

DATELINE : BEEF



All In The Family

Hands-on approach, commitment to health, breed success at young Angus operation

Jim Lund of K-Lund Angus Farm believes that most families today prefer to purchase quality Angus beef raised by family farmers.

Seeing this emerging trend, Lund and his wife Roxanne sold their dairy herd in Woodville, Wisconsin, 8 years ago and purchased Angus

FAST FACTS

- **If left uncontrolled, coccidiosis can cause bloody diarrhea, dehydration, depression and bad performance, while also making animals more susceptible to secondary infections**
- **Bovatec® (lasalocid) has been shown to increase ADG, decrease days to first estrus (puberty) in beef heifers on lower-energy diets, and have no negative impact on pregnancy rates**
- **Feeding Bovatec in combination with Aureomycin® (chlortetracycline) lets producers optimize weight gain and feed efficiency while controlling coccidiosis and the leading causes of BRD**

seedstock. With an initial 20 cows, the Lunds began direct marketing their beef to local customers, hoping to establish a niche market for their product.

Today K-Lund's 140-cow herd is producing quality beef that is featured on the dinner tables of customers in Minnesota, Montana, Iowa and Wisconsin.

HANDS-ON HEALTