

Managing beef on dairy on a feedyard

By Spencer Wolter, DVM

Abstract:

This talk walks through a systemic approach to evaluating incoming beef on dairy cross calves entering into a feedlot and how to tailor protocols and management practices specific to each lot or group. There are numerous unknowns and different environments that beef on dairy cross calves are raised in during the nursery and backgrounder phases. Thus when formulating standard operation procedures, it is critical to get as much information on a group as possible; ranging from a history, on-site necropsy and diagnostics, and tailoring facilities to a smaller framed calf, etc. Producers and veterinarians alike need to be mindful of the Holstein genetics, factoring in different disease pressures and management and attitudes.

Case Study:

The case study reviews how to evaluate a group of beef on dairy cross calves when they are experiencing a pneumonia outbreak. We review vaccinations and mass medication events along with current necropsies and additional diagnostics (such as antibiotic sensitivity). This helps us make a well-informed decision for processing vaccinations and whether to use prophylactic antibiotics. Evaluating facilities and stocking density is a must to ensure these cross calves are not under additional stress. If calves are overstocked or unable to readily access feed, water and a dry place to lay down, the immune system will be suppressed and morbidity and mortality will increase. Regular visits are pivotal to long-term success since stressors are not static, and if disease insults become prolonged, we create railers and dead calves.

Conclusion:

There are many different factors to consider when formulating standard operation procedures and management practices when feeding out beef on dairy cross calves. Since they are on feed substantially longer than native cattle, small insults become additive, and mortality and railers can quickly add up, affecting a producer's bottom line.

DRAFT