

The month of May is traditionally the time when many cattle operators work spring born calves. This year has been a challenge finding a couple of days without rain, but I have yet to speak with a rancher who is not THANKFUL for the rain. Glenn Selk, OSU Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist shares some important info on proper injection sites at calf working time. As the majority of the calves reach their second month of life, it is time to castrate the male calves and immunize all of the calves to protect them against blackleg. Also the new information suggests that in some situations, calves may be vaccinated for the respiratory diseases, i.e. IBR and BVD. Check with your veterinarian for vaccination advice.

Correct administration of any injection is a critical control point in beef production and animal health. There is a negative relationship between meat tenderness and injection sites, including injection sites that have no visible lesion. In fact, intramuscular (IM) injections, regardless of the product injected, may create permanent damage regardless of the age of the animal at the time of injection. Tenderness is reduced in a three-inch area surrounding the injection site. **Moving the injection-site area to the neck stops damage to expensive steak cuts.** Therefore, cow/calf producers should make certain that their family members, and other hired labor are sufficiently trained as to the proper location of the injections before the spring calf-working begins.

Give injections according to label instructions. Subcutaneous (SQ) means under the skin, intramuscular (IM) means in the muscle. Some vaccines (according to the label instructions) allow the choice between intramuscular (IM) and subcutaneous (SQ). **Always use subcutaneous (SQ) as the method of administration when permitted by the product's label.** Remember to "tent" the skin for SQ injections unless instructed otherwise by the manufacturer. Proper injection technique is just one of many components of the Beef Quality Assurance effort that has had a positive impact on the entire United States beef industry.

Another important aspect of the Beef Quality Assurance effort is keeping of accurate treatment records. Treatment records should include: 1) Individual animal/group identification, 2) Date treated, 3) Product administered and manufacturer's lot/serial number, 4) Dosage used, as well as route and location of administration, 5) Earliest date animal(s) will have cleared withdrawal period, and finally 6) Name of person administering the product.

Treatment records for cattle should be stored and kept for a minimum of three years after the animal(s) have been sold from your operation. Beef producers are encouraged to learn and practice Beef Quality Assurance Guidelines. You can learn more about the Oklahoma Beef Quality Assurance program by going to the website: <http://oklahomabeefquality.com/> The Oklahoma Beef Quality Assurance Manual can be downloaded from that site. Examples of treatment records to be kept and stored are available from the Oklahoma Beef Quality Assurance Manual or the Oklahoma Beef Quality Assurance program website. Please feel free to stop by the office or call with production questions.

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