liquid): Cattle must not be slaughtered for 13 days. For dairy cattle, the milk discard time is 60 hours.

RALGRO® (zernanol implants): Not for use in humans. Keep out of reach of children. No withdrawal period is required when used according to labeling. Do not use in beef calves less than 2 months of age, dairy calves, and veal calves. A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminating calves. Do not use in replacement beef heifers after weaning or in dairy cows or replacement dairy heifers. Use in these cattle may cause drug residues in milk and/or calves born to these cows. Implant pellets subcutaneously in ear only. Any other location is a violation of Federal law. Do not attempt salvage of implanted site for human or animal food. Not approved for repeated implantation (reimplantation) with this or any other cattle ear implant within a single production phase as safety and effectiveness have not been evaluated. For complete safety information, refer to the product label.