

EARLY VACCINATORS ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL

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Growers who give the modified live virus vaccine early are the most successful. I have been in more than 200 calf ranches and veal barns this past month. Many of the calves are performing very well, while the calves in a neighboring barn are in the middle of a disaster. There is a common thread. The successful operators are vaccinating between day one and day

five into the barn and repeating the modified live again a week later, or waiting a month, or not giving a second dose.

The disaster barns are either not vaccinating or are giving either the first injection or the second vaccination between 14 and 28 days into the barn. Calf Veterinarians have been aware that a problem exists with using modified live virus vaccine during this time frame. The "experts" have various theories. I am not convinced we know why. The brand of vaccine used is not the problem. My advice "do not give MLV vaccine at 14 to 28 days".

I have followed a protocol of vaccinating day one and repeating on days 8 to 12, for more than 10 years. The protocol works!! We have screwed the program around many times, and usually not to the calves' benefit.

My reasons for doing it this way:

1. The incidence of persistently infected (PI) BVD calves causes me to want BVD protection as early as possible. Any given day, using

perfectly normal, unstressed calves (I don't know where you would find them) only 70% of the calves will respond to the vaccine. This is one reason a second dose is necessary for good protection.

2. Bovine Respiratory Syncytial Virus (BRSV) requires two doses to be effective, Unless there is exposure prior to vaccinating.

3. Modified Live Virus Vaccine is being used to cause the calf's own immune system to produce interferon (which is "Mother Nature's" own medicine, effective against both viral and bacterial pathogens). The interferon persists for only 3 - 5 days. The second injection given between 8 and 12 days gets another dose of interferon produced before the 14 day incubation period for Pasteurella pneumonia. P. multocida pneumonia usually follows the stress of moving and first week scour problems by 14 days.

Another approach that is working: Inject Immunoboost day one (the benefit from the Immunoboost lasts for 7 days) and delay the first MLV vaccination until day 8 to 12. Give the second injection of MLV after 30 days, or in the case of veal - wait and see if a respiratory problem develops. If it does, come in with the MLV. Remember the calf will be worse the day following vaccination, about the same on the second day, and by the third day he is improving. Calves vaccinated the first week have less trouble with MLV.