

## Growing your calf for a profit

Good stewardship practices are always in the forefront of producers' minds, especially this time of year as we see new life being introduced into our care. Raising calves in accordance to these practices is beneficial, both morally as well as financially. Our goal is to start calves as healthy as possible so as to decrease their stress and sickness now and in the future.

**Vet tips**  
**Dr. Aaron White**



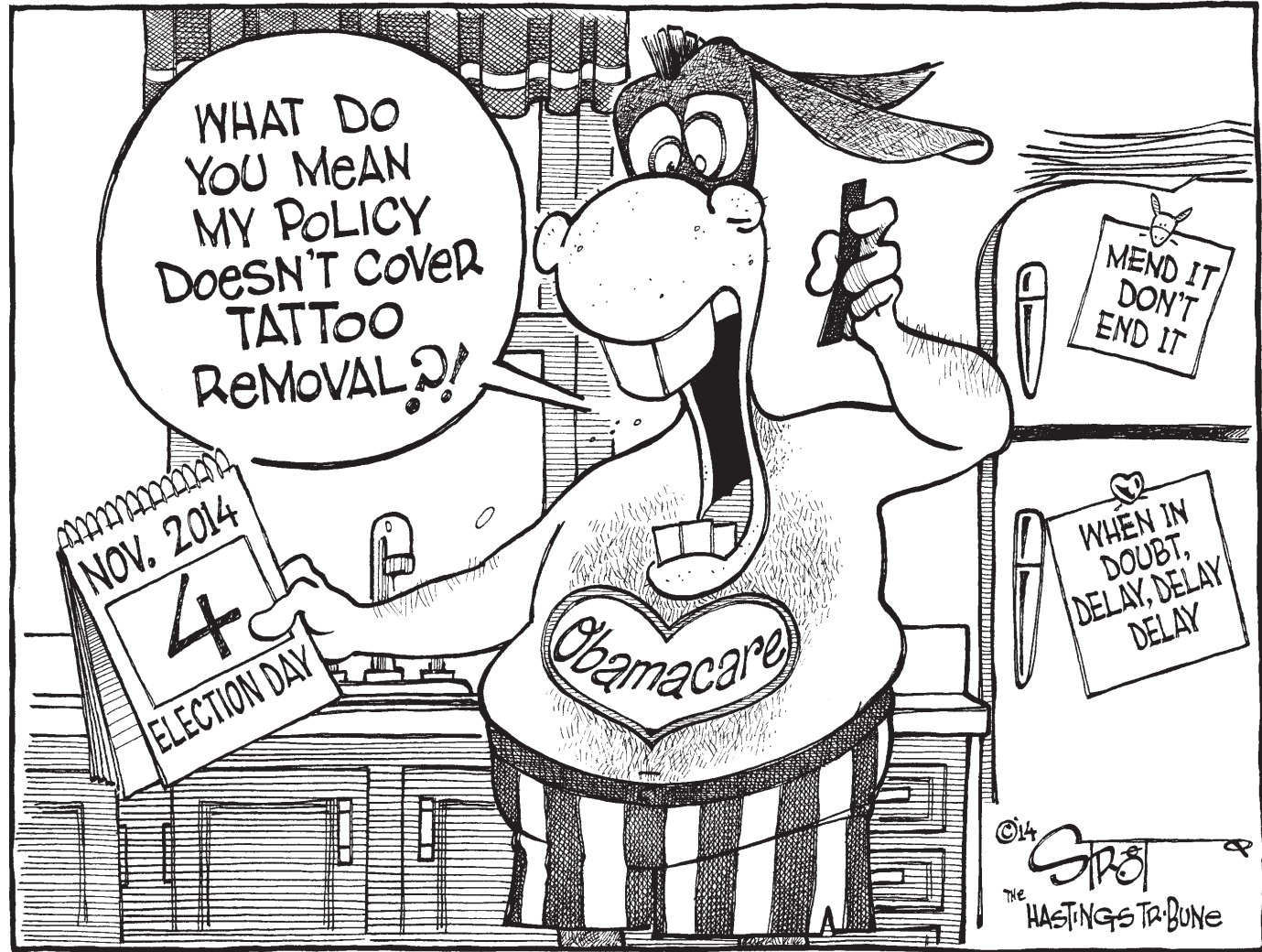
The intake of colostrum in calves is the essential first step in calf health. Colostrum carries with it antibodies to many of the pathogens the calves will be exposed to early in life. Colostrum provides immediate protection and a high concentration of energy for your calves the moment they take their first meal. The timing of colostrum intake is crucial in the calf's ability to absorb the antibodies effectively. The intestines of the calf begin having a decreased ability to absorb antibodies at 6 hours after birth and by 24 hrs are essentially closed. In the best case scenario the calf should get up and nurse within 1 hour of birth and receive 12-15% of its body weight in colostrum or approximately 2-4 quarts depending on the size of the calf. Colostrum is of vital importance in a calf's life. Colostral intake will set the course for future health status and productivity of that calf.

