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## Winter Producer Newsletter

If you are not already into the thick of things, calving season is likely just around the corner for you. We know from personal experience that this is a season full of excitement and hope mixed with a good dose of anxiety as you wait for this year's calf crop to hit the ground. While many factors that affect your calf crop cannot be influenced at this point (sire selection, cow nutrition, pre-breeding vaccine programs) there are a great many things you can do to set your operation up for a successful and low-stress calving season, as outlined in this newsletter.

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### Bluetongue Virus Alert

Dr. Poe recently received an e-mail from Dr. Dale Moore of Washington State University regarding an increase in Bluetongue in the western United States.

This virus drew some press coverage last summer when it was discovered in our state. Bluetongue case data from 2015 confirmed 42 positive animals in Washington state; most of those animals were white-tailed deer but cattle and domestic sheep were also included.

This disease is most commonly transmitted by a particular species of gnat but can also be passed through infected semen, bloodsucking lice, and ticks as well as contaminated needles. In cattle this disease is known to cause reproductive effects (stillborn calves, mummified calves, abortion and infertility), congenital defects (weak or dummy calves, deformities), and hypersensitivity reaction in persistently infected cattle. Though the disease is typically seen in midsummer to early fall the congenital defects would not be apparent until calving season.

If you have any cases of stillborn, mummified, or de-

formed calves it is advised that those calves be considered for bluetongue testing. The best samples for testing are bone marrow from long bones, spleen, or brain.

If you have any questions about bluetongue and how it may affect your herd please do not hesitate to give the office a call.



### Calving Supply Checklist

Are you ready for calving season? Are you stocked with all the supplies and equipment you will need to get through any circumstance? Here is a brief list of items you might want to consider having on hand in the coming weeks and months. If you can think of others to add please let us know.

- Obstetrical Lube such as J-Lube
- Obstetrical sleeves
- Exam gloves
- Disinfectant solution and scrub such as chlorhexidine (Nolvasan) or betadine
- Warm water supply and clean buckets
- Halter, cow restraint mechanisms
- Obstetrical chains & handles (stainless steel are better, don't rust as quickly and last longer)

- Calf head snare
- Fetal extractor
- Bristle brush for cleaning equipment after use
- Frozen colostrum or powdered colostrum replacer
- Old bath towels for cleanup and rubbing of calf after delivery
- Calf feeding bottle/esophageal feeder
- Product to treat navel—iodine, Vetericyn
- Electrolytes for dehydrated calves (such as Resorb or Replenish)
- Uterine boluses
- Oxytocin (for retained placenta)
- Dexamethasone (for calving paralysis)
- Flunixin meglumine (Banamine/Prevail)
- Antibiotic such as LA-200, Hexasol, or Vetrimycin 200

### Colostrum Supplement vs Replacer

Did you know that there are different types of colostrum products available? Many a time I (Dr. Poe) have talked to a producer about giving colostrum to a calf and mentioned giving a replacer versus a supplement and had them question me further about the difference. The big difference is the concentration of immunoglobulins (IgG), the important immune proteins that convey immunity from the cow to the calf. For example, Colostrx Supplement has 50g of IgG per bag while the replacer has 100g. In all cases where a calf is weak and may not get up to nurse within 12 hours I recommend giving the replacer as an insurance policy that the calf is getting adequate immune proteins. While replacer is more expensive than supplement, that extra cost could mean the difference between a live calf and a dead calf. If you know that the calf has gotten up and nursed a supplement can be given to boost passive transfer.



### Handling Calving Difficulties

Do you know when and how to properly to intervene in calving? There has been many a time when we've

hemmed and hawed over how often to check on a cow that we think might be having trouble. Enclosed with this newsletter you will find an article from the WBRC *Cattle Producer's Handbook* that gives a great overview of when and how to assist in calving. There is also an article on feeding colostrum as well as injuries and diseases of beef cattle associated with calving.

### WBRC *Cattle Producer's Handbook*

Once again, if you don't have this handbook in your library already you should seriously considering purchasing it. We have often turned to this resource to update and educate ourselves and our staff on topics as well as to help educate clients. For more information, including how to order this book, please contact the University of Idaho at 208-736-3600.

### Calving Emergency Contact

There are three ways to get in contact with Dr. Poe during calving season:

1. Call the clinic (633-0711)...during business hours as well as after hours. After hours the clinic phone is forwarded to her cell phone.
2. Call her house: 639-2366.
3. Call her cell phone: 638-2040

Please be sure to leave a detailed message if she doesn't answer your call as she may be away from the phone or attending to another emergency.

You may also see a new face during farm calls this season as Dr. Stefani Mark will be joining Dr. Poe on calving calls when possible.

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The doctors and staff at Grand Coulee Veterinary Clinic would be happy to assist you with all your calving needs. Please do not hesitate to call or stop by if you have any questions or concerns.