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GARFIELD COUNTY  
EXTENSION

AG NEWS



## Calf Processing Time

Brian Freking, SE District Livestock Specialist

Spring processing calves is here, therefore, consider sitting down with your veterinarian to learn of the most recent vaccines and procedures that will give the best economical return. One area that has changed in recent years is giving modified live respiratory vaccine at branding. Research has shown that it can aid in summer respiratory problems but perhaps more significant is the initiation of the “memory” cells to give a better response to the second injection at pre-conditioning or weaning. Again, visit with your veterinarian as giving modify live vaccine can pose a concern when given to calves nursing pregnant cows. No matter which vaccination program is outlined, it is of little value unless the vaccine is handled and administered properly.

Recently mixed modified live vaccines are very sensitive to sunlight. It is preferred to have a cooler with syringe barrel size holes cut in the top or side to place the syringes in when not in use. Place a few cold packs in the cooler so the vaccine is not only in the dark but kept cool also. Vaccine location recommends everyone now administer in front of the shoulder and whenever possible inject subcutaneous as suggested for

Beef Quality Assurances. It is recommended to record serial number(s) of vaccine given and might be done easiest by using a smart phone to capture it as an image.

Methods of castration has been discussed for many years and often the method preferred comes from a line of tradition. The most important thing is to get it done at a young age – before 3 months of age. If castrated early the methods and procedures used seems to be similar in stress and effectiveness. Yet, the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) found that only 75 percent of the calves are castrated before marketing and of those only 75 percent were castrated before 3 months of age. Admittedly, there are some parts of the country where the calves are barely seen before gathering so castration early is the farthest thing from their mind.

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Read the Label!

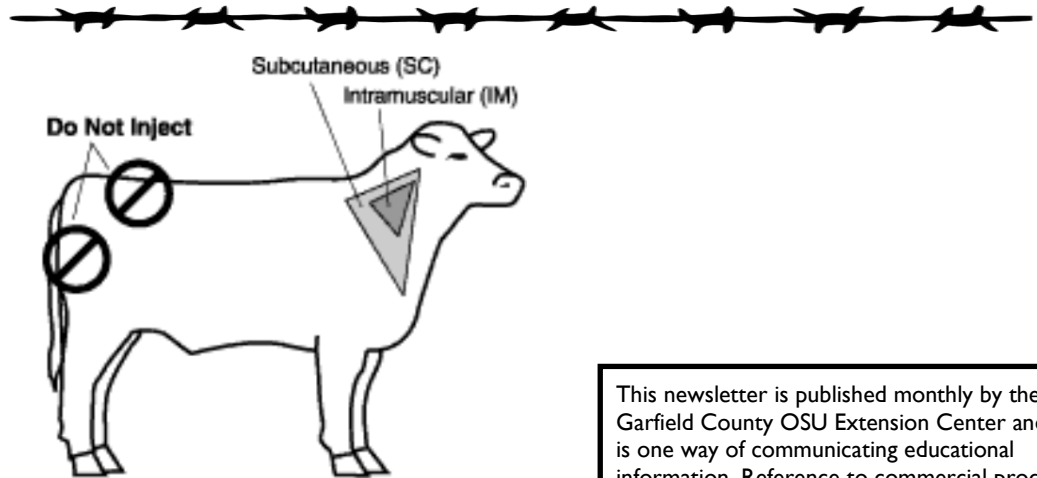
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Discussions are held on surgical versus banding and research data varies as the “best and lowest stress.” Basically, if done at early age banding seems to be slightly less stressful as measured by cortisol levels however if castrated later – at weaning or later – then initially cortisol levels are higher when castrated surgically however the cortisol levels in the banded calves peak later and some evidence shows the banded calves have some pain up to 4-5 weeks after castration. Gains of the late castrated calves comparing the two methods vary but tend to favor the knife cut cattle 30-60 days later. It is recommended to give a vaccination for tetanus before or at least when banding

cattle. There seems to be more of a trend to band calves when tagging at birth which is fine however it is a little too early to implant with growth hormones. An interesting fact is that only 20 percent of the calves going to market are implanted, according to NAHMS, and yet these calves are 20 pounds heavier than nonimplanted herd mates. Unless enrolled in an “all natural” program implanting at branding will give a good return on your investment with implants. When knife castrating some slit the side of the scrotum while others cut off the bottom of the scrotum. Research comparing the two methods is non-existent but most veterinarians say it is simply preference.



Subcutaneous (SQ)

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