Now that we have the calf off to a good start with adequate colostrum intake, what is next? The practice of reducing stress to the cows and their calves is the next step. You might ask, how can we reduce the stress of a cow/calf pair in the middle of a pasture or dry lot? For calves, stress occurs in 3 major ways: changes in surroundings, diet, and weather.

While it is essential for the reduction of scours and other contagious diseases to remove cow/calf pairs from the calving area, we need to minimize stressful moves as much as possible. Secondly, changes in diet, while more detrimental in orphan calves, also increases stress. Thirdly, the greatest source of stress among newborn calves is weather. Calves, especially newborn calves, need a clean dry place out of the wind. As the calves get older they can tolerate colder temperatures better, provided they can find protection from the wind. Providing clean bedding materials and windbreaks will greatly reduce the stress that the weather can produce in your calves.

Now that you have managed stress as well as possible in your calves, it is time to look at boosting their immunity. Vaccines are available and are most beneficial when administered to the cows and heifers prior to calving. This way the calves will receive antibodies via their mother's colostrum. I prefer to vaccinate heifers at six weeks prior and again at three weeks prior to calving. Cows get one booster 30 days prior to calving. Vaccinations in calves is best done in the first 2 days after birth and at 2-3 months of age or at a typical branding time. A 7-way clostridial vaccine is the most commonly administered vaccine at this stage in life. However, each farm and ranch will have its unique set of challenges and it is best to discuss your individual needs with your veterinarian.

Recognizing sickness in calves early is essential in any type of illness a calf can acquire. Scours, or diarrhea, and pneumonia are the #1 and #2 calf diseases in preweaned calves. In the next article, we will discuss these two disease states in greater detail. As always, contact your veterinarian with any questions or concerns regarding your livestock



## There's no mystery to finding friends

Relax. The crisis has been averted. A trip to the department store and a healthy charge on my credit card saved the day.

We got a call about two weeks ago that we were needed to lead a team of volunteers in the building of a house in Mexico. It was a call we were glad to get, but the last few days were crazy busy getting ready to go.

This may seem trivial – some might say vain – but a priority of mine is to make sure my cosmetics and hair care products are fully stocked before we leave. I don't care if we are in a Third-World country, I am going to "maintain."

Of course, we stayed with family and kids along the way. We had been on the road for three days and were almost to our destination when it dawned on me that my make-up bag was still hanging on the back of the bathroom door at my daughter's house in Dallas.

Let me back up a little here. The day we left, we were about 60 miles from home when Jim remembered he had forgotten his guitar. I'm still not sure I really believe his story, because he headed straight for the music store when we hit Dallas. The next day was his birthday, and he coerced me into declaring a new 12-string guitar as his present, complete with case.

So, in the whole scheme of things, I don't feel so bad about my measly mascara and cheap cleansing cream. Like I always say, "If money can fix it, it ain't a problem."

## Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



Years ago we were returning from a mission trip and the fuel pump on our van went out in a little town called Sibanol, Texas. After the vehicle was taken to a mechanic, we booked a room at the motel and walked across the street for dinner. There, we met a couple about our age and struck up a lively conversation.

We learned he had been a paramedic and that they attended a church we were familiar with. We exchanged e-mail addresses and bid our farewells. Later we became e-mail buddies, corresponding for quite some time until we switched our Internet carrier and somehow lost touch.

