

River View Veterinary Service Newsletter

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News and Upcoming Events:

- Shows and fairs are in full swing! As a reminder, please call us at 309.848.9093 as soon as you know you need a health certificate! We're booking fast!

Welcome to the River View Veterinary Service Newsletter!

This newsletter is designed to provide cattle producers with timely information and education on a variety of topics. Got a topic? Let us know!

Sarah Foust, DVM and Terry Foust, DVM

Polio

(Adapted from Faries, Jr. Floron; Texas Cooperative Extension; Sept 2005)

As fall approaches, some health conditions become more common, such as anaplasmosis and polio.

The disorder called polio (polioencephalomalacia) commonly develops in malnourished, thin cattle that have been grazing poor pastures low in protein, consuming high levels of sulfate in grass and water and then are brought into dry-lot confinement and fed large amounts of grain concentrates or grain silages without adequate roughage. Polio can develop within a few days in cattle under these conditions. It often occurs in late summer and early fall when pastures are dry and when overgrazed and replacement heifers and weaned calves are penned for supplemental feeding.

The abrupt change in diet can cause necrosis (death of cells or tissues through injury or disease) of the brain. Thiamine levels in brain tissue may also drop, which can cause severe neurological disease.

Affected cattle, especially weanlings and yearlings, become weak and uncoordinated and go down. As the downer tries to stand, its ankles remain flexed or knuckled over. Cattle with polio often lie down and just cannot get up.

To prevent permanent brain damage, producers should call in a veterinarian for treatment immediately. Cattle often improve within 12 hours if they are treated early in the course of disease and do not have brain necrosis. If the cattle do not respond to thiamine treatment, either they have irreversible brain damage, or the problem has been misdiagnosed. To prevent recurrence, feed good-quality hay before a gradual return to grain, and maintain a high fiber diet.

If you are concerned about your cattle, please call our office for a consult (and possible farm visit) to help identify a solution!