

# Willow Creek Veterinary Services, P.C.



## September/October 2008



### New Fall Programs

By Dr. Sherri Merrill

We are excited to announce that Willow Creek Veterinary Service will have two new programs available this fall; a pregnancy exam package and a replacement heifer development package.



These packages will allow us to provide you with more in depth information regarding the health and reproductive status of your herd and help you get the best performance possible out of your investment. Let us be an asset to your operation, not a liability.

The pregnancy exam package will include:

- Pregnancy status
- Age of fetus

- Body condition score
- Weight
- Report summarizing the data
- Consultation/ time to go over report and address additional concerns that you may have

We feel that the information gathered and evaluated at this time is extremely valuable. Preg checking continues to be a valuable tool for cattle producers as it allows for timely culling of open animals. Why not take advantage of having the cows in the chute and gather additional data that will help manage your herd?

Determining the age of

the fetus will allow us to construct a calving distribution. This information along with the percent of open cows allows us to evaluate the reproductive status of the herd and detect problems early, such as bull problems or infectious diseases. This information will also help you create a shorter calving season, if you desire. Steps can also be taken to "front-end" load the calving season next year so that the majority of your herd calves at the beginning of the season. This allows more time for the cows to recover from calving and still get rebred in a timely manner.

Body condition of cows is also important to monitor. Thin cows often have trouble getting bred. Any thin

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### WHATS NEW.....

Now available at our clinic is a webcam. If you are boarding your pet and would like to see how they are doing while your gone-all you need is internet access and for a small fee you can watch them!!! Ask about this next time you board your pet.



### Halloween Special

\*\*Call ahead and set up an appointment for your black cat to get a FREE rabies vaccination on Friday October 31, 2008. That's right, a FREE rabies vaccination but your cat has to be completely black. Offer good only on Halloween.

\*\*Bring your pet (cat, dog, ferret, rabbit, hamster, etc.) to the clinic in their costume on Friday October 31, 2008 and receive a special treat for them. We will also have candy for all the humans that are in costumes!! So have an adult bring you and your pet in your costumes to the clinic before 5:30 and start your Halloween



### Important Dates:

#### September-

- 1-Labor Day
- 7-Grandparents Day
- 22-Fall begins

#### October-

- 16-National Boss Day
- 12-18-Vet Tech week
- 31-Halloween

## New Fall Programs-cont.

(cont.)

cows that are bred should receive a ration formulated for them to gain weight prior to the third trimester in order to avoid breeding problems. Thin cows will not be able to gain enough weight to support the growing fetus during the third trimester of pregnancy and they will not gain weight after the calf is born due to the high energy requirements of lactation. So, now is the time to put weight on these girls.

Knowing an accurate weight of your cows is extremely important in formulating a winter feeding ration for your cows. We would be happy to balance a ration for you. This information will also help us to dose your animals correctly, ensuring that they get enough, medication/dewormer and save you money by not overdosing.

Finally, this package includes a report summarizing all of the data and our conclusions/observations. A time will be scheduled for us to meet and discuss this report and any other questions or concerns that you may have.

The replacement heifer development package will include data from weaning and pre-breeding.

- Weight
- Body condition
- Ration Formulation
- Pelvic Measurement
- Reproduction Tract Score
- Bangs Vaccination
- Report
- Consultation

This information will allow for timely management decisions that will ultimately improve the health and reproductive performance of your cow herd. Weight, body condition and ration formulation all go hand-in-hand. Heifers should be 65% their adult body size by the start of the breeding season. This increases the likelihood that they will be cycling and that their pelvis will be develop appropriately. Proper body condition of replacement heifers at the start of the breeding season is also critically im-

portant. If heifers are too thin they may not be cycling. If they are cycling their odds of getting bred late the next season or not getting bred at all, are much greater. If heifers are too fat, they deposit fat in their udders and pelvic canals decreasing their milking ability and increasing the likelihood of dystocia. Plus, with feed prices today, who wants to feed more than they need to? Weights and body condition can then be used to formulate a ration so that the heifers will reach their optimum weight and body condition at the start of the breeding season.

