

Rural Roots & Research

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The Holidays Are Over—On to Calving Season!

As the holiday season winds down and the ornaments find their way back into storage, many of us are shifting gears. While Christmas might be the “most wonderful time of the year,” for some cattlemen, calving season is a close second!

For cattle producers who spring-calve, some may have already started their calving season; either way, this time of year brings excitement and anticipation, but it also requires preparation. Dr. AJ Tarpoff, Kansas State Extension Veterinarian, offers this helpful checklist to make sure your operation is ready.

For experienced cattlemen and cattlegirls, we know that everything does not always go according to plan. From big calves to premature calves, to twins, we must be ready for all situations. The following checklist is designed to help you plan and prepare to improve your calving season's success. We all know the saying: "Failure to plan is planning to fail."

Calving Assistance Checklist:

- OB chains, calf puller, OB gloves, OB lube (non-detergent soap & water is one option), non-irritant antiseptic (Betadine or Nolvasan), flank rope to lay cow down
- A cooler can be used to keep warm water in calving barn if no other source available.
- Old towels or similar
- Review basic treatment plans with your local veterinarian for retained placenta, calf scours, colostrum replacers and supplements and ensure necessary treatments and supplies are on hand or readily available. Include a functional thermometer
- Know the difference between colostrum supplements and replacers, in most instances use replacers that contain at least 100 IgG per dose
- Have on hand at least 2 clean and functional esophageal tube feeders, clearly marked, one for healthy calves, one only used for sick calves
- Plan and watch for opportunities to collect colostrum from within the herd. Date and freeze in quart sized plastic bags for future use
- If replacement calves are obtained from outside the herd, plan for their isolation and testing before exposing to entire herd
- Plan for severe weather; wind, freezing rain and blizzards are not uncommon. Plan for correcting calf hypothermia. Calf shelters should be in good repair, bedding on hand.

- Shift feeding to dusk or later to promote day time calving one week before anticipated start of calving season

I wish you all a happy and uneventful calving season!

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension, call the office at 785-537-6350, email me, Lindsay Shorter, at lindsayshorter@ksu.edu, or stop by the office. Be sure to follow Riley County K-State Research and Extension on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Riley County 4-H program.