

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

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“Calf Care”

With calving season quickly approaching it is important to keep a few things in mind when it comes to calf care to ensure our calves get the best start possible. Scours are one of the major issues we see impacting calves in the first month of life. If calves develop a long lasting or severe onset case of scours they can lose too many electrolytes. If this happens they may develop metabolic acidosis and severe dehydration that can be fatal if not effectively treated. Our calves are most susceptible to scours in the first few weeks of life.

To prevent scours be sure to make sure that calves are kept in a sanitary environment to prevent exposure to the pathogens that cause scours to develop and spread in the herd. If possible, keep your older calves in a separate location from your younger calves to reduce the in-herd disease transmission. Plan ahead and keep your cows in good body condition so they pass immunity to their calves through colostrum. Finally, continuously change the feeding locations to spread out the calves and keep them from congregating with the other cattle.

Another consideration to keep in mind for nursing calves is the importance of access to fresh clean water. It is one of the most important nutrient needs in a calf's diet and often gets overlooked. When calves nurse milk it bypasses the rumen and goes through the stomach to the small intestine. So, once the calf starts adding grass and grain to their diet, there needs to be water in the rumen to allow the mixing of forage and feed to aid in digestion.

Save the date! Greenwood County KSRE, in collaboration with the Southwind and Wildcat Districts, will be hosting a calving school. This program will be presented by K-State Extension Beef Veterinarian, Dr. A.J. Tarpoff. Goals of the program are to increase knowledge, practical skills, and to increase the number of live calves born if they need assistance. The meeting will be held on Thursday, January 12, 2023, at the 4-H Building at the Old Iron Club in Fredonia, KS at 6 p.m. A dinner will be provided with door prizes available. Please RSVP to the Extension Office by January 4th so as to obtain an accurate head count for meal planning purposes. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Information comes from K-State University Beef Cattle Institute.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Ben Sims, at benjam63@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.