



Vaccination/Processing Recommendation for Weaned Calves

Whether on your ranch or through the local auction market every calf goes through the weaning process. Preparing these calves for their next phase of production is vitally important to the health and wellbeing of the animal and to the ranch where these calves are raised.

Producers in the “seedstock” business are raising bulls and heifers and selling these animals to their customers to grow and improve their cattle operations. They have a vested interest in turning out the highest quality product they can. This process begins with a proper weaning and vaccination program. Immunizing cattle against Bovine Respiratory Disease (BRD) using pre-weaning and weaning vaccinations greatly reduces the incidence of sickness caused by stress and co-mingling of animals during the weaning process.

Weaning or “backgrounding” calves takes a minimum of 45 days if done properly. During this period, the calves are separated from their mothers and put into pens, are given vaccinations and booster shots, taught to eat and drink out of troughs, as opposed to nursing their mothers, and monitored for signs of illness.

Once backgrounding is complete these animals are now “conditioned” and prepared for the next phase of production which is growing them at home or sending them to a development program to be fed and grown into breeding-age bulls and females.

For the record, I am not a veterinarian. However, I have been preconditioning feeder calves and seedstock or replacement breeding stock for many years. I have seen firsthand the results of successful weaning programs and problems associated with cattle being weaned the “hard way” through the local auction markets.

The following pre-weaning and weaning procedures are what we use in our ranching and feed yard operations, and I would recommend them to you as well. You, as my customers and clients, are sending me replacement cattle to grow in a development program. As you are aware, these cattle are co-mingled into like groups of bulls or heifers and grown and developed for sale and subsequent breeding. These cattle come from many different environments and situations, so it is vital that these cattle are vaccinated properly at home first!

Procedures: **Consult your local vet for the appropriate products for your area*



Pre-weaning: 3 to 6 weeks prior to weaning

CattleMaster Gold FP 5 - Modified Live/Killed (ML/K) Respiratory Vaccine
Vision 7 with Spur - Clostridial Vaccine (Blackleg)
Preponse HM - Pasturella Vaccine
Dectomax Injectable - Deworm and parasite control

At weaning:

Day 1: Pyramid 5 or equivalent - Modified Live (ML) Respiratory vaccine

Pour-on product for fly control

Day 10: Pyramid 5 Booster shot (only 70% of cattle vaccinated the first time responded to the vaccine, hence the booster shot)

Day 21: Pyramid 3 - Respiratory booster if needed

Vision 7 - Clostridial (Blackleg) vaccine booster

Thru day 45: Continue to monitor the health of the cattle and treat any sickness with vet prescribed antibiotics. Clean water troughs regularly.

As aforementioned, this is the protocol I follow each year when we wean our ranch calves. This program works very well for us, and we have minimal sickness. I do want to mention a couple of things though:

1. I often hear from ranchers that "My calves don't get sick at home, why should I go to all the trouble...?" Good question!! The reason to wean properly is because most of your calves are not growing up and spending their entire lives at home. You are sending your bulls and heifers to me and that is when their "raising" tells the tale. These cattle are being co-mingled with other cattle of unknown history so to speak. If everyone is weaned and vaccinated properly then morbidity and mortality are GREATLY REDUCED!!
2. "I use Killed vaccines because it's much easier to use because I don't have to mix it up first". The fact is that Modified Live (ML) vaccines are much more effective than killed vaccines in providing the proper LONG TERM protection against BRD.

Whether you chose to give preweaning shots is up to you though I highly recommend it. The main point is this: Start your vaccinations on **DAY 1** of the weaning process and give the appropriate booster shots as suggested. Working your calves, the



day you send them to me, or the week before, does them little good. The cattle need to be fully weaned and vaccinated before being sent to the development program.

I hope this information helps you as you get ready to prepare your animals for the next phase of production. I can assure you following these guidelines will benefit the program and ensure your cattle the greatest opportunity to perform to their maximum potential. As always, consult your veterinarian. I am always available as well to answer any questions you may have.