



SD ANIMAL INDUSTRY BOARD

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NEWS RELEASE – ANTHRAX VACCINATION REMINDER Dustin Oedekoven, DVM, State Veterinarian May 3, 2021

PIERRE, S.D. – State Veterinarian Dr. Dustin Oedekoven recommends South Dakota cattle producers vaccinate against anthrax prior to turning cattle out to summer pastures.

Anthrax is caused by bacteria that can develop into an environmentally resistant spore form that can remain in the soil for decades. Under the right conditions, these spores can be ingested by cattle during grazing, after which 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. Environmental extremes, such as drought and flooding, may aid in making anthrax spores available to livestock. The number of annual cases of anthrax in cattle has decreased significantly due to an efficacious vaccine.

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 should promptly investigate any unexpected deaths, 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 a good source of information about anthrax and can assist producers in getting a diagnosis for unexplained cattle deaths,” Oedekoven said.

For more information on anthrax, contact your veterinarian or the South Dakota Animal Industry Board.

*OEDEKOVEN (OH’ dih koh ven)