



GOOD PRACTICES

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In the past, we have often said that it is an acceptable practice to use a needle up to 10 injections if it doesn't dull or become contaminated. With the continual spread of anaplasmosis in the region, the best practice is to use a new needle for every injection. It's more than just delivering a pharmaceutical product in a humane way while reducing lesions and abscesses. Possibly now more than ever, it is a matter of herd health. To maintain herd health and profitability as bovine anaplasmosis continues to spread, we will need to change how we approach needles, castration, dehorning, implanting, and parasite control.

Anaplasmosis is a blood born disease that is carried from one animal to another through a vector such as blood feeding flies and ticks or with contaminated tools during herd health processing. At this point, scientists believe that ticks are the major contributor. However, there are multiple strains of the bacterial organism known as *A. marginale* that live in the red blood cells of infected cattle (rickettsial). Some strains are carried by ticks while other strains are more commonly carried by blood feeding flies.

If you don't already have a veterinary-client patient relationship, now is the time to get one. Cattle prices are good. So, losing one cow to anaplasmosis hurts even more. Looking at the full picture across a carrier herd, it could be even more detrimental. UGA's College of Veterinary Medicine published a paper in 2022 that evaluated the disease's prevalence in beef herds across Georgia. They reported that the economic losses of anaplasmosis include decreased production and fertility, mortality, abortion and clinical treatment expense. In the U.S., the cost of a clinical case of anaplasmosis is conservatively estimated at > \$400 per animal according to their findings. That cost has likely increased since then. Working with a veterinarian to be proactive in prevention will be a great step forward in reducing mortalities and economic losses.

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The study went on to conclude that *Anaplasma* seroprevalence was positively associated with the number of injections given in the previous 12 months and bringing new cattle on the operation within the past 3 years. Thus, bringing in new animals is a risk, but if we use good needle management it can help minimize the spread within a herd. Calves and yearlings may not show clinical signs, but as they age the severity of the of symptoms increase. Cattle will start to show symptoms around 1 to 2 weeks after infection. A stressful event such as a storm may cause increased symptoms including death. Also, research has reported that 16% of infected, pregnant cows pass the disease onto their offspring and are persistently infected.

Your veterinarian can also give good tips on what to watch for such as pale or yellow mucosal lining, unusually aggressive behavior, staggering, poor body condition, and labored breathing, among others. Good practices regarding anaplasmosis can help prevent big losses. The referenced study is entitled: Seroprevalence and molecular detection of *Anaplasma marginale* infected beef herds in Georgia, USA, by Dr. Lee Jones.

