



Vaccines and Vaccinations

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The use of vaccines and drugs continues to increase each year. Some may be of questionable value as products come and go. The real value of a product is determined by its continual use for a number of years.

Product approval is a long and costly procedure for a commercial company. The expense of development drives the prices high, yet efficacy and safety under actual use are extremely important to the producer or consumer. Some vaccines may not stay on the market long enough to recover total cost.

Following vaccination, disease outbreaks may occur that are sometimes more severe than actual field exposure, yet there are so many stresses on cattle the specific cause may not be identified. This poses the question: Should you use all the recommended vaccines on all the animals or does that create more problems than it prevents? Are we using more vaccines than we need?

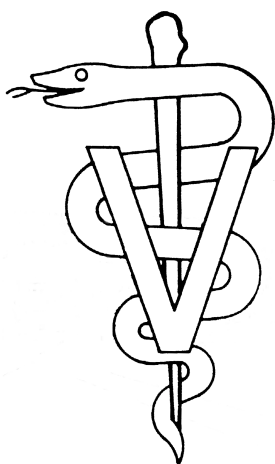
It seems that most of our research is centered on new products. Are we as an industry working on the wrong end of the problem? Should our efforts be directed toward finding out why animals do not get sick? Could research of this type provide us with information to prevent more disease problems instead of treating animals after they get sick? Would it be possible to help solve the problems of respiratory disease and many other diseases by identifying the reason for an animal staying healthy? Other animals raised the same way may get sick and die. Could this information reduce the need for expensive treatments and death losses?

Should ranchers manage their cow herds so they can vaccinate calves at least 3 weeks ahead of weaning? This does reduce health problems, but does it pay?

Before you start vaccinating, think. Are you giving your animals more vaccinations than they need?

Precautions for handling vaccines and vaccinations

- Vaccines should never be mixed with other vaccines unless indicated on the label.
- Store vaccines at the recommended temperature.
- Change vaccination needles frequently (after 10 to 15 head).
- Do not use a chemical disinfectant on vaccination equipment unless it is rinsed well before use. If a needle contacts any foreign material, manure, etc., the needle should be changed.
- Keep good records on all products used and the animal recipients. Record the company name, expiration date, manufacturer's serial number, date used.
- Vaccines may be killed, modified live or a combination of both. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Do not try to vaccinate with a bent or burred needle.
- Keep medication at the work area for the treatment of anaphylactic shock during vaccination or treatment.



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- Use the tenting procedure, pulling the hide up before injecting when indicated; however, experienced operators can inject below the skin without any problem.
- Choose a suitable place for either subcutaneous or in-the-muscle injections. For most vaccinations, the neck is preferred.
- Good clean, soapy water is an excellent cleaning agent, but instruments should be rinsed well before use.
- For vaccination in the muscle, be sure the needle is long enough to prevent leakage from the injection site.
- Do not place vaccinations too close to each other.
- Do not be the first to use a new product. If it is good, it will be available.
- Hot water (first out of the tap in the morning) is normally an excellent non-contaminating rinse solution.
- Speed should not be your only concern when vaccinating. If you are not willing to do a good job, get someone else.
- Do not use an outdated product.
- Do not prepare vaccine for injection that cannot be used in a reasonable time (1 hour is reasonable). Avoid sunlight if possible.
- Ice packs and cooler should be used when transporting vaccine during hot weather.
- Keep injection equipment adjusted and repaired as this will prevent leakage and plunger bypass.
- Avoid freezing diluted vaccine.
- Use a small gauge needle that you are comfortable with. A 14- to 16- gauge, 1-inch long needle should be used if possible.
- Use only sterile equipment to fill the injection equipment. Only a transfer needle should be used for mixing modified live vaccine.
- Injection equipment should be clean at all times. If contamination does occur, it should be cleaned and the needle changed.
- Place your equipment on a clean surface when you lay it down. Hanging equipment should be positioned so that the needle does not touch a contaminated surface.
- Unused newspapers, along with other disposable paper products, are adequate for covering the work area.
- Clean paper or cloth towels should be available at all times.
- If you have a mishap with your vaccine and lose a dose, go to another site and vaccinate again. Prevent vaccine waste when possible.

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