

POOR CALF HEALTH IS A DISEASE TO PROFITABILITY

Effect of postweaning disease on carcass traits, feedlot performance and mortality

	Number of Treatments		
	0	1	2
Prime, %	1.0	0.8	0.7
Premium Choice, %	14.4	11.1	9.1
Low Choice, %	53.4	50.0	43.5
Select, %	29.3	35.1	39.5
Standard, %	1.9	2.9	7.3
Yield Grade 1&2, %	56.7	62.3	70.6
Yield Grade 3, %	40.4	35.2	28.0
Yield Grade 4&5, %	2.9	2.5	1.4
ADG, lbs.	3.3	3.1	2.9
Mortality Rate, %	0.1	3.8	15.3

Net effect in per-head dollars returned as number of treatments for postweaning disease varies

	Number of Treatments		
	0	1	2
Quality Grade Premium	PAR	-\$5.35	-\$14.29
Yield Grade Premium	PAR	\$1.62	\$4.03
Carcass Weight Discount	PAR	-\$1.61	-\$4.69
Dark Cutter Discount	PAR	\$0.05	-\$0.19
ADG Bonus*	PAR	-\$34.56	-\$68.74
Death Loss Discount**	PAR	-\$54.91	-\$216.85
Treatment Cost#	PAR	-\$25.16	-\$64.28
Net Dollars Returned	PAR	-\$119.92	-\$365.01

*Based on pounds of additional carcass weight gained during the feeding period.

**Accounts for cost of gain investment and lost carcass value.

#Includes medicine, labor and chute/equipment charges.

Summary Facts

- Healthy cattle returned \$365.01/head more than cattle treated twice for disease.
- Increased death loss and treatment accounted for up to \$281.13/head in lost revenue, while reductions in performance and carcass merit reduced net return by an additional \$83.88/head.
- 12.45% of all calves (8,596 head) were treated at least once as a primary result of bovine respiratory disease (BRD).
- Double treatments for BRD significantly reduced percent Prime by 30%, Premium Choice by 36.8% and Low Choice by 18.5%, while increasing Standard by 34.8%, when compared to non-treated calves.
- Sick cattle lost three to four times more dollars from lower quality-grade grid premiums than were returned for numerically lower yield grades.
- Mortality rate was 150 times higher for cattle treated twice compared to non-treated cattle.

Materials & Methods

- Data represents 69,036 calves from 14 states fed at 21 Iowa feedlots during 2002-2011.
- Vaccination, implant and nutritional programs were consistent across participating feedlots.
- Calf health status was classified as non-treated (0), single treatment (1) or treated two or more times (2).
- Calves were harvested when visually evaluated to have 0.4 inch of external fat.
- Example grid* values were applied to the USDA 5-Area Average for June 2011 to June 2012.

*Example grid can be found at www.CABpartners.com/marketing/CABexamplegrid.pdf

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Data Source: Iowa Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity.

The Bottom Line

Cattle sickness can devastate profitability. **Postweaning disease accounts for as much as \$365 per head in lost revenue.** Death loss accounts for the most dramatic costs, but everything from extra medications to reductions in feedlot gain and quality grade jeopardizes the bottom line. Regardless of calf ownership beyond weaning, improved health management can add value and protect profit potential.



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Questions?

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