

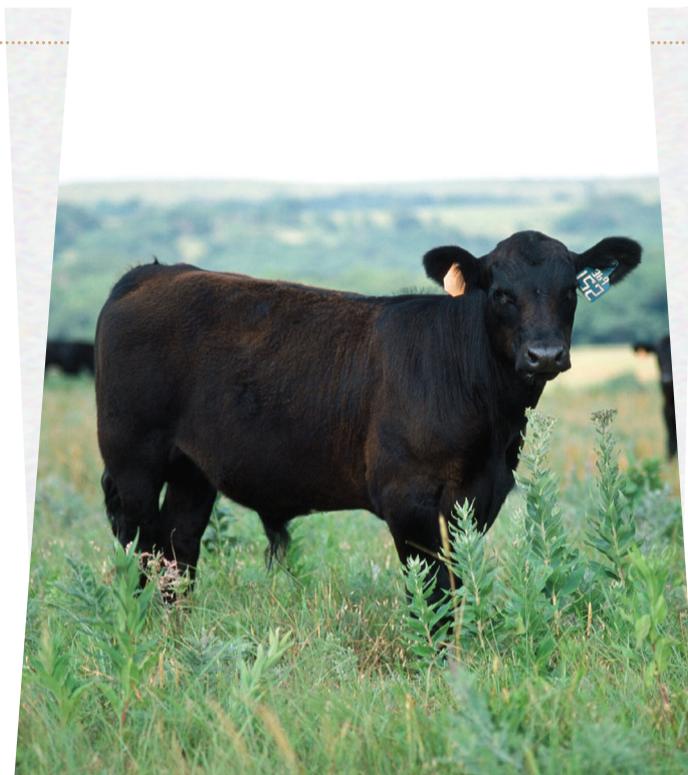
# A STORY OF A STEAK

RESPONSIBLE BEEF

## PRECONDITIONING PROGRAMS: A SMART THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

With an added value of up to \$100 per head, the decision to precondition calves can add to producers' bottom lines. The right program incorporates three areas for maximum long-term health and ultimately, profitability: vaccination protocols, growth implants and parasite control.

Kevin Hill, D.V.M., with Merck Animal Health, suggests working with a veterinarian to choose a comprehensive preconditioning program. The PrimeVAC™ preconditioning program includes these three critical components. Dr. Hill explains why each is important.



### Step 1: INCLUDE VACCINATIONS THAT BUILD CALVES' IMMUNITY

Dr. Hill says, "The goal of preconditioning is to maximize the health and performance of cattle for their lifetime – it's not just about giving calves a vaccine, it's about building protective immunity by using the right products at the right time."

Experts recommend choosing a vaccination program that includes protection against respiratory viruses and bacteria, as well as clostridial bacteria. The most complete respiratory protection available against the five viruses and two bacteria that are the most common causes of bovine respiratory disease (BRD), is included in all of the PrimeVAC protocols using Vista® Once or Vista 5, plus Once PMH®.

### Step 2: UTILIZE GROWTH IMPLANTS

In addition to proper nutrition, implanting calves is an excellent strategy for producers to achieve optimal calf growth. The results of multiple studies have shown that using Ralgro® (zeranol) will consistently increase weaning weights of steer and heifer calves by 20 to 25 pounds when used at 30 to 90 days of age.<sup>1</sup>

According to 2014 data provided by Superior Livestock, only about 28 percent of sale calves were implanted. Those calves bring just as much money per pound as non-implanted calves, so Dr. Hill says a huge opportunity exists for more producers to take advantage of that practice with no price penalty. "Implants provide an average increase in weaning weight of 23 pounds. So at current market prices of over \$2.50 per pound, there is a net advantage of about \$30 per head to implant calves," he says.

### Step 3: CONTROL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PARASITES

Parasite control is essential to optimize weaning weights, minimize sickness and enable calves to respond quickly to vaccination programs. Safe-Guard® (fenbendazole) is an important component of the PrimeVAC program that will rapidly remove harmful internal parasites. "Because of the documented resistance that is developing to the Avermectin class of dewormers, Safe-Guard is an increasingly important tool for effective internal parasite control,"<sup>1</sup> says Dr. Hill.

External parasites, such as lice, mites and flies, can also be serious problems for cattle producers. These pests are most prevalent during spring and summer months, but may thrive year-round in warmer climates. Producers can control external parasites with proven products, such as Ultra Boss® Pour-On Insecticide.

PrimeVAC provides guidelines that producers can use to work with their veterinarian to construct a customized vaccination program to meet the unique needs of their operation. The local veterinarian will have the most relevant information about the disease status in the cow herd and the region, and the protection needed for the feedyard destination.

“THE GOAL OF PRECONDITIONING IS TO MAXIMIZE THE HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE OF CATTLE FOR THEIR LIFETIME — IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT GIVING CALVES A VACCINE, IT'S ABOUT BUILDING PROTECTIVE IMMUNITY BY USING THE RIGHT PRODUCTS AT THE RIGHT TIME.”  
— Kevin Hill, D.V.M., with Merck Animal Health



For more information on PrimeVAC, visit [cattleprimevac.com](http://cattleprimevac.com)

ResponsibleBeef.com

1. Data on file.

A withdrawal period has not been established for Ralgro in pre-ruminating calves. Do not use in calves to be processed for veal. For complete information, refer to product label.

Safe-Guard drench and paste: RESIDUE WARNING: Cattle must not be slaughtered within 8 days following last treatment. For dairy cattle, the milk discard time is zero hours.

A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminating calves. Do not use in calves to be processed for veal. Consult your local veterinarian for assistance in the diagnosis, treatment and control of parasitism.

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