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Why should we adopt **BQA** practices from an **economic perspective**?

- More often than not, BQA practices help in achieving the goals of having...

1) Returns on Investments: invest in management for **consistent**, higher valued **calves**

2) A High Demand Product: healthy calves for **consistent**, higher-quality **beef**

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3 Main BQA Practices (for this presentation)

1. Vaccines

- Handling (cattle & meds)
- Administration
- Not having a vaccination program at all



2. Nutrition

- Affects reproduction AND health



3. Record-Keeping

- You can't fix it if you don't know it needs fixing!



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Vaccinations/Handling

Vaccination



Immunization

• Mishandling – wastes money & time

- Improper storage, mixing too early (MLV) = not effective

• Improper administration – waste money & time

- Under dosing = builds resistance, no longer effective
- Improper injection site = abscesses from injection sites decrease carcass value
 - *This has improved greatly in the last 20-30 years due to BQA education: 2022 Audit – 6,637 carcasses evaluated, only 2.9% had lesions*

• Not doing it – possibly spend more money later

- Sick calves = lighter weight calves
- More doctoring later = more expenses
- Discounted calves, missing out on a premium possibly



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Vaccinations/Handling



**\$/head calculated on 50 doses using average of various products – will vary based on product & amount purchased*

Value-Added Program	WHEN	Protocol	\$/Head Cost
VAC24	Calves vaccinated on cows at 2 to 4 months of age	1 dose 7-way, 8-way or 9-way Clostridial 1 dose viral 5-way (IBR, PI3, BRSV and BVD Type 1 & II) 1 dose Pasteurella Haemolytica and/or Pasteurella Multocida. Internal and external parasite control recommended.	\$6.20
VAC34	Calves vaccinated on cows 3-4 weeks prior to shipping.	2 doses 7-way, 8-way or 9-way Clostridial 1 dose viral 5-way (IBR, PI3, BRSV and BVD Type 1 & II) 1 dose Pasteurella Haemolytica and/or Pasteurella Multocida. Internal and external parasite control recommended.	\$7.20
VAC34+	Calves vaccinated twice, at branding and 3-4 weeks prior to shipping.	2 doses 7-way, 8-way or 9-way Clostridial 2 doses viral 5-way (IBR, PI3, BRSV and BVD Type 1 & II) 1 dose Pasteurella Haemolytica and/or Pasteurella Multocida. Internal and external parasite control recommended.	\$8.70

****don't have to adopt a specific "value-added program" – but you do HAVE to work with your vet to establish a program best for your operation***

<https://superiorlivestock.com/value-added-programs/>

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Vaccinations/Handling

	No Program	VAC24	VAC34	VAC34+
	\$/Head Cost			
Vaccine Program	\$0.00	\$6.20	\$7.20	\$8.70
Doctoring Once*	\$4.00	Handled once & sick calves don't eat		
Doctoring Twice*	\$8.00		Handled twice & sick calves don't eat	
Doctoring 3 Times*	\$12.00			Handled 2-3 times & sick calves don't eat
Dead Calf	~\$2,000	In this market especially, a dead calf is always more expensive than a vaccine.		

**cost highly dependent on sickness & product(s) used – this is just an example of how it adds up & how a proper vaccination program can decrease drug costs in the long-run by getting ahead of it*

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Vaccinations/Handling

- Why should we vaccinate our calves properly?
 - Like taking kids to daycare:
 - your calves are immune to your environment, not the feedlot environment they are going to.
 - Sick calves:
 - more money spent on recovery
 - negative affect on ADG
 - less pounds to sell
 - lower profit



These consequences affect not only your profitability, but a feedlot manager's as well.

“Why, as a cow-calf producer, should I care about a feedlot manager's profit?”

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“Why should I adopt proper vaccination practices from an economic perspective ?”

Marketing Strategy:
Buyers are typically willing to pay a premium for calves with a lower risk of getting sick in the feedlot & won't have carcass issues.

(may not always be a premium, but there is always a discount.)



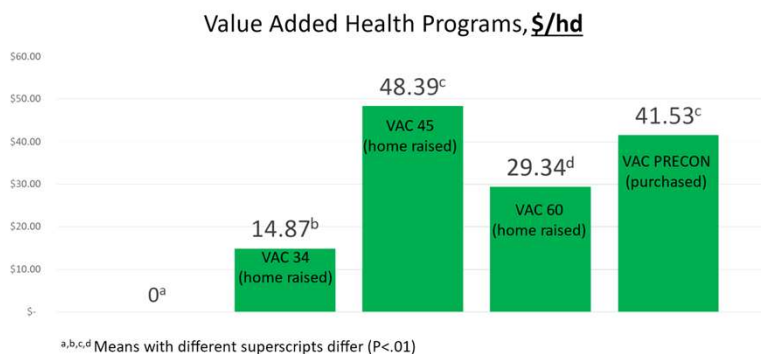
The “why” behind adopting BQA practices & spending money on an effective health/vaccination program.