Pelvic measurement is an important tool that is under utilized in our area. We recommend that all heifers be pelvic measured and those that will not be able to have a decent sized calf be culled (specific weight depends on your herd and management). This will decrease the amount of dystocia and save vet bills.

Reproductive tract scores are assigned by a vet based on palpation of the reproductive tract and ovarian structures. These scores can be used to determine if the heifers are cycling and ready for breeding. This should be done 6 to 8 weeks prior to breeding; allowing time for changes to be made to correct a problem if one arises.

Vaccination for Brucellosis is no longer required by law but will avoid regulatory hassles should Brucellosis be found in the state. The state is now providing EID tags in place of the metal clips. See our article on changes in food animal medicine for more information.

This program includes a report summarizing the data and our observations. A time will be scheduled to discuss our recommendations and address any questions that you may have.

In addition to the above services we would also be happy to help you with other aspects of heifer development, from culling criteria, to EPDs and estus synchronization.

For more information, please contact Dr. Merrill at 329-4805.

## Halloween Candy Not For Pets

By Nicole Koehler

Sure animals can have a "sweet tooth" just like humans, but candy was not meant for your pets for several reasons.

Reason #1-Animals don't know they need to take the wrapper off before they eat the candy.

Reason #2-Some candy can be a major choking hazard for your pet just like your young children.

Reason #3-Also just like your children, too much sugar can cause excitement and this might cause some unwanted/uncontrollable behaviors from a "sugar high".

Reason#4-Chocolate is actually toxic to your pets. Chocolate contains an ingredient theobromine, which humans can break down and excrete much more efficiently than pets. The toxic level of theobromine is 100-200mg/2.2 lbs. of pet body weight. For a comparison; Baker's unsweetened chocolate has about 450 mg of theobromine per ounce making it the most toxic chocolate; semi-sweet chocolate has about 225mg/ounce-mild toxicity; and milk chocolate (Hershey Bar) has 60 mg per ounce of chocolate-low toxicity. White chocolate is virtually non-toxic, but still has a lot of sugar. Even if your pet doesn't eat enough for toxic levels, problems can still occur: excitement, nervousness, trembling, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst, and muscle spasms. Keep in mind that chocolate can cause very dark-colored diarrhea that causes impossible-to-clean-stains on carpets! Although cases of dogs eating an entire chocolate cake with chocolate frosting have been reported and no problems were noticed, each dog has their own tolerance level! If you are concerned about a chocolate overdose, your next step would be to know what kind of chocolate your pet ate, how much was eaten and the approximate weight of your pet. Then call Willow Creek Veterinary Services with the information.

Reason#5-My pets don't share their treats with me, why should I share mine with them?

## Exciting Changes in Food Animal Medicine

**By Dr. Shane Pedersen**

As the title states, there really are exciting changes coming to food animal medicine! And these are not changes that cost a lot more, or necessitate a lot of extra work. They are easy changes that call for people to have an open mind and a small understanding that things are always changing.

The first exciting item is the change in Brucellosis vaccinations. Now instead of the metal clips for vaccinates, the government is helping to supply special orange electronic identification tags or EIDs for all the newly Bangs vaccinated heifers. The retention of the tags should be better than the metal clips and by using the new EIDs it can get you started with individual ID's. The most tremendous advantage of individual IDs is the power of good record keeping. Calf weaning weights, calving dates, cow production, treatments, and many other parameters can be monitored and accumulated for review. Good decisions can be made with an accumulation of good data. If you have interest in using EIDs for the rest of your herd or setting up a database of information for your herd, just call us and we would be glad to help you. The new Bangs tags will be available starting in September.

