



From the desk of Dr. Chuck Roberts  
September 1st, 2016

Greetings fellow stewards of the animals that help to feed the world. Hopefully this comes at a time when the cooler fall weather is upon us and the trial of our August heat and humidity are becoming a memory.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of minimizing stress and therefore preventing disease in the animals under our care.

Weather stress is unavoidable but there are many things we can do to minimize its affect on our animals. It doesn't matter if you have a thousand animals or six, it is essential that we have a plan to ensure animals are well prepared to deal with the things that are out of our control.

First, every producer should have a vaccination protocol in place specific to the farm and manager, unique to your animals. A vaccination protocol should be developed with your veterinarian and reviewed yearly to meet your individual needs. It will be different and specific for every farm. Remember, if you raise beef animals you have a responsibility to have your feeders healthy and immune-competent to perform at a high level for the individual or feedlot who raises them to maturity.

Second, it is very important to provide your animals with well-ventilated, clean, and appropriately-sized pens to prevent undue stress on animals and over exposure to disease-causing organisms and environmental toxins. This can be accomplished with good design and maintenance of facilities. As veterinarians we strive to prevent disease rather than coming out to treat individual sick animals. We all have a high ethical obligation to provide the best care and environment for the animals in our care.

Third, it is essential that we provide high quality feed for our animals, not only for optimal production of beef or milk, but to ensure that the individual animals have the best natural response to diseases and vaccinations they are exposed to throughout their life-time. It is not enough to have good feed, we also need to be sure they have easy access to the feed. That can easily be compromised by over crowding or poor layouts of the feed bunks that keep more timid animals from consuming enough of the good feed you work so hard to produce or purchase. Sometimes we need to step back and really watch our animals to see what they are telling us and be willing to listen.

Weather changes and stress will never go away but we should do everything we can to minimize their effects. Remember we are all on the same team and the answers are not always easy. Together we have our best chance to overcome the challenges placed before us. Enjoy fall and we look forward to helping wherever we can. We appreciate being a member of your team.



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