

Vaccination Advice

2:30 p.m. session, Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2005

Presenter: Charlie Stoltenow, North Dakota State University

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA (Dec. 7, 2005) — Before North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension veterinarian Charlie Stoltenow would talk about vaccination programs, he told producers they first need to recognize the importance of nutrition.

“All of my health programs start with nutrition,” Stoltenow told attendees of the 2005 Range Beef Cow Symposium. “We can’t look at vaccines as a panacea that’s going to protect us. If an animal doesn’t have an immune system, the vaccine can’t work miracles.”

That said, Stoltenow recognized that vaccines are a critical part of health programs and said he likes to refer to them as “risk management.”

So why do vaccines sometimes fail? He shared several reasons:

- The animal is already incubating the disease;
- Passive transfer interference;
- The wrong vaccine for the condition;
- The vaccine administered incorrectly,
- The vaccine experienced temperature abuse or was outdated; or
- The animal can not mount an appropriate response.

The animal’s inability to mount an appropriate response is the biggest issue, Stoltenow said. “This may be due to pre-existing conditions, the number of doses, inappropriate age of the animal and stressful conditions.”

He emphasized that animals need to receive two doses of a vaccine — especially if it is a killed vaccine. Among feedlot animals he also stressed that animals should be vaccinated against infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), bovine viral diarrhea (BVD), bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV) and parainfluenza-3 virus (PI₃). “These are the big four, and they set it up so calves can better kill off other disease threats,” Stoltenow said.

As a tip in treating calves, Stoltenow suggested learning from experience and catching sick animals and treating them early. “The first sign of disease is appetite depression. If we are to the runny nose stage, we are too late,” he says.



“All of my health programs start with nutrition,” said NDSU Extension veterinarian Charlie Stoltenow. [PHOTO BY LYNN GORDON]

In designing vaccination programs for the cow herd, Stoltenow encouraged producers to visit with their state diagnostic lab and identify which diseases are problems in their local area. He said, depending on your location, vaccinating for things like leptospirosis may not be necessary, but the anthrax vaccine may be worth considering.

— by Kindra Gordon, field editor, Angus Productions Inc.
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