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Vaccinations/Handling

Value Added Health Programs Effect on 2024 Calf Prices— VAC24 or VAC missing as the base



Merk Animal Health, 2024 <https://www.merck-animal-health-usa.com/hub/bovils/primevac/>

- Not every “value-added” program will be economically feasible for every operation.
- But it is important to at least explore vaccination protocols to increase the health & value of your calves.

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Nutrition



- The **best genetics in the world** will not be fully expressed if nutritional requirements are not met.
- The **best vaccination program in the world** will not be effective if nutritional requirements are not met.

Investing in a proper forage management, supplementation, & mineral program will be beneficial to your vaccination program & overall health of your cattle.

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“Why should I adopt a proper nutrition program from an economic perspective ?”



Example:

- You invested in the vaccine. But if their nutrition wasn't great, their immune system may not respond to it. (Cost of vaccine + cost of doctoring 1, 2, or 3 times or cost of dead calf)

	VAC24	VAC34	VAC34+
Vaccine Program	\$6.20	\$7.20	\$8.70
Doctoring Once*	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00
Doctoring Twice*	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$8.00
Doctoring 3 Times*	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Total \$/Head Cost	\$10.20 - \$18.20	\$11.20 - \$19.20	\$12.70 - \$20.70
Dead Calf	-\$2,000 + drug costs		

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Record-keeping



- You can't fix it if you don't know it needs fixing!
- Why are you spending the money you're spending?

❖ There is a difference between necessary investments and unnecessary expenses

- Can't improve if you don't know there is room for improvement:

(examples of questions you can answer with records)

- 1) “What are the weaning weights of my calves?”** -> evidence of cow production, genetics, nutrition program, average daily gain, vaccine administration
- 2) “Which cows are my most efficient cows?”** -> evidence of replacement heifer potential, who is pulling their weight in the herd and the weight of less productive cows, nutrition program
 - Reproductive traits are low in heritability, but you can select from cows who breed and calve early in the season and based on docility (did she try to kill you when you tagged her calf?)
- 3) “When can I market these cattle?”** -> evidence of vaccination protocols and withdrawal dates

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What can we record at the chute?

- Body Condition
 - WHY? – **body condition is going to affect reproduction & calf development**
 - can help you know if you need to adjust nutrition plan
- Preg Checks
 - WHY? – **open cows cost more than they make**
 - who is getting bred early in the season?
 - **what do they need nutritionally based on their gestational/lactation phase?**
- Weights of bulls, cows, and calves
 - WHY? – most **vaccines/medications** and fly controls - weight basis
 - bull and cow nutrition/DMI - weight basis
 - **weaning weights** – Which calves are the heaviest? Who was that calf's sire/dam?
 - When were they born in the calving season? - What was their ADG?
- Overall Health & Temperament
 - WHY? – riding/checking pastures with a pocket notebook is great! But having cattle in the chute is a great opportunity to take a closer look

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“Why should I adopt a record-keeping system from an economic perspective ?”

❖ All the things we need to record affect the money going out of & into your wallet!

Money Going Out:

- Nutrition program/Cow BCS
- Vaccines/medications/vet bill
 - Breeding
 - Labor

Money Going In:

- Weaning Rates
- Weaning Weights
- Carcass Weights/Quality

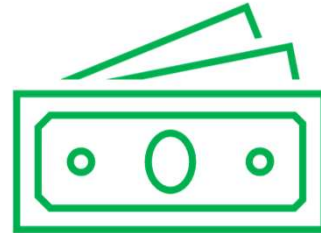
❖ Know why you are spending what you are spending on your herd!

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Why should we adopt **BQA** practices from an economic perspective?

- How you manage your cow herd affects...

- 1) Your Production & Profitability
- 2) Calf Production after Your Operation
- 3) Overall Beef Production



❖ The goal should always be to produce a high-quality beef product, and that starts with adopting high-quality management practices. High-quality beef is in strong demand which adds value to the cow-calf operation.

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SFBFP - Cattle Management for Women
December 11th, 2025

QUESTIONS???
MAY GOD BLESS YOUR STEWARDSHIP!

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