

Preventive Herd Health Plan

Every effort should be made to prevent disease and infection in the cattle herd. An additional benefit from disease prevention, in addition to healthy cattle, is that the most effective way to reduce the potential for antibiotic residues is to control the need to use antibiotics – and healthy cattle do not need antibiotics.

Preventive herd health plans will consist of herd management and immunization recommendations. One herd health plan will not fit every operation; a herd health plan needs to be developed for each individual operation. Work with the herd veterinarian to develop a herd health program and review/revise it at least annually.

A preventive herd health plan should include:

1. Target pathogen(s)
2. Recommended vaccine(s)
3. Recommended feed additives (if any)
4. Appropriate time frame to protect (vaccinate) against targeted pathogens
5. Management considerations to aid in the prevention or reduce the spread of pathogens
6. Management and treatment protocols for use if prevention efforts fail, including an outline of treatment protocols specified by the herd veterinarian.

Management and treatment considerations will need to be discussed and developed for each operation. The herd veterinarian will need to develop the treatment protocols with the operation's management so that both are comfortable with the recommendations.

The preventive herd health plan, treatment protocols and veterinary drug orders need to be developed together to complete a herd health program.

Some sample information that may be used on a heard health plan, as developed with your herd veterinarian, is shown here:

For all cattle and production segments

- Provide appropriate nutritional feedstuffs
- Handle cattle to minimize stress and bruising
- All injections administered in front of the shoulder
- Identify any animals treated to ensure proper withdrawal time
- Make records available to the next production sector
- Always read and follow medication label directions
- Keep records of all products administered including: date, animal identification, product used, serial/lot number, amount administered, route of administration, person administering and withdrawal time
- Consult with herd veterinarian for additional health procedures appropriate to your area