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Livestock and Natural Resources

Fenceline- Time to Plan Weaning

Oh, my goodness, where has the time gone? In just a few weeks, we will be considering weaning the calves. It's best to start planning for that now.

Having a good herd health program plan can help to reduce sickness at weaning, improve the treatment response of those calves that do get sick, and increase the overall performance of calves during weaning. Work with your veterinarian to plan vaccination strategies and treatment protocols.

Strategic mineral supplementation when the calves are with their dams prior to weaning may be beneficial for getting good immune response. Minerals such as copper, zinc, cobalt, and manganese are important to immune system function. A lack of these minerals in feed sources or high levels of other minerals, such as sulfur which can inhibit absorption of minerals, can impact immune response.

Introducing new feeds to calves while they are with their dams prior to weaning can help calves start on feed more quickly when they are weaned. Feedstuffs should be palatable with minimal fines and dust. Feeds should be evaluated to determine if they have adequate levels of protein and energy to meet desired performance goals.

Fence-line weaning calves or placing nose weaners into calves 4-7 days before removal from their dams are a couple of methods to accomplish this. Both of these methods prevent the calves from nursing while still giving the calf social contact with its dam. This gradual process appears to help the calves forget about nursing and begin the transition to being on their own and part of a new herd.

Ideally, fence-line weaning should be in an environment that

- allows both cows and calves to spread out along the fence,
- has minimal dust present, and
- provides feed and water resources for the calves that are familiar and close to the fence.

A number of studies have shown calves that were fence-line weaned have lower incidents of sickness compared to their contemporaries that were hard weaned and immediately separated from visual and audio contact with their dams. Some studies have shown a significant increase in average daily gain and total weight gain for calves that were fence line weaned when compared to their hard weaned contemporaries.

David G. Hallauer
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Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Foliar Fungicide Use in Soybeans

As the corn crop heads towards growth stages where fungicides no longer do much good, attention may switch to soybean fungicide use. We're not quite to the optimal application window yet (R3, or beginning pod stage where pods are three sixteenths of an inch long on one of the four uppermost nodes on the main stem with a fully developed leaf), but we soon will be.

The soybean diseases that might warrant fungicides in Kansas include frogeye leaf spot, brown spot (common in Kansas – often at low levels), *Cercospora* leaf blight and pod and stem blight (in excessively wet years). Knowing what we know about this year: weather plus yield potential plus crop value has to equal a good return to a fungicide correct? Maybe. Maybe not.

To best make a decision on a fungicide application, evaluate potential return. Work by NE Area Agronomist Stu Duncan (2013-2019) showed an average yield response across five dryland site years to be 2.8 bushels per acre. The yield response across nine irrigated site years was less than half a bushel. Iowa State University evaluations in 2020 suggested much the same, with yield responses of one and a half to just over three bushels per acre in a year with very low disease pressure. If disease *is* present, this could change significantly, but only scouting can help you determine that (make sure to differentiate between bacterial diseases not controlled by a fungicide and fungal diseases that may warrant control). Once you know potential returns vs. application costs, etc..., a good decision can be made.

In addition to economics, fungicide resistance should also be considered. Blanket applications in the absence of disease with little potential for disease pressure may not seem to cause much harm, but have the potential to increase resistance, with frogeye leaf spot already confirmed resistant to some fungicide classes.

Fungicide applications have the best opportunity for economic gain if frequent rainfall occurs through R5 (seed an eighth inch long in one of the four uppermost nodes on the main stem) with disease present. Scout now to give fungicide applications the best chance for success. For information on fungicide efficacy based on disease, check out this Purdue publication at: <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/BP/BP-161-W.pdf> .

Peony Disease Battle

It's not like we don't see it every year, but every year it seems to surprise us a little – peony diseases. Right now, Red Spot and Powdery Mildew are rearing their ugly head.

Red spot (Measles) causes distinct, reddish-purple spots on the upper leaf surfaces that often coalesce and become large, reddish purple blotches on the upper leaf surfaces (light brown when viewed from the underside). Spots on stems will merge to form reddish brown streaks.

Plants with powdery mildew appear to have been dusted with flour and can lead to death of the leaves. It's not as common as Red Spot, but does show up this time of year as well.

The control solution? Sanitation. Remove all diseased tissue, including stems, at the end of the growing season. In fact, *all* foliage can be removed in mid-August with no harm to the plants (plants will be essentially dormant). Remove dead foliage now. If you have any mulch with plant debris in it, replace it with clean mulch. This can help reduce the source of disease inoculum to keep disease severity at lower levels next year.

Cindy Williams
Meadowlark Extension District
Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

Packed Lunch Safety

Carrying your food in an insulated container with a freezer gel pack not only keeps your meal safe to eat, but helps prevent boring bagged lunches!!

Make extra of a favorite main dish and enjoy it a day or two later as a packed lunch at work or school. Use an insulated container and gel freezer pack to carry perishable foods that must be kept cold. Bacteria multiply rapidly if food is held in the “danger zone” of 40-degree F to 140-degree F for more than 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90-degree F).

Keeping food at a safe temperature is important when carrying your lunch. Let your “sack lunch” be limited only by your imagination through following these food safety tips:

Preparation:

*To serve food in carried lunches, the food must start out safe. Follow general food safety practices of cooking foods to safe temperatures, working with clean and using clean utensils and a clean work surface, cooking and storing food properly.

*Wash hands with soap and water. Wash the lunch container and thermos with hot water and detergent after every use. If you use a paper bag, purchase bags specifically for carrying sack lunches and use a clean bag each time.

*Prepare just the amount of perishable food that can be eaten to avoid possible safety problems with leftover perishable foods.

*Use thermos containers to keep liquids or semi-fluid foods cold or not. Fill shortly before leaving with your lunch. For hot foods, preheat the thermos by filling it with hot water and letting it stand for a few minutes. Pour hot water and add steaming hot food. For cold foods, fill your thermos with cold water first and let stand a few minutes before emptying the water and adding cold foods.

Keep Cold Foods Cold:

*Perishable foods served cold, must be kept cold. These include the following foods and items prepared with these foods: Meat, poultry, seafood, egg, tofu; dairy products (milk, cheese and yogurt); opened canned fruit, cooked fruits and vegetables and cut/peeled fresh fruits and vegetables; pasta, rice and cooked vegetables and fruits.

*If lunches are packed the night before, keep perishable foods refrigerated until you are ready to leave with your lunch. Add cookies, chips or other foods that lose crispness in the morning.

*If possible, store lunches containing cold perishable foods in a refrigerator until lunchtime. When refrigeration isn't possible, carry already chilled foods in an insulated lunch container. Include an ice pack, freezer gel pack, or water frozen in leakproof plastic freezer containers. Place your lunch in a cool place out of direct sunlight.

Reheating foods in the microwave:

*If foods are reheated in the microwave at work, reheat until they are steaming hot throughout.

*Follow package directions for frozen convenience meals.

Foods safe at room temperature:

Packed lunch foods that are safe at room temperature are:

*Peanut butter sandwiches

*Popcorn

*Bread, crackers, bagels

*Unopened single-serving containers of fruit, fruit juice and pudding

*Commercially prepared meats, poultry, seafood and dried beans (such as beans and franks) that can be opened and eaten immediately

*Dried fruits

*Nuts

*Cookies, cereal bars

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Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

No news From Nancy the week.