



**Blood test for Freemartin:** Kari noticed that sometimes when we send blood in for Freemartin testing we get results back in a couple days, and sometimes it's a couple weeks. She investigated and found out that the tests are set up on Wednesday's but only if they have enough samples to fill all the wells in the testing system. If they don't have enough samples they wait until the following Wednesday and repeat the process.

**Sorry.** The farmer appreciation meal is being cancelled for 2020. We always have it in a crowded indoor hall to avoid weather issues. That's out this year. Also, Animal Health who provides the chef and the cooker has grounded the cooker. We hope to bring it back with flair next year. I am sure there will be a vaccine by then and this whole COVID mess will be behind us. Jeff Moore suggested we upgrade to french fries instead of potato salad and Emma suggested grilled asparagus.

We want to thank everyone for the effort of calling ahead for products and continue to encourage calling ahead. The office has time to get the labels made out correctly and the order boxed up.

Again, thanks for giving us a heads-up in advance.

**New US import:** The United States has imported a new tick into the southeast, the 'Asian longhorned tick.' This tick was a native of Australia and New Zealand. Along with the tick came a disease called Theileria which is a blood disease similar to Anaplasmosis. So far the tick and the disease are showing up in the southeast, and hopefully our winters will keep them out of Wisconsin. Anaplasmosis is spread on dairies from common needle use and Theileria will probably be as well. Anaplasmosis got to Wisconsin in animals that were either purchased and brought here or through heifers raised in areas where Anaplasmosis already exists. Theileria is another reason to rethink animals going out of state to heifer growers, especially southeast, and the purchase of animals originating in the southeast.

**Preconditioning calves and premiums, from Drovers magazine:** In the past, calves that were preconditioned prior to selling as feeders brought a premium. Small numbers of calves would be presented to the sale barn weaned, castrated, dehorned, and vaccinated with a veterinarian certifying the vaccinations. As the industry has slowly adapted and feedlots have learned how important reducing the disease risk of purchased animals is, preconditioning has caught on to the extent that over half the calves are now preconditioned when presented to a cattle auction. The premium has essentially shrunk but that is not an accurate representation. Auction market prices are announced based on high averages so when most of the calves are preconditioned, they represent the averages. What is missed is that calves not preconditioned are now seeing severe discounts. It's not uncommon for calves to sell with \$150 discounts to the preconditioned calves. The wording has changed, the effect still means preconditioning pays big bucks.

## **I just had this conversation with my kid, and I thought it might make many of you smile.**

He's thinking that when he gets out of college he can pick up a little acreage and raise a couple steers. My response was that's great. If you have kids they can learn a lot, like chores, responsibility and if something dies you have meat to eat. If you want to enjoy watching the animals grow and eat meat you raised, that's great. Also, if you enjoy going home to animals or a garden and it relieves mental stress from a bad day at work (unless you're a farmer), that's great too. But I said, "don't think for a minute you're going to save money." Farmers are really sharp and they barely make any money. If you want to raise backyard beef I said, you will lose money. Then I told him this story.

I received an emergency call one evening about 8:00 p.m. I remember the sun was setting and it was nice outside. A retired farmer neighbor had a sick steer.

When I arrived Chip had 10 steers in a gutter dairy barn, about 1200 pounds each running every which way with no chute, no lockup, and in the gloom I could see a steer with pneumonia.

The first words out of Chip's mouth were "I hope this isn't going to cost more than \$25."

After thinking about the question and realizing he spent more than that when he called, I asked why.

"Last year I raised 10 steers same as this year he replied, and they never got sick. I kept track of every penny I spent on them 10 and I didn't pay myself a penny. At the end of the year I cleared \$25 for my time."

What could I say? I suggested selling the steer the next day, but Chip said no, he wanted to treat it. I'm thinking a fire or tornado taking down Chip's barn would be a good thing going forward. He could get a job at McDonalds for a couple weeks once a year for way more income. I had some time to think because I had to wedge a gate in the corner, chase the steer around for 45 minutes trying to get it behind the gate (why we charge by the hour), and I never did have the chance to listen to the steers lungs or take a temp. I administered one dose of antibiotics, which was not near enough, but Chip said it was going to live or die on one dose. I drove home depressed about the evening and the expectations.

Fortunately I couldn't see the steer pen very well from the road and I couldn't count the steers while I drove by Chips barn every day. Really, every single day I got to dwell on that steer. I didn't want to ask how the steer did, because I figured it would die, but I wanted to keep the remote possibility in my mind that maybe it did live.

Chip never had steers in that barn again.

We just keep seeing Tetanus in cattle and it's almost always associated with using bands to castrate. You might have used bands for 20 years and gotten away with it, but you have too much money invested in beef calves (no matter what breed) to lose them to a disease you can vaccinate for. That or learn to castrate with a pair of scissors and a quick pull.

***WE HOPE EVERYONE HAD A HAPPY AND SAFE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY***

