Wanted: Beef cattle producers for an internal parasite field study

Sources: Jeff Lehmkuhler, UK extension professor, Dr. Michelle Arnold, UK associate professor and extension veterinarian

Internal parasites impact animal performance and immunity. Research shows weaning weights of calves burdened with internal parasites are 20-35 pounds lighter. We want to learn more about the prevalence of internal parasites and the efficacy of products available on the market. Most of the anthelmintic products for livestock have been on the market for decades and concerns regarding their effectiveness have been mentioned. We need your help.

Kentucky Cooperative Extension, Kentucky Beef Network and Merck Animal Health, are joining to recruit 100-120 farms to participate in a Fecal Egg Count Reduction Test (FECRT) in beef cattle this fall. Several producers participated in the effort this spring and will participate again this fall. We are looking for an additional 20-30 farms.

**Who can participate?**

The team wants to gather more information on growing cattle. This includes calves you will wean and hold for at least 14 days, backgrounding/stocker operations buying in fall calves and those developing replacement heifers. We can sample mature cows as well if you have them on the farm.

**How many animals do we need?**

We need producers who have at least 20 animals in a group. These animals must stay together in a group for at least 14 days after deworming. We cannot collect samples from 15 calves and five cows to reach the 20 samples needed.

**What do participating producers need to do?**

You’ll need to collect fecal samples from at least 20 different animals immediately before you treat for internal parasites. Then exactly 14 days later, collect 20 fecal samples from different animals to examine the difference in fecal egg counts between PRE and POST treatment. Producers may grab samples from freshly excreted fecal pats in the pasture, this works well for POST samples. You will need to send samples to the lab for counting and the lab will send results you/your county extension agent.

**What does it cost?**

The service is free except for your time and the money to purchase the product you choose to collect samples.

**How do I join the study?**

Contact your county extension office and speak to your agriculture and natural resources agent if you wish to participate at least three weeks before you plan to work cattle. If your county ANR position is vacant, contact UK extension beef specialist Jeff Lehmkuhler for more information at jeff.lehmkuhler@uky.edu. For more information about beef cattle and other topics, contact the (COUNTY NAME) Cooperative Extension Service.

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