

NINE STEPS TO HERD HEALTH PLANNING

A health program is essential for improving efficiency on any cow/calf operation, including evaluating herd health goals and developing a written document that summarizes the needs of the operation. This process of planning health needs for the entire year can result in considerable cost savings and assures product availability by contracting arrangements with animal health suppliers.

The following steps from Glenn Rogers, DVM, MS, DABVP, and cow/calf veterinary operations manager for Pfizer Animal Health, guide producers through developing a health plan to fit the goals of their operation.

Developing a Herd Health Plan

1. Work with a local veterinarian. A veterinarian will help you tailor a plan to fit your specific operation's goals.
2. Determine the optimal time of year for calving/breeding season. Because the circum-

stances are always changing, the season should be periodically reevaluated.

3. Determine the optimal length for calving/breeding season. This depends on the goals of your operation, management resources, geography, breed and other factors.
4. Research diseases and parasites significant in the region. Local veterinarians are knowledgeable about regional issues and can help offer the right solutions for your operation.
5. Determine the ideal time to administer preventive measures for each disease/condition. Vaccinating at the correct time can help maximize performance.
6. Determine which health and management practices will require cattle handling. Then, package the health management practices into a limited number of working sessions.
7. Develop a one-page plan summary. Successful planning combines immunology, man-

agement and economics into a simple, cost-effective program.

8. Select reputable products that are backed by research results that prove their levels of effectiveness.
9. Periodically update programs. As management changes occur and improved products make their way to the market, the health plan should be adjusted to be most efficient for the operation.

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