River View Veterinary Service Newsletter

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News and Upcoming Events:

- Our annual AI & Breeding School is just around the corner, on Wednesday, April 19! We hope to see you there!

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

4 tips for managing mud this spring

(Radke, Amanda; Beef Magazine Feb 27, 2017)

Mud is often a by-product of the spring thaw. Here are tips for managing the mud and maintaining herd health during the sometimes sloppy spring months from Jane Parish, Mississippi State University Extension beef cattle specialist.

1. Be mindful of newborn calves born in the mud
Parish writes, "Mud can negate the insulation value of the hair coat. Of distinct concern are newborn calves born in or near mud holes or muddy areas. Calves can become chilled by mud, trapped in it, or sickened by pathogens thriving in it. This is why it is so important to closely monitor calving, routinely check cattle, and move cow-calf pairs to fresh pasture soon after calving."

2. Understand how mud impacts breeding success
Parish says, "Mud creates suction on hooves and makes it more difficult for cattle to move around in a muddy area. They expend more energy moving through mud and may have difficulty mounting for breeding. With mild mud conditions, just 4 to 8 inches of mud, cattle dry matter intake is reduced by 15% versus what it would be under the same conditions without any mud. When severe mud conditions are present, 1 foot or more of mud, dry matter intake plummets by 30% relative to the same conditions without any mud."

3. Know your soil types
Parish adds, "Although it may not be practical to totally eliminate mud on the farm, pastures, feeding areas, and cattle should be managed to minimize the negative impacts of mud on the herd. Start by taking an inventory of the soil types and slopes on the farm. Some soils drain better than others and are less prone to mud accumulation. If soil types and slopes are identified on a farm that are less susceptible to water pooling and/or mud build-up, then areas with these soils may be good places to select for high-traffic uses."

4. Better manage high-traffic areas to reduce mud
Parish recommends, "Next, identify high-traffic areas on the farm. These are places that cattle or vehicles move across on a frequent basis. High-traffic areas may include lanes where cattle are funneled to move them through to another location. Gates and feeding and watering areas are other prime examples of high-traffic areas. Cattle handling areas are another high-traffic location on the farm. Ground-level protection from mud development in these areas may include construction of high-traffic ground coverings, such as feeding pads made of concrete, geotextile fabric, or other materials. Make sure that construction of ground coverings covers sufficient surface area to be effective. A feeding pad that is too small may become surrounded by deep mud."