

Animal Industry News Update

from the LCES Animal Science Specialists



Animal Health (Dr. Christine Navarre)

Show Season

Livestock show season is gearing up, and as animals travel the state, certain health problems may arise. Travel away from home, co-mingling with other animals and the noisy show barn environment can be stressful, especially to young cattle. Pneumonia is of particular concern, and show animals should be properly vaccinated for respiratory diseases to minimize the risks of this problem. Digestive upsets also can occur, including bloat and diarrhea, so consistent feeding and watering are important.

Remember that show cattle can carry a disease home to the farm, even if they don't look sick. These diseases can cause abortion, diarrhea, pneumonia and even death. Cattle returning from a show should be isolated from the herd for 30 days. There is also a disease called bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) that can infect the fetus of a pregnant animal at a show. There may be no signs of illness in the cow, but when the calf is born months later, it sheds this virus to the herd. The calf may look perfectly normal, but is a source of BVD virus, which can cause a wide variety of problems in the herd. A veterinarian can provide information about vaccinations for show cattle, quarantine recommendations and prevention of BVD.

Anaplasmosis

The stress following the hurricanes has caused an upsurge in cases of anaplasmosis. Signs are weakness, bizarre behavior and aggressiveness, and acute death from a low blood count and lack of oxygen. Cattle suspected of having anaplasmosis should be treated immediately by a veterinarian. A veterinarian can provide information about a vaccine to prevent this disease.

Biosecurity

The hurricanes have caused extensive damage to fences, and cattle all over the state have been co-mingled with animals from different herds, and been sold, bought and shipped all over the state. The combination of co-mingling and stress commonly leads to outbreaks of pneumonia. Other diseases may have been transmitted from herd to herd, so producers should contact veterinarians to discuss their overall herd health.

Parasites in Sheep and Goats

Parasitism in sheep and goats is a widespread, deadly problem. Unfortunately, the dewormers available are becoming less effective every year, and, on many farms, dewormers no longer work. Pasture management therefore is essential to preventing deaths and production losses caused by parasites. Parasite resistance to dewormers can be brought to a farm by purchase of a new animal, so quarantine procedures are important. New treatment and control recommendations are available. For more

information, go to www.scsrpc.org, www.lsuagcenter.com and contact a local veterinarian.

National Animal Identification System (NAIS)

A national identification system is essential to disease tracking and protection of the national herd, and to be competitive in world markets. And for those who adopt electronic ID early, there can be marketing advantages here in the United States. The first step to the NAIS is premises ID. The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry urges producers to voluntarily register their premises by the end of 2005. Producers can go to www.idaf.state.us/programs/premises.asp for more information and for sign-up sheets.

Horses (Dr. Clint Depew)

Developing a Horse Breeding Program

The objective of every horse breeder is to produce genetically superior horses. As a breeder strives to make genetic progress, he or she faces many environmental conditions that affect horses; thus, making evaluation of genetic potential difficult. A gifted breeder is able to select superior horses for mating and manages the environmental affects, such as nutrition, health care, training and injuries, to maximize the horse's genetic potential. Since breeding for quality horses is not a simple matter, breeders must understand the genetic principles and their application to be successful.

The most important aspect of developing a good breeding program is to select outstanding breeding stock. Identifying genetically superior breeding stock is accomplished by using individual records, pedigree records and progeny information. With high heritability traits, the individual record is a good indication of the horse's breeding potential. Therefore, by selecting an outstanding individual based on its record, the probability of passing those genetics to the next generation is quite good, as high as 40% to 60% in many traits of economic importance in horses.

The rates of progress that a breeder makes in a breeding program depend on four things. The first is a consistent goal. Breeding programs have become so specialized (racing, halter, cutting, pleasure, etc.) that the all-around horse cannot be competitive in any event. Therefore, breeding programs must focus on a single goal to be successful.

The second aspect associated with genetic progress is heritability. Heritability is relatively high in most traits of economic importance; therefore, it is not a limiting factor in most breeding programs.

The third factor that affects the rate of progress is the selection intensity. Selection intensity is the amount of selection pressure applied for a particular trait. In other words, the difference between the horses you selected and the average of the

breed. The greater the superiority of the selected horses, the greater the improvement that can be expected in the foals.

