

Animal Industry News Update

from the LCES Animal Science Specialists



Animal Health (Dr. Christine Navarre) Calf Diarrhea

There are a number of disease problems that can occur in young calves, and calf diarrhea is one of the most common. Calf diarrhea can be caused by bacteria, viruses or protozoa. The most common bacterial cause of calf diarrhea is enterotoxigenic *E. coli*, commonly known as colibacillosis. Calves get this disease between 2-5 days of age.

Most cases of diarrhea that occur in calves from 10 days to 2 weeks of age are from viruses (rotavirus and coronavirus) and protozoa (cryptosporidia). It is important to remember that there are no specific treatments for viruses and cryptosporidia. We only can support the calf with fluid therapy (oral electrolytes and/or intravenous fluids). Calf scour boluses and any number of treatments (Pepto-Bismol, eggs, etc.) will not work in these cases. In fact, antibiotics given by mouth (scour boluses) and other treatments can interfere with the re-establishment of the normal flora of the gut that is important in healing. Withholding milk, although popular at one time, is not a good idea. Calves need good nutrition for the gut to heal. Even "high energy" calf electrolytes do not have enough nutrition. The general rule in treating calf diarrhea is to give only high quality milk replacer and fluids by mouth. Injections of Vitamins A and D may help. Intravenous fluids are rarely needed if cases are treated early. Always mix calf electrolytes and administer according to the label. Because not all of the fluids given orally are absorbed, sometimes the stool actually gets more watery. But if the calf's attitude improves, the fluids are working.

Beef (Dr. Tim Page) Louisiana Branded Beef

The Louisiana Cattlemen's Association (LCA) has recently registered a Louisiana branded beef trademark. A Louisiana branded beef program was one of the five major initiatives of the Louisiana State Beef Advisory Committee.

The LCA registered the following trademark for Louisiana branded beef:

flavor
LOUISIANA BEEF

In recent months, there have been a number of beef cattle producers expressing interest in developing a Louisiana branded beef program. A producer in north Louisiana has been feeding out his own beef, slaughtering it, processing it, and then serving it in his restaurants. Several producers in south central Louisiana have been grass finishing calves, slaughtering them, and then selling the beef in local area stores. Also, there is a group of producers in southeast Louisiana that has expressed

interest in finishing their own calves and selling the beef as a Louisiana branded beef product.

Because of this new program, the LCA has formed a Louisiana Branded Beef Board. The board met recently and developed minimum criteria for beef to be eligible to carry the Louisiana branded beef label. This is still in the draft status and has not been finalized. One reason that I am putting this information out is to hopefully get some valuable feedback from agents and producers before we finalize it. The draft criteria are as follows:

1. Louisiana calved
2. Source and Age Certified
3. Premise ID required
4. Individually identified records
5. Producers must be Beef Quality Assurance certified and adhere to all BQA recommendations and guidelines
6. Producers must follow NCBA Animal Care and Handling Guidelines
7. The calves can be grass and/or grain fed
8. Master Cattlemen certification is strongly recommended (may be required in the future)
9. Calves must be slaughtered in a state inspected and/or federally inspected facility
10. Applications must be obtained and submitted to the LCA Branded Beef Board for approval (fee - \$100.00)
11. Sample packaging and labeling must be submitted to LCA Branded Beef Board for approval
12. The LCA Branded Beef Board reserves the right to withdraw label use rights if beef product is deemed inferior quality

Again, I want to reiterate that this is in draft status only, and has not been finalized. The board would appreciate any and all feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions, you may contact Dr. Tim Page at tpage@agcenter.lsu.edu or (225)578-7906.

Swine (Dr. Tim Page) Biosecurity for Show Pig Producers

This is the time of the year when show pig producers really need to be aware of biosecurity since interested buyers are evaluating their pigs on a regular basis on their farms. These potential buyers go from farm to farm looking at show pigs. They do not shower, change clothes, or change footwear in between visits, like they should. Even if they say they have done these things, there is still the potential to bring a disease onto the farm. And, a disease outbreak on a show pig producer's farm could force them to completely depopulate and start over. Not only do we have to be concerned about the 'regular swine diseases' being spread, we have to worry about humans bringing H1N1 virus onto farms and infecting pigs.

Biosecurity is the use of management practices designed to prevent the introduction and spread of infectious disease. Examples of this include housing facilities, pig flow techniques, restriction of new animal sources, quarantine and testing of new animals, rodent control, control of other animals that may be vectors for pathogens, and monitoring human and vehicle entry onto the farm. Vehicles can be a mechanism for disease spread. Cleaning and disinfecting trucks and trailers before access to the farm can reduce the risk posed by those vehicles. Human foot baths can help as well, but they are by no means a complete deterrent to humans bringing in disease.

Nationally, about 85% of swine operations do not allow anyone on their operations except employees. Most operations that do allow visitors do so because the visitors are business necessities such as electricians, plumbers, and service personnel. However, because Louisiana producers raise show pigs, this is not feasible. Producers must take every precaution possible. They need to ask visitors if they have any symptoms of being sick, and ask visitors when they were last on someone else's pig farm. All visitors need to be required to change to clean boots and coveralls provided by the producer before entering the farm.

Hopefully, these suggestions are helpful to show pig producers. At the same time, show pig producers need to be aware that by allowing visitors onto their farm, they are taking a chance every time they do. The more visitors they have, the higher the odds that they will have a disease or multiple diseases brought onto their farm.

Poultry (Dr. Theresia Lavergne)

The cost of cage vs. cage-free produced eggs

Promar International (an economic consulting company) recently conducted a study on the cost of banning cage egg production. The study was conducted for the United Egg Producers.

According to the study, the cost of eggs to consumers would increase about 25% if all eggs had to be produced cage-free. Not only would the cost of eggs increase for consumers, but the increased costs would be felt by the government too. The estimate is that federal spending on food assistance programs (school programs, WIC, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) would increase by \$169 million a year just from the increase in egg costs that would result from banning cages.

Additionally, the US would have to begin importing eggs to meet the consumer demand for eggs. Today we produce enough eggs for our needs, however if cages are banned we would need to import as many as 7 billion eggs a year. These eggs would be imported due to the rise in costs of cage-free produced eggs as well as the decrease in total production that would occur by going to all cage-free production. It is likely that imported eggs would come from countries with lower food safety and welfare standards than we have in the US. Also, the US's food safety inspection system would be responsible for

inspecting imported eggs, which could put a strain on their efficiency.

Other notable mentions in the study:

- Cage-free hens need 15-25% more feed than caged hens to produce the same number of eggs – which means 7 billion more pounds of corn and soybean meal and 580,000 additional acres of farmland needed
- Cage-free production would require a 400% increase in land needed to produce the same number of eggs as produced by caged hens
- The cost to farmers to convert their farms to cage-free systems would be \$7.5 billion
- The producers may face obstacles in obtaining the financing to convert their farms and in obtaining the necessary permits

Interestingly, American consumers do have the right to choose and purchase the type of eggs they prefer (regular/modern caged housing systems, cage-free housing systems, or free range), and 95% of Americans do choose regular/modern caged housing system produced eggs!