



SD ANIMAL INDUSTRY BOARD
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NEWS RELEASE – ANTHRAX VACCINATION REMINDER

Dustin Oedekoven, DVM, State Veterinarian

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PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota cattle producers are encouraged to include anthrax vaccine in their vaccination program when they turn out cattle to summer pastures. Recent flooding may increase the risk of cattle encountering anthrax this season, according to Dr. Dustin Oedekoven, South Dakota State Veterinarian.

Anthrax is caused by bacteria that can develop into an environmentally resistant spore form when in the soil. Under the right conditions, these spores can become available for cows to graze. Once ingested by cattle, the spores become activated and produce toxins that cause rapid death. Anthrax can be prevented in cattle by administering a vaccine which is widely available, inexpensive, and very effective.

While the anthrax risk has been well-documented in many parts of South Dakota, and anthrax vaccination of cattle is routine in those areas, it is not always possible to predict where cases may occur. Flooding is an environmental factor which may aid in making anthrax spores available to livestock. Cattle going onto pastures that have previously experienced flooding or into areas where anthrax has been documented in the past, should be considered prime candidates for vaccination.

If Anthrax is Suspected Contact Your Local Veterinarian or the Animal Industry Board

“During the summer, producers should take time to check all cattle frequently,” says Oedekoven. “Cattle producers need to promptly investigate any unexpected deaths on pasture, whether in cows, bulls or calves,” continues Oedekoven. “With anthrax and many other diseases, treatments and preventive measures are available, and prompt action can help prevent excessive losses.” If a producer suspects anthrax, the case should be reported immediately to local veterinarians or to the State Veterinarian at 605-773-3321. **Suspect carcasses should not be moved or disturbed until a diagnosis has been made.** “Local veterinarians are excellent sources of information for cattle producers regarding anthrax,” Oedekoven said. For more information on anthrax, contact the South Dakota Animal Industry Board.

*OEDEKOVEN (OH’ dih koh ven)