

How to Make it a Successful Season

Spring-time is “Go Time” on the farm or ranch. Field work has begun and cattle producers are finishing calving and getting ready for spring processing and summer turnouts. Preparing for important spring and early summer activities can help make the day and season a successful one.

Calf Processing Preparedness Activities:

- ◆ Work with your veterinarian to determine what spring kinds of vaccinations and insecticide treatments will work best for calf processing and a reminder to get your order placed ahead of time.
- ◆ When the vaccine and other products arrive: Record the purchase location; date of purchase and date given; product name; lot # and expiration date; withdrawal information (if any); dosage being used, etc.. This will save time at processing and reduce lost information if boxes are ruined or discarded.
- ◆ Check your supply of routine antibiotics/sprays, disinfectants, and basic vet supplies to have on hand for potential treatment and/or castration activities at processing.
- ◆ Ensure the vaccine refrigerator at home is working and at the proper temperature before getting any vaccines. Make sure you have coolers, cooling packs, and thermometers available for use the day of processing to keep the vaccine at the correct temperature (35-45°F).
- ◆ Check that you have enough adjustable/pistol grip type syringes on hand for the number of vaccines being given. Ensure that all syringes have been cleaned (no disinfectants, boiling water only) and all parts allowed to dry before use. Replace worn out O rings or lubricate with vegetable oil when putting the syringes back together. Color code the syringes and the vaccine boxes with tape to help everyone keep track of what they are giving and prevent cross-mixing of vaccines.
- ◆ Check your needle supply to ensure you have the right sizes. *Check your vaccines label for injection protocols. Also ensure an adequate supply as you will need to change our needles at a minimum of every 10 head and potentially even more if the needle becomes bent, broken, or dull.
- ◆ Locate your branding irons and ensure equipment and heat sources are full and functioning (i.e. generator or electrical circuits are functioning; propane bottles are full; cords or tank fittings are available and in good working order; electrical irons don't have cord breaks, etc.).
- ◆ Locate and print off Safety Data Sheets for all products being used the day of processing and put them in a notebook (i.e. vaccines, disinfectants, insecticides, WD-40, etc.).
- ◆ Check to ensure that equipment and facilities are in good working condition (i.e. corrals, chutes, trailers, branding equipment, gates, vehicles, ATV's, pasture fences, etc.).
- ◆ To ensure additional safety and sanitation; prepare a simpler meal this year that can be put in individual (restaurant style to-go) containers. Pack snacks or dessert items in individual bags. Utilize bottled beverages and stack them in the cooler to make them easy to grab.



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- ◆ Reduce your processing crew and utilize a local crew to help with virus concerns. Also consider implementing the use of calf tables or nordforks to reduce the number of individuals in one location.
- ◆ Consider planning a “thank you” get together later in the fall to include all of the family and friends that would normally help with processing to still show appreciation and help reduce current exposure.

Day-of Processing Activities:

- ◆ Ensure that cattle are moved to the processing area and sorted and ready to start when you crew arrives.
- ◆ Provide feed and water resources for worked cattle.
- ◆ Pre-cool the coolers that will hold vaccine for at least one hour and don’t take vaccines to the processing site until you are ready to start. *Only mix one bottle of modified live vaccine at a time.
- ◆ Go over general safety reminders for the crew including:
 - Vaccinations and other tools (i.e. castration equipment, branding irons, needles (changing out and use), heat sources, electrical shut-offs, etc.).
 - Awareness of others, livestock, and equipment movements.
 - Covid-19 health safety protocols as currently provided.
 - General reminders about hydration, sun exposure, insects, etc..
 - Location of First Aid kit, Fire Extinguisher, and emergency information notebook containing (Safety Data Sheets, vaccine labels, needle stick information, poison control #, and address location for the day).
- ◆ Place drinks, food, and snacks in a location upwind and somewhat away from the processing activities. Also provide a place for the crew to take a break and get out of the elements.
- ◆ Provide a hand-washing station that can be operated with your feet or knobs that can be turned with an elbow or back of the hand. Also provide sunscreen and insect repellent.
- ◆ Assign duties that are appropriate and to help everyone feel included and help the day run smoothly. This includes specifically designating only one or two individuals who will mix vaccine and fill syringes and an individual to fill out record sheets on calves if any specific issues or additional treatments.
- ◆ Provide disinfectant solution for castration and treatment tools, as well as additional water to replace the solution periodically.
- ◆ Provide a sharp’s container for needle disposal and a five gallon bucket with a lid to place empty vaccine bottles and other contaminant trash.
- ◆ At the end of the day, throw out any opened/used or bottles of modified live vaccines. Burning or incinerating used bottles is best before glass disposal. Check for any dropped needles or broken equipment.