The next exciting aspect of food animal medicine is the advent of intranasal vaccine research and its expansion. At current time there is a new intranasal vaccine (Onset) available that will be available this fall for use in cattle. It will be like the Nasalgen product, but in addition to the Rednose and PI3 that is in Nasalgen there will also be the 2 types of BVD, BRSV, and eventually both Pasturella types. The direct advantages of this vaccine are that:

1. It is less traumatic to the cattle (fewer injection sites)
2. Ease of administration
3. Has a dye to mark which cattle have been done
4. Onset of action is faster than the injectable
5. As far as the research tells us the intranasal is comparable in its effectiveness as the injectables.
6. Decreased chance of vaccine reactions and deaths



The biggest downfall of the new vaccine is that it is new and new things sometimes have bugs that need to be worked out. That part remains to be seen. If you are interested in the new vaccine, come and talk with one of the veterinarians to see how it can fit in your operation.

## Weaning Preparation

**By Kris Nelsen**

It is getting near weaning time and everyone should be prepared. Having your fences fixed, yards clean, gates properly hinged, and the feed wagon in working order are all very important to have accomplished before weaning. The most important things to keep your calves healthy are proper handling and proper vaccinations.

Some ways to keep your herd healthy and stress-free during a very stressful time are:

- Vaccinating your calves and putting them back on the mammas will help the vaccinations work better.
- Having your calves castrated and dehorned in the spring is best, but if you wait until the fall; either do it

and put the calves back on the cow or wait until the stress of weaning is past. It will be easier for them to heal.

Our vaccination protocol has remained the same, but it never hurts to have a refresher. Stop at the clinic and one of the veterinarians or vet tech will be happy to help you with that.

Ideally, these vaccinations should be done 2 to 4 weeks prior to weaning and then again at weaning. If this is not possible, give the first vaccination at weaning and booster in 2 wks. By doing the vaccinations and the boosters this will hopefully help your calves avoid getting sick and put more energy into growing.

If you have any questions on weaning, vaccinating or any other herd questions

please feel free to contact us at Willow Creek Vet Services (402)329-4805.

### **PISTOL SYRINGE CARE**

**Wash your pistols often!**

**After every job.**

**Wash your pistol right!**

**Do NOT use soap!**

**Wash outside-inside with extremely HOT water-let dry**

**Lube is a pistol best friend!!**

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## Pregnancy Checking Your Herd

By Kris Nelsen

Would you like to save money this year? By pregnancy checking your herd early this fall, you will have more money in the long run. Plus, preg checking early in the cows gestation will help the doctors to more accurately predict the calving date.

Our veterinarians are able to detect a pregnant cow reliably at around 45 days or longer by sleeving. We also have an ultrasound available that can detect a pregnancy earlier, age the baby, check for twins, and at around 50 to 70 day's of pregnancy, can detect the sex of the unborn calf.

While you are preg checking your herd it is a great time to cull any unnecessary problem cows.

### Culling Criteria:

- Pregnancy Status-remove all open cows and consider removing the late bred cows
- Feeding cows that don't produce a calf costs a lot more money today than it has in the past with fuel and corn prices so high, we believe the price per cow per day is around \$2.30.
- Disposition-mean cows are not acceptable and should be removed:
- Poor Performance-milk production; never raises an average or better than average calf or didn't raise a calf at all this year
- Age/Mouth-older cows don't always produce the best calves, checking the mouths on the cows will give you an estimate on age. Cows with a broken or smooth mouth should be fed separate or culled depending on the cows production
- Udder-check to make sure the udder is in good condition, check for hard quarters or enlarged teats-cows with only two functional teats produce smaller calves.
- Structural Soundness-make sure she is not lame, check for long toes, bad hips
- General Health-check over-all condition; check eyes for cancer and other malformations

By using these criteria in culling cows you will improve your herd production and your bottom line. While culling early isn't always what you want, by doing so you will save on feed costs and may even be able to purchase new cows to replace the culled ones.

Please call for your appointment.

