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Nebraska BQA: Herd health plan/protocol

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Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Nebraska cattlemen have demonstrated a commitment to the integrity of today's beef products by implementing sound cattle management practices. Consumers are looking for beef raised in a healthy and safe environment. An appropriate Herd Health Plan/Protocol ensures that all cattle are raised in the best health.

A strong herd health plan begins with a yearly production calendar that includes cattle nutrition, reproduction management, vaccination schedules, and marketing, all of which are critical to sustainable beef cattle production. Management practices can be better matched with cattle needs by looking at the annual production cycle month by month.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Animal Science Department has an example of a beef production calendar at beef.unl.edu .

Once a production calendar is developed, a producer can work with his or her veterinarian to plan a specific health program to their herd management plan. The veterinarian can help a beef operation best tailor health management to deal with local diseases, parasites and other regional health issues.

Most herd health plans include core vaccinations such as IBR, BVD, BRSV, PI3, Clostridials, Brucella, Lepto, Vibrio, and so on, as well as core parasite controls. But there are additional considerations, and a veterinarian's recommendations can better meet a herd's needs. Depending on labor and timing, developing a strong plan can improve effectiveness and economics for the operation.

Nutrition is an important element of all herd health plans. Building a nutrition plan around utilizing available feedstuffs and water supplies is a vital part of the yearly management calendar. Additionally, cattle health and nutrition can't be separated. Working with a qualified nutritionist can improve the economic bottom line and improve the value realized from a herd health program.

Lastly, remember to follow all product labels pertaining to dosage, administration, storage and withdrawal times, and to keep good health records.

For more information about Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance or to get BQA certification, contact Rob Eirich, UNL Extension Educator and Nebraska Director of BQA at the UNL Panhandle Research and Extension Center 308-632-1230 or reirich2@unl.edu .

Beef Quality Assurance is a nationally coordinated, state implemented program that provides systematic information to U.S. beef producers and beef consumers of how common sense husbandry techniques can be coupled with accepted scientific knowledge to raise cattle under optimum management and environmental conditions. Eirich directs the program in the state of Nebraska, in a partnership between UNL Extension, Nebraska Cattlemen, and the Nebraska Beef Council.

[Nebraska BQA Main Page](http://bqa.unl.edu/baqnebr-article-2)

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