The fourth thing that affects the rate of progress is the generation interval. The generation interval is the length of time it takes to replace all the mares and stallions in a herd. The shortest period required for a mare to produce a female to replace her will be approximately 4 years. In reality, selecting the best female offspring from your herd for replacement and getting them into production requires a generation interval of 6 to 7 years.

A progressive breeding program must take advantage of these genetic principles to be successful. Progressive breeders should start with the best stallions and mares affordable. The plan should be to produce three to four foals out of each mare, then replace the mare with her best filly. All mares that do not produce or produce low quality colts should be culled with their colts from the breeding herd. The best fillies should be selected and put back in the herd to replace the first generation of mares as soon as possible. A second stallion must be selected to breed to the new fillies used as replacements. A complete change of the mare herd would occur approximately every 6 to 7 years.

By taking advantage of the superior genetic potential in the foals produced and using them in the breeding herd as quickly as possible, maximum genetic improvement will be obtained. With proper application of these genetic principles, a horse breeder can produce the champions of tomorrow.

Swine (Dr. Tim Page)

Show Pig Health

A well-planned show pig health program will minimize disease and increase growth rate by increasing pig immunity against common diseases and controlling parasites. Each agent and exhibitor should discuss and decide on a plan for disease prevention. Even a minimal program is better than none. Over the last few years, some show pig producers have either reduced their herd vaccination and parasite control programs or, in some cases, even eliminated them. Lack of the proper vaccinations, parasite control and pig immunity will lead to an increase in inefficiency and disease. As with all livestock production, exhibitors should develop relationships with local veterinarians for assistance and guidance in maintaining pig health.

Most show pig producers use some form of vaccination program for sows and boars. These sow vaccinations, when given at the proper times and with the proper boosters, will aid in immunizing young pigs against certain diseases for a short time. In most cases, however, show pig producers today are not vaccinating their young pigs against disease following weaning and preparing them for sale to 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors. These pigs go through many stresses during this period, which can drastically affect immunity negatively.

First, they are weaned and separated from the sow and must become accustomed to consuming feed to meet their nutritional requirements. During this time, natural immunity to diseases that they received from the sow is decreasing. Next, they are mixed with other pigs from other litters in pens for display to prospective buyers. A typical example has the pigs then being trucked to a sale location, tags inserted, mixing with other pigs (with new bugs), made to get up time and time again for viewing, and then pushed through a sale ring only to be mixed again with other pigs and new pens. Finally, they are loaded and hauled home to the exhibitor's pen and facilities that are new and strange (with new bugs).

Why are we surprised when the pigs start coughing and/or scouring soon thereafter? Or, after they have been hauled and exhibited at a prospect pig show (of which we have many in Louisiana), as well as exposure to other pigs (with new bugs), they become sick. What happens then? Usually, a treatment period starts to eliminate the disease that is making the pig sick. We are in the habit of just concerning ourselves about treating the problems when they occur. We should be addressing the potential problems and trying to prevent many of them. This would contribute to the show pig being healthier and the exhibitor (parents and agents as well) having a more educational and enjoyable experience.

Many vaccines and dewormers are available in the pork industry today. Most can be obtained locally or ordered through livestock products suppliers. The vaccines are a great deal cheaper than having to purchase antibiotics to treat problems that develop. We have to be careful in recommending certain companies or brands to our clientele. Sometimes though, exhibitor families need a recommendation from agents on what to purchase. The following vaccines are quality vaccines with positive results. They are not the only vaccines or the best ones available. An old standby that has served us well for many years is Respire from Pfizer. It protects pigs from respiratory disease caused by *Mycoplasma pneumonia*. As with most vaccines, it requires a booster 3 weeks later. Be sure to instruct your exhibitors to read the label because some vaccines differ on whether they require booster vaccinations and the time interval to administer it. Pfizer has even improved upon Respire. They now offer FluSure/Respire One/ER Bac Plus. This not only immunizes against *Mycoplasma pneumonia*, but also swine influenza virus and erysipelas. We do not see swine influenza and erysipelas every year in Louisiana show pigs, but we see more of these diseases the last few years. If an exhibitor could use only one vaccination, this is the one recommended. As with other vaccines, this one requires a booster vaccine in 3 weeks. Other quality vaccines include Suvaxyn RespiFend MH by Ft. Dodge, ParaPleuro Shield P+BE by Novartis and Myco Silencer ONCE by Intervet.