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Calf Processing Day-List of Items:

- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- First Aid kit with sting salve
- Bulk water for changing out disinfectant solutions
- Fire Extinguisher and shovel
- Sharp's container and disinfectant and disposal buckets
- Branding Irons and adequate heat source
- Ropes and halters
- Old rags and paper towels
- Extra ear tags and marker pens
- Equipment lubricants
- Tool Kit (duct tape, wire, multiple pairs, crescent wrenches, screwdrivers, etc.)
- Surgical gloves and leather or welding gloves for irons
- Syringes, castration, and other treatment equipment
- Vaccines, insecticides, disinfectants, and antibiotics
- Basic vet kit related items including additional scalpel blades
- Coolers, cooling packs, and thermometers
- Color tape, makers, and note paper
- Bulk water for washing hands and soap station
- Food and drinks
- Portable tables, chairs, and shade

Pre Turnout Activities (Cows & Bulls):

If you work your cows and bulls at branding or another day in the spring; consider some of the following to get ready for summer turnout.

- ◆ Make sure brands are readable.
- ◆ Replace any missing, loose, or hard to read tags.
- ◆ Consider adding new tags for older cows to include the brand and a contact number.
- ◆ Record all tag numbers and information and make sure that numbers match-up before turnout.
- ◆ Check body condition scores and also check teeth, eyes, and hooves for any problems.
- ◆ Work with your veterinarian to implement a spring vaccination and deworming program.
- ◆ Complete Breeding Soundness Exams on all bulls to ensure fertility and genital and structural soundness. Also consider testing for Trichomoniasis to help protect your herd and your neighbors.

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Pre-Summer Pasture Turnout Activities:

- ◆ Create an information sheet on pastures (rented and owned) that will be utilized and include:
 - Geographical coordinates, address (if available), and any helpful landmarks near the main gate.
 - Size of the pasture; primary grass types; number of water sources/types, etc..
 - Special notes (i.e. flooding on east side when it rains, poisonous plant patches, well issues, etc.).
 - How many head, breed, type, etc. will be in the pasture.
- ◆ Check all pasture fences and make repairs. Note any damage locations and how it occurred; if known.
- ◆ Look for noxious or poisonous weed patches as green up occurs. Determine what kind of mitigation practices might be needed including spraying and grazing restrictions after mitigation.
- ◆ Clean out tanks; complete general well maintenance; and turn water sources on to ensure all components for the well and pumping system are working.
- ◆ Post a sign inside entrances of main gates with your contact phone number and brand. This is for neighbors, law enforcement, and brand inspectors in the event livestock get out, an animal is sick, etc..
- ◆ Let neighboring pastures know when you will be moving livestock; number of head, type, and brand; and updated contact information including a separate emergency number.
- ◆ Ensure that equipment (chutes, panels, docks, etc.), vehicles and trailers are in good working condition including lights and signals.

Resources:

State of Colorado Covid-19 Information- covid19.colorado.gov/

Colorado Crisis Service (*Help for Farmers & Ranchers)- coloradocrisisservices.org/ or [Call 1-844-493-TALK \(8255\)](tel:18444937255) or [Text "TALK" To 38255](text:TALK38255)

Poison Control Web: poison.org/ or Poison Control #: [1-800-222-1222](tel:18002221222)

Compendium of Veterinary Products: bayerall.cvp-service.com/

Safety Data Sheets: chemicalsafety.com/sds-search/

Beef Quality Assurance Resources & Online Certification: cobqa.org/resources.html

Colorado Noxious Weed Information: colorado.gov/pacific/agconservation/noxiousweeds

Cattle Vaccine Handling & Management Guidelines– University Idaho Extension: extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/PNW/PNW637.pdf

Needlestick Prevention Resources-Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center: umash.umn.edu/needlestick-prevention/

	Subcutaneous		Intramuscular	
	Gauge	Length	Gauge	Length
Cattle				
<300lbs.	18-20	1/2-3/4"	18	1-1 1/2"
<300-700lbs.	16-18	1/2-3/4"	16-18	1-1 1/2"
>700 lbs.	16-18	1/2-3/4"	16	1-1 1/2"

*Check vaccines/antibiotics for further guidelines