

River View Veterinary Service Newsletter

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News and Upcoming Events:

- Drs. Sarah and Terry will be attending continuing education conferences soon. Let them know if there's any topic you'd like to know more about!

*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*

Heifers don't like drylot

Placing heifers in a dry lot during development has oft been a management strategy employed to reduce costs and control inputs. However, is it the best strategy for proper heifer development? According to Alan Newport with BEEF Vet, this may not be the case:

“A study from Oregon published in 2017 confirmed again that drylot heifers have reproductive disadvantages compared with their pastured counterparts.

Drylot heifers experienced delayed puberty compared with pasture heifers, despite similar average daily gain. At the end of the 182-day trial, twice as many of the pasture heifers were pubertal, compared with their drylot counterparts.

Weekly data collected during the study showed the drylot heifers walked around much less, and also consistently showed higher stress levels than the pastured heifers.

New Mexico research showed heifers developed in drylot had greater average daily gain, but reduced pregnancy rates compared with cohorts reared on range pastures.

Montana research published in 2014 reported that heifers developed in drylot gained more than two times more body weight than heifers developed on native range. “

However, there are benefits to be considered. Inputs can be controlled more closely and a wider variety of feedstuffs can be fed. Animal health is easier to monitor, as animals will be coming to the bunk and being seen on a regular basis. Another important factor is space. If pasture space is unavailable or low-cost post-crop residue is not available, placing heifers on dry lot may be most advantageous to producers.

Ultimately, each producer needs to do a cost-to-benefit analysis and determine the best system for them. If you need help analyzing your system, give us a call. We're happy to help make your herd more profitable and efficient!