

CALVING EASE

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Vaccination Records

This letter's usefulness assumes that you vaccinate heifers in order to increase their immunity to bovine diseases. We also assume that you have an ongoing relationship with your veterinarian who can assist you in developing a vaccination program appropriate for your situation.

Which heifers to vaccinate, when, and with what?

Have you ever heard or used the expression, "that one fell through the slats?" Somehow a heifer was missed. She didn't get dehorned, vaccinated, moved or whatever. She "fell through the slats."

One goal of our vaccination programs is not to miss heifers when we vaccinate. That means careful scheduling of vaccinations. Age at vaccination is not the question here. Rather, we are talking about being certain that vaccinations are given when scheduled or due. One nearby farm does their scheduling on a big white board with erasable markers. Calf ID's, date due and materials to use are listed and revised weekly.

Another heifer raiser uses stiff 3x5 cards. Each card lists heifer ID's, vaccine to be used and the date on which vaccinations are scheduled. Since these are first vaccinations, the second follow-up injections are scheduled at the same time on a second card showing the same information.

Another person uses DairyComp 305 to list all the calves due for vaccination that week. By selecting all heifers with birth dates (BDAT) in a given range, he can make a list to use at the hutches.

Which heifer was vaccinated?

Is she or isn't she? How's your memory? We can still remember what our glasses are for even if we can't remember where we put them last. Beyond that, we find it much more reliable to record vaccinations rather than just "remembering" them. Some folks keep a "vaccination" notebook. The heifer raiser that uses 3x5 cards simply keeps the cards.

The DairyComp305 user has defined several items (e.g., HVAC1, HVAC2) in which dates of vaccination are recorded. The method isn't important. But recording regularly and accurately vaccinations given is a useful resource to make certain no heifers "fall between the slats."

An overview of the entire vaccination program

A few years ago at Noblehurst Farms we decided to actually write down the details of our vaccination practices. Maybe we didn't have a vaccination program; we just went out and injected vaccines. At this farm there are enough bovines so that no one person does all the vaccinating. When we went to write down the current practices it took nearly a month to find out what everyone was actually doing. What vaccines are you using? Which animals are vaccinated? At what age or stage of lactation/gestation are they vaccinated. Shots in the hutches. Shots in pens. Shots when confirmed pregnant. Shots at dry-off. What a muddle! Who gets what when?

When we finally got all of this written down all the persons vaccinating animals reviewed it. Three revisions later most of the errors were corrected. We did discover two big holes in our program. Now heifers are re-vaccinated for lepto and respiratory viruses at 12-13 months. Fresh cows are boosted for the same pathogens between 30-40 days fresh.

This kind of discipline, that is writing down actual vaccination practices, might be quite revealing on your farm. Maybe you will find that you deserve a pat on the back and congratulations for a job well done. Maybe you will find that you have some animals that are "falling through the slats." (See also the January 2001 issue entitled, "Vaccination does not equal Immunization.")

Calf Raiser's Tip

Last July we described an Internet resource for calf raisers. It is still there but the address has changed. Jim Quigley's **Calf Notes** may now be found at:

<http://www.calfnotes.com>

If you have recently acquired a modem and e-mail software, you may want to subscribe to **DAIRY-L**. To subscribe to **DAIRY-L**, send an e-mail message to:

listserv@umdd.umd.edu

Modify the following line and put it in the body of the message, and NOT the subject:

SUB Dairy-L Firstname Lastname

For example, if your name is Jane Doe, then you would send a

message that had the following line in the body of the message:

SUB Dairy-L Jane Doe

If you know of someone that doesn't currently receive **Calving Ease** but would like to, tell them to **WRITE** to **Calving Ease**, 11047 River Road, Pavilion, NY 14525 or to **CALL** either 585-591-2660 (Attica Vet Assoc. office) or 585-343-8128 (Offhaus Farms Office) or **FAX** (585-591-2898) or **e-mail** sleadley@frontiernet.net or pams91@2ki.net . A limited number of back issues may be accessed on the Internet at www.calfnotes.com and clicking on the link, Calving Ease.