

Take it from them...

BILL PRICE,

a custom feedlot operator and NDSA Feeder Council member from Mandan knows the value of vaccination. "A 3 percent death loss in the feedyard can really take the profit out in a hurry," he commented. That's why there's no non-vaccinated cattle in his family's feedyard.



And they have found plenty of other tangible benefits of vaccinated calves, too, he said. "Vaccinated calves don't get as sick as often, respond better, gain faster and therefore are worth more."

That's why programs like VIP should benefit participating cattle producers. He said, "The VIP form will serve as proof of the health and management practices those cattle received, and feeders and order buyers will trust its integrity. The program should be a win-win situation for everyone."

BILL DOBLER, a prominent order buyer from Mandan is the first to tell you that nearly all the cattle he buys come from neighboring South Dakota. The reason is simple, he said, "because 80 to 85 percent of the feeder cattle for sale there are vaccinated." And that's worth a lot to him. "When they're vaccinated, your death loss goes to darn near zero, your pull loss goes to darn near zero and you have a lot better chance of making some money," Dobler commented.

He's learned that lesson the hard way, he said. "I have a standing rule not to buy non-vaccinated cattle until at least Nov. 10 or 15. But, one year, I broke my rule and suffered 8 to 10 percent death loss. I'm not going to do that again. That's the way you lose customers."

Programs like the VIP are valuable to Dobler. "They give you the information you want, and when the producer signs off on it, you know it has been done," he said.

"Just because your cattle are vaccinated doesn't mean I am necessarily going to buy them; they have to meet my other criteria as well. But you can be darn sure that, if they're not vaccinated, I won't be buying them."

Feeder Council...

The Feeder Council, a division of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, works to promote the feeding and backgrounding industries in North Dakota by planning programs, developing educational materials and directing legislation.



Made up of 11 grassroots feeders and backgrounders, the Council is led by Chairman Steve McLeish of Braddock, Vice Chairman Bill Price of Mandan and Secretary Karl Hoppe of Carrington. Other Council members include the following: Tom Bresnahan of Casselton; Al Elliott, Jr., of Galesburg; Frank Melchior of Almont; Peter Mesling of Dickinson; Bob Quam of Wyndmere; Dwight Schilling of Ventura; Grady Thorsgard of Northwood; and Jerry Vangsness of Walcott.

For more information about the Feeder Council or the VIP, contact the North Dakota Stockmen's Association office at (701) 223-2522, ndsas@btigate.com or 407 S. Second St., Bismarck, ND 58504.

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North Dakota

VACCINATION INFORMATION PROGRAM

- *An information program designed to give your feeder calves an extra "push" at marketing time*



COULD YOUR FEEDER CALVES USE AN EXTRA PUSH AT MARKETING TIME?

Do you want to make order buyers and feedlot operators sit up straighter and raise their hands more often when your calves enter the ring at marketing time?



Participation in the North Dakota Vaccination Information Program (VIP) is designed to give sellers a marketing edge.

ABOUT VIP

VIP is coordinated by the North Dakota Stockmen's Association (NDSA) Feeder Council and is designed to document the vaccination history and management practices used on feeder calves for sale in North Dakota.

The program has two main purposes: First, to help order buyers and feedlot operators make informed purchasing decisions, and, second, to help astute cow-calf producers and backgrounders differentiate their cattle from non-vaccinated cattle.

HOW IT WORKS

Producers interested in participating in the program fill out a VIP form at the time of marketing. (A sample form is shown at the right.) The forms are available in the offices of all North Dakota livestock auction markets and scales. On the forms, producers indicate their contact information and consignment information, in addition to the vaccination and management history of the cattle. The NDSA Feeder Council has identified



three minimum preferred practices in order to qualify for VIP, including administering a 4-way viral vaccination and booster for IBR, BVD, PI3 and BRSV; administering a clostridial 7-way vaccination and booster; and supplying documentation to verify those vaccinations. Sales receipts and supplier-signed vaccine product cards qualify as appropriate documentation forms.

Producers sign the VIP form to certify that the information is accurate and that they stand behind their cattle and their word.

At the time the animals are sold, auctioneers at participating livestock auction markets will introduce qualifying cattle and read off the appropriate information to potential buyers. Insist that they do. Proper marketing requires it.

INFORMATION IS POWER

Members of the NDSA Feeder Council, with input from local order buyers, designed the VIP to communicate necessary information in an easy-to-use format for both buyers and sellers. Members also recognize the value of other health history/management programs and encourage producers to use this or another program when marketing their cattle.

And because all information is beneficial, the Feeder Council also encourages producers to fill out the applicable areas on the VIP form even if they do not meet all the minimum preferred practices. Information is power, and some is better than none.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

There are no guarantees that participating in the VIP or a similar program will yield a



premium for your calves. However, order buyers and feedlot operators agree that those who do not vaccinate their cattle and those who do not follow the recommended management practices are much more likely to realize discounts at marketing time. Vaccinated feeder calves suffer less illness and gain weight faster than their non-vaccinated counterparts. Therefore, fewer and fewer order buyers and feedlot operators are willing to take a risk on those without the recommended vaccinations and protocols.

The only cost to participate in the VIP is the time it takes to complete the program form. Pick one up and fill one out next time you have feeder calves to sell and are looking for a way to give them an extra push. ■