For optimum parasite control, exhibitors should deworm pigs every 30-45 days. As with all medications, whether it is dewormers, feed additives, vaccines or antibiotics, please remind your exhibitors to observe withdrawal times. Also, some exhibitors may have an excellent vaccination and parasite control program and their pigs still become sick. They should be prepared with a plan of action for treatment if their pigs do become sick. It is critical that sick pigs be treated as soon as possible after diagnosis of the disease. Remember, have exhibitors consult their local veterinarians for assistance with the health of their show pig projects.

Poultry (Dr. Theresia Lavergne) **Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)**

Everyone involved in the poultry industry is concerned about the possibility of a highly pathogenic avian influenza virus making its way to the United States. There has not been a highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza in the United States for more than 20 years, and that strain was eliminated.

There is no treatment for highly pathogenic avian influenza, so the poultry industry must prevent it. The industry can work to prevent avian influenza by implementing and following strict biosecurity procedures at all times. Furthermore, proper cleaning and disinfection procedures are essential.

How is avian influenza transmitted? Transmission from bird to bird occurs by direct contact with secretions from infected birds (feces and respiratory secretions); contact with contaminated feed, water, equipment and clothing; and from contact with "normal" looking waterfowl that are carrying the virus. Also, broken contaminated eggs may infect chicks in incubators.

What are the signs of avian influenza in birds? Birds that have highly pathogenic avian influenza will have severe depression, inappetence, drastically reduced egg production, facial edema (with swollen and cyanotic combs and wattles), and sudden death (mortality can be 100%). For a definite diagnosis, the virus needs to be isolated.

What happens if an outbreak occurs? If an outbreak does occur, birds in infected flocks must be slaughtered, and their carcasses and litter will have to be disposed of. The facilities will have to be cleaned and disinfected, and remain empty for at least 21 days. These are minimum recommendations and may vary depending on the recommendations of each integrator.

Human infections? Avian influenza viruses do not usually infect humans, but human cases can occur. The possibility of a person developing avian influenza is low, but during an outbreak there is a risk to people who have had contact with infected birds and/or their secretions. Fortunately, medicines approved for human flu viruses should prevent bird flu in humans (unless the viruses become resistant to these drugs).

Additionally, the virus is inactivated by normal recommended cooking temperatures for eggs

and poultry. This is just another reason to cook eggs and poultry properly and thoroughly (to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F or above).

Dairy (Dr. Charlie Hutchison) **Milk Production and Prices**

The growth in milk production continues with September production, in the top 23 dairy states, hitting 13 billion pounds — up 4.9% compared to a year ago, according to the "Milk Production" report from USDA. This is the result of a 4.2% gain in milk per cow and an increase of 54,000 head of cows. U.S. milk production for the 3rd quarter (July-September) totaled 44.0 billion pounds, up 4.2% from the same period last year. Cow numbers for the same period were 9.05 million head, which is 27,000 more head than the same period last year. Cow numbers are not increasing everywhere, but large increases in states like California (over 28,000 more head than September 2004) and Idaho (over 39,000 head) helped offset declines.

Even though milk production continues to grow, and demand for dairy products is stable, the price for raw milk continues to go up. The class 1 price for October milk is \$17.37, \$0.57 higher than the September price. The advance class 1 milk price for November is \$17.66 (\$0.29 higher than October). Most experts are forecasting lower milk prices possibly in December or the early part of 2006 if production continues to increase and demand for dairy products remains stable or declines.

Milk-Feed Ratio

Thanks to a higher all-milk price and lower feed prices, the milk-feed ratio was 3.36 for September. That is 0.3 points higher than the revised August ratio and 0.14 points more than the September 2004 ratio. The all-milk price increased 30 cents to \$15.10 per hundredweight. Corn and soybean prices were lower on a month-to-month and yearly basis.

Cooperatives Working Together

The Cooperatives Working Together (CWT) program has tentatively accepted 448 bids from producers to retire its milking herds. Those bids represent 66,000 cows, or the equivalent of 1.2 billion pounds of milk. From the Southeast region of the country bids were tentatively accepted from 54 farms with a total of 3,803 cows. Milk production from these farms is estimated at 63 million pounds, 5.0% of the total milk production reduced by the program. The next step will be on-farm audits to verify the accuracy of information submitted. Once the audit occurs, then producers can send their cattle to slaughter.