This trip found us going through that little town on Sunday morning, and we determined to be there in time for church and see if our friends were still there. There was only one church of that denomination in town, so it didn't take long to locate. We arrived in plenty of time and went in to find a seat.

Like so many older churches, it was suffering from a lack of numbers, but 13, counting us, were there at the appointed time. We introduced ourselves

and asked if anyone knew an older man named John who had been a paramedic. One lady said she had been a member for more than 30 years and she knew no one of that description. What happened next is a little amazing. Their preacher was gone that day and the song leader had been recruited (reluctantly) to lead the service. When he heard that Jim was a preacher, he quickly asked if he would like to deliver the message.

Just like a good Boy Scout, Jim is always prepared. He readily agreed.

So, here we were at a church we had never been to before, trying to find someone we met once and no one seemed to know, with Jim preaching the sermon. Now, I have heard him preach that particular sermon about three times recently, but this time was totally different, and I told him I thought it was the best sermon he ever preached.

After worship, a gracious lady named Lupe invited us to her house for lunch, whispering, "I make good chalupas. My grandchildren say so."

"If we get the chance to eat homemade Mexican food," I told her, "we're going to take it."

Her grandchildren were right. She does make good chalupas. Her husband, Bernardo, was just as gracious and hospitable as his wife. In fact, we are stopping at their home on the way back to pick up some special iris bulbs she promised us.

So even though we didn't find our mystery friends, we met two new ones.

## Eat breakfast like a king, it's the most important meal

The old adage bears repeating – eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a pauper.

Put another way, nutritionists believe breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It breaks the fast, provides fuel for the body and prepares for healthy nutrient intake.

Breakfasts vary, however, and beginning your day with a meal that includes plenty of high quality protein remains the foundation for experiencing healthy benefits.

The ideal breakfast for weight loss contains 25-30 g of high-fiber, low-sugar carbohydrates. Foods such as eggs, lean meat, low-fat dairy, beans afford good choices for breakfast as well.

"If you're too busy for breakfast, you're probably giving up more than a meal," says Karen Hanson, Manhattan Hy-Vee registered dietitian. "Research shows kids who eat breakfast perform better in school. And if you're trying to lose weight, eating breakfast jump-starts your metabolism and keeps you from over-eating later."

Children rely heavily on a consistent food intake, the dietician notes. If they miss breakfast, that period of semi-starvation before lunch can create physical, intellectual and even behavioral problems.

Kids who eat breakfast and are physically active concentrate better. They

## Insight

John Schlageck



typically score higher on tests.

Keep grab-and-go items like cereal, yogurt, fruit and string cheese on hand for busy mornings. On those really rushed mornings, kids can eat in the car on the way to school or day care. It's better than not eating at all.

Other tips include making oatmeal with milk instead of water; eating lunch, dinner or snack foods (ham and cheese sandwich, leftover veggie pizza) for breakfast; or using yogurt or low-fat milk to make breakfast smoothies.

Adults need a breakfast boost too.

"Breakfast recharges your brain and body after the overnight fast," Hanson says. "If we skip breakfast, our body responds by increasing hunger and hanging on to calories. If you're trying to lose weight by skipping breakfast, you're sabotaging yourself."

A bowl of whole-grain cereal and a banana is a quick breakfast that will keep you focused all morning. Try leftover pizza with 100 percent juice if you're not a breakfast-food fan.

A balanced breakfast makes a big difference in overall health and well-being, Hanson says. Here are three tips for making breakfast fit into your morning routine.

Organize the night before. Set the table with bowls and spoons for cereal. Ready a blender for smoothies. Make muffin or waffle mix so it's ready to cook in the morning.

Keep it simple with a bowl of high fiber, higher protein cereal and fruit.

Pack breakfast to go. Plan a nutritious breakfast that can be eaten in the car or on the bus. Teens might like a banana, a bag of trail mix and a carton of milk. You can also check out breakfast options at your child's school.

A recent American Journal of Clinical Nutrition study suggests a breakfast containing 35 g protein from lean beef and eggs leads to improved appetite control and satisfaction throughout the day.

Eating breakfast results in diet quality. It sets the stage for the rest of the day while moderating appetite swings and improving vigilance and memory tasks.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

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