

Backgrounding Programs And Retained Ownership

Herman D. Laramore

Rancher

Marianna, Florida

If one is considering retained ownership of his cattle, he must begin planning in advance as to where he is going to feed his cattle and the necessary vaccination program to keep cattle healthy through the feeding process.

There are many feedlots who will partner with you, or feed your cattle (you retain 100% ownership). I would recommend that you talk to other producers who are retaining ownership and also visit the feedlots of your interest. It is important that you be completely confident in the feedlot you choose, otherwise, you are going to have many sleepless nights. When you ship a 50,000-lb. load of cattle 1,000+ miles and will very likely never see them again, and you have no further input into the feeding and management of your cattle, no real input into sale of cattle, no written contract or agreement, then it is imperative that you trust the feedlot you are dealing with. I would suggest in any case that a producer start small with a feedlot, maybe only one load the first year. This will allow a producer to develop a relationship with the management and an opportunity to observe their performance in feeding your cattle.

I recommend that, once a feedyard is selected, a discussion with them is most helpful in developing a vaccination program. It is important for the feedlot to be involved since they will be responsible for the animals' health and further immunization once they arrive at the feedlot. The more the feedlot knows about the prior vaccinations of cattle, the better they are able to continue and booster the immune systems of your cattle. In spite of all your efforts and the efforts of the feedlot, you are going to loose some cattle from time to time. Your goal in implementing a vaccination program should be to keep the death

loss to a minimum and the cattle as healthy as possible, which will result in better overall performance of your cattle and increased profit potential.

Keep in mind at all times, retained ownership of your cattle is no "get rich quick scheme". Over the years it has proven to be a profitable venture with a modest return on your investment.

The following is a summary outline of my backgrounding and retained ownership program with Tri-States Cattle Feeders in Hereford, Texas:

- October, November, December: calves are born—at each month's end, castration and Ralgro implants for calves born during that month.
- April 1st: all calves re-implanted with Ralgro, dewormed, IBR, BRSV, BVD, PI3, 7-way blackleg, pasteurella and dehorned.
- Approximately June 1st: creep feeders placed in pastures for all calves to get accustomed to eating dry feed.
- Approximately July 1st: wean, Ralgro, deworm, IBR, BRSV, BVD, PI3, pasteurella, 7-way blackleg, weigh. Calves placed in weaning corral with fresh water, free choice Coastal hay and free choice home blended feed. In approximately one week to ten days calves are released onto good quality pasture with free choice feed. Here they remain for 45 days post weaning.
- Approximately August 15th: calves shipped to feedlot.

This procedure has worked well for me for several years. The calves have minimum shrink in a 1200 mile trip. They immediately eat and drink upon arrival at feedyard, and I have had very little health problems or death loss.