Watch for Aflatoxin in Corn

Regulators and food companies are expanding testing of Midwest grain and milk for aflatoxin because the drought has resulted in outbreaks at many corn farms. Iowa officials have begun weekly testing of the milk from each of the 750 dairy farms located in 26 eastern counties, as well as milk tankers coming into Iowa from Illinois and Missouri. Any tanker of milk that contains more than

0.5 parts per billion of aflatoxin will be discarded. Therefore, if you see a bargain price on a load of corn or corn screenings, you might want to take a 'gander at that horse's teeth.'

Beef (Dr. Jason Rowntree)

The Louisiana Gulf Coast was devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Katrina killed thousands of cattle, destroyed citrus farms and, in the Florida parishes, pushed over thousands of acres of timber. The subsequent damage left many without electricity to operate dairies, shriveled huge pine tree forests to pulpwood and destroyed fence lines for miles. Within a month, Hurricane Rita made landfall on the Louisiana-Texas border September 24. Rita's destruction has been well documented; the storm destroyed homes and agricultural buildings, killed thousands of cattle, flooded pastures and, like Katrina, destroyed fence lines for miles.

Immediately after Rita's passing, staging areas were designated all along the Gulf Coast beginning in Cameron Parish, north of the storm's landfall, stretching to Lafourche Parish, 50 miles southwest of New Orleans. Beginning in late August, several government, commodity and LSU AgCenter entities worked to provide relief to beef cattle, dairy and equine producers. Thankfully, producers, agricultural organizations and many others have provided feed, hay, fencing supplies and other items to help in this challenging time. Without question, Louisiana thanks those for their wonderful support.

The Gulf Coast is now transitioning from a rescue-oriented crisis into long-term recovery; we are looking ahead to repairing and rebuilding farms, wintering livestock and, in time, gaining some much-needed rest. Needs within area are documented below. Staging areas in Lafourche/Terrebonne and Iberia parishes are in the process of closing. If you live in these areas and are still in need, please contact your local county agent. Calcasieu and Cameron parishes' staging areas will be condensed to one location.

Calcasieu Parish

A call for hay was made by county agent Tommy Shields. Many Cameron Parish cattle have temporarily relocated to Calcasieu Parish. An estimated 5,000 head need constant aid. Fencing is a huge issue; a minimum of 100,000 acres need to have fences replaced.

Cameron Parish

Cameron Parish cattle are dispersed throughout the state. Yesterday from Hackberry, more than 40 more cattle were rounded up; however, most rescue operations are ending. Cameron Parish will need to rebuild fence around at least 100,000 acres and is feeding a minimum of 5,000 cows a day.

Vermilion Parish

Some 6,000 to 8000 head of cattle are in need of continuous aid. Andrew Granger, Vermilion county agent, estimates 120,000 acres will need perimeter and cross fences.

Staging Information

Below are identified staging areas for beef cattle relief. If you know of someone interested in donating, please call Bob Felknor at 225 343 3491 or Jason Rowntree at 225 578 3345.

Calcasieu Parish /Cameron Parish

McNeese University Farm

2907 McNeese Farm Rd

Lake Charles, LA 70607

Mr. Darren Goodwin

(337) 302-5759

Mr. Tommy Shields

(337) 842-4245

Mr. Gary Wicke

(337) 274-1842

Vermilion Parish

Vermilion Parish Office

1105 West Port Street

Abbeville, LA

70510-5831

Andrew Granger (337) 296 6852

Hilton Waits

(337) 898-4335

(337) 658-9889

Monetary Donations:

Cash donations can be sent to these organizations:

Calcasieu Parish Cattlemen's Association

Attn: Tommy Shields

7101 Gulf Hwy.

Lake Charles, LA 70607

Vermilion Parish Cattlemen's Association

Attn: Andrew Granger

1105 West Port St.

Abbeville, LA 70510

Louisiana Cattlemen's Association

Attn: Bob Felknor

I-10 Frontage Road, Port Allen, LA 70767

225 343-3491

Louisiana Farm Bureau

Attn: Ronnie Harrell

P O BOX 95004

Baton Rouge, LA 70895