Differentiating Pasture Lameness in Beef Cattle

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During the summer grazing month many producers run into issues with lame cattle. The effects of lameness may show itself by decreased fertility, weight loss, decreased performance, and increased labor and medicine costs. It has been estimated that 88-92% of lameness in cattle stems from the foot. Several issues could be the culprit, but we will review some of the common causes and the key differences between the clinical signs. It is a good idea to contact your local veterinarian to create a treatment plan for these conditions prior to the grazing season.

Lameness with Swelling:

The first way to determining the cause of lameness is to observe obvious swelling. The swelling mist commonly effects the lower limb, indicating the area of inflammation just above the hoof. It is important to distinguish if the swelling is symmetrical (equal on both sides of the foot), or asymmetrical (only effecting one side). Swelling may also be noticed effecting single or multiple joints in both calves and cows.

Footrot is a common disease process that occurs in pasture cattle. Footrot is a bacterial infection of the foot that manifests itself with symmetric swelling encompassing the lower limb just above the hooves. Upon closer inspection, producers will notice a crack in the skin between the hooves and a foul pungent odor. Injectable antibiotic treatment is typically very rewarding when treated in the early stages of the disease. With delayed or late treatment of cases, however, deeper structures of the foot (tendons, joints, even bone) may become involved. Delayed treatment often requires extended therapy, and leads to increased cull rates from the herd.

It is always important to closely inspect symmetric swelling cases in the pasture settings. Wire, bale wrap, or other foreign bodies can wrap around and entrap the lower foot causing very similar symptoms as footrot. If the swelling has a well demarcated line horizontally across the foot, further investigation is warranted. The entrapping foreign body must be removed.

Single sided or asymmetric swelling of the foot often indicates a more serious condition in cattle. This type of clinical sign is often the result of deep structure issues. Puncture wounds, sole abscesses, or chronic infections can cause single sided joint, bone, or tendon infections. Extensive footwork on a tilt table or under sedation is often indicated in these cases. Contact your veterinarian when these cases are identified.

Lameness with no Noticeable Swelling:

Obvious lameness to one or more limbs with no noticeable swelling can often be challenging to diagnose appropriately. One of these conditions is called Hairy Heel Warts, also known as Digital Dermatitis, or Strawberry Footrot. These animals often display obvious lameness and will attempt to walk on the “tippy toe” of the foot. Upon closer observation you will notice wart like growths or bright red scab lesions below the dewclaws and above the heel bulbs of the foot. Topical treatment with an astringent or antibacterial solution is warranted for this condition.

The last condition we see more commonly in newly arrived stocker calves, is called toe tip necrosis (toe abscesses). These animals often appear with shifting lameness of the back legs. They will usually stand in strange orientations to protect and get pressure off of the damaged toe. The rear, outside hooves are most often affected. Treatment of these consists of picking up the feet and using hoof testers to confirm the conditions. Then the toes are slightly opened with hoof nippers to release the pressure. Without opening the toes, healing will not occur.

Lameness can be challenging to diagnose in a field situation, but understanding the subtle differences will help with proper and timely treatment. Visit with your veterinarian about any non-responsive lameness issues. Further diagnostics and treatment may be indicated.
A Family Affair

Break out the sunscreen and head to the fairgrounds, because it is finally fair month! I am so excited to see what kind of projects the 4-Hers have been working on this year and cannot wait to see their smiles when they are back in the community building looking at each others exhibits. The fair was always the big summer event in my family. During my time as a 4-Her, I would spend countless hours with my mom and dad working on projects. My mom would help me come up with new recipes to try and assist me when things were just not going my way. Then, it was down to the barns where dad would be waiting with the steer of heifers, ready to twist a tail when needed. I cannot forget about my sister who not only had projects of her own, but always wanted to hear my advice because “she wanted to be like me.” 4-H and the fair are not just individual activities, they are a family affair.

As you prepare to bring your animals to the county fair, be sure to follow these tips from Amanda Marney to ensure your family and livestock have a successful fair week.

- Don’t bring any visibly sick animals to a show or fair.
- Keep unused equipment and feed bagged or covered to reduce the risk of contamination.
- During the fair, keep animals as comfortable as possible to help reduce stress. Provide adequate bedding and plenty of air movement. Also, make sure clean water is always available and that your animals get the same feed as they do at home.
- Keep wheelbarrow tires, pitchforks and feeding equipment clean and free of manure.
- Clean and disinfect all items at the end of the fair before taking them home.
- Properly dispose of unused bedding, hay and feed after the fair. Do not bring them home.

Remember 4-Hers, your family is there as a guide and a helping hand. Remember to thank them for all they do to help you be successful in your projects. To all my 4-Hers and 4-H families, thank you for making the best better.

Best,

Shannon
(Agriculture/4-H Agent)

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July 4-H Fact

A.B. Graham started a youth program in Clark County, Ohio in 1902. This is considered the birth of 4-H in the United States.
External Parasites of Goats

Crabgrass Control

This is the time of year when people really notice crabgrass infestations. By far the best way to control crabgrass is to prevent it by maintaining a good, thick lawn. Crabgrass is an annual that must come up from seed each year and the seed must have light in order to germinate. If a lawn is thick enough that sunlight does not reach the soil, the crabgrass will not germinate. Under Kansas conditions it is not easy to maintain such a lawn; so many gardeners do the next best thing and apply a crabgrass preventer in the spring. Crabgrass preventers kill the seed as it germinates. Most do not have any effect on crabgrass that has already come up. If we are too late to apply a preventer, we do have other herbicides that will kill crabgrass plants including Ortho Weed-B-Gon Max + Crabgrass Control, Fertilome Weed-Out with Crabgrass Control, Monterey Crab-E-Rad and BioAdvanced Lawn Weed & Crabgrass Killer. Each contains quinclorac, which is a crabgrass herbicide, as well as other active ingredients that control broadleaf weeds. Quinclorac is an excellent crabgrass killer that controls not only crabgrass but also has good activity on foxtail and certain broadleaves such as bindweed, black medic and clover. However, it does little to nothing to goosegrass.

Fortunately, crabgrass starts declining about the middle of August. This is about the same time that cool-season grasses such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass start to come out of their summer doldrums. By the first of September, the crabgrass will be less noticeable. Therefore, a small infestation is best ignored. Remember that crabgrass is a warm-season annual and will be killed by the first frost. (Ward Upham)
Upcoming Events

The following are area or Statewide Agriculture, and/or Community Development/4-H events.

For more information on these events please contact the Extension Office

**July**

1– North Central District Horse Show– Salina
4– Happy 4th of July!
5– Offices Closed
9-10– Bob Hines Swine Classic– Manhattan
9-11– Tri-County Free Fair– Herington
17-26– Morris Co. Fair– Council Grove
25-29– Chase Co. Fair– Cottonwood Falls

**August**

12– Morris Co. 4-H Carcass Dinner– Council Grove
14– 4-H State Horticulture Contest– Manhattan
21-22– Kansas Livestock Sweepstakes– Manhattan