

Last week we discussed the importance of implementing a good health program for your entire herd. We mentioned that implanting calves would be beneficial during the spring working time. This week we will take a deeper look at implants and discuss some of the key benefits they can add to your operation financially.

An implant, which is inserted under the skin in the back of the calf's ear, consists of small pellets that contain a growth stimulant which is slowly released over a period of time. The implant causes an increase in the secretion of a growth hormone, which increases muscle growth. The three most popular types of implants for beef calves are Ralgro, Synovex C and Revalor-G. Though each of these implants is designed to increase the rate of weight gain and improve feed efficiency, they are unique in that each implant should be used on a specific type of calf. Ralgro implants may be used on suckling, weaned, growing, and/or feedlot beef calves. Synovex C implants may also be used in suckling beef calves, or in steers that weigh 400lb or more. Revalor-G implants are only recommended for use in pastured (slaughter, stocker, and feeder) steers and heifers.

Although implants are beneficial in that they can increase weaning weights, it is important to note that cattle must be receiving adequate nutrition in order for the implants to positively influence the calf's feed efficiency and gain. That is, implants complement good management (genetics and nutrients provided), but do not compensate for poor management. When properly used, growth-stimulating implants can enhance Average Daily Gain (ADG) in suckling calves by 4-8%. Research studies have shown that this equates to average returns of at least \$10 for each \$1 invested in the cost of the implant. Not only does this increase amount of pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed, it simultaneously decreases cow cost per year, both of which are key in taking the necessary steps to becoming a profitable operation.

For more information about the use or types of implants available, or to purchase implants to use on your herd, please contact us.