

POOR CALF HEALTH IS A DISEASE TO PROFITABILITY

The Bottom Line

Postweaning calf disease can devastate producer profitability, accounting for as much as \$200 per head in lost revenue. While the most dramatic losses are realized as increased death loss and treatment costs, lingering reductions in feedlot gain and quality grade also jeopardize the bottom line. Regardless if a producer retains ownership through the feedlot or sells calves at weaning, managing for improved calf health can add value and protect profit potential.

Postweaning disease can account for as much as \$200 per head in lost revenue.

Summary Facts

- Healthy cattle returned \$201.16 per head more than cattle treated twice for disease.
- Increased death loss and treatment accounted for up to \$148.47 per head in lost revenue, while reductions in performance and carcass merit further reduced net return by an additional \$52.69 per head.
- 17.5% of all calves (2,334 head) were treated as a primary result of bovine respiratory disease (BRD).
- Double treatments for BRD significantly reduced percent Prime by 44%, Premium Choice by 33%, Low Choice by 18%, and increased Standard by more than three fold, when compared to non-treated calves.
- Sick cattle lost three to four times more dollars from inferior quality grade than were returned for lower yield grade.
- Mortality rate was 100 times higher for cattle treated twice compared to non-treated cattle.
- As quality grade grid premiums increase, nearing \$200 million for *Certified Angus Beef*® alone since 1998, managing for improved calf health will allow cattlemen to get their share.

Materials & Methods

- Data represents 13,321 calves from 12 states fed at eight Iowa feedlots during 2002-04.
- 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.
- Dollar amounts were based on the 2003-04 average weekly grid values for Kansas and Texas.



Acknowledgements

Data Source: Iowa Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity.
Grid values reported by Grid-Max, a service of Cattle-Fax.

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

	Number of Treatments		
	0	1	2
Prime, %	1.6	0.9	0.9
Premium Choice, %	21.7	19.1	14.6
Low Choice, %	51.0	44.7	42.1
Select, %	23.6	30.4	33.2
Standard, %	2.2	4.9	9.3
Yield Grade 1&2, %	57.0	67.7	73.1
Yield Grade 3, %	40.8	31.1	26.5
Yield Grade 4&5, %	2.3	1.2	0.3
ADG, lbs.	3.2	3.0	2.9
Mortality Rate, %	0.1	3.1	10.0

*Percent change between 0 and 2 treatments

Comparison of the net decrease in dollars per head returned due to postweaning disease.

	Number of Treatments		
	0	1	2
Quality Grade Premium	PAR	-\$10.39	-\$19.41
Yield Grade Premium	PAR	\$2.90	\$4.59
Carcass Weight Discount	PAR	-\$1.55	-\$1.58
Dark Cutter Discount	PAR	\$0.18	-\$0.58
ADG Bonus*	PAR	-\$24.49	-\$35.71
Death Loss Discount**	PAR	-\$31.07	-\$100.04
Treatment Cost#	PAR	-\$20.60	-\$48.43
Net Dollars Returned	PAR	-\$85.02	-\$201.16

*Based on the lbs 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.

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Questions?

Call Steve Suther at 877/241-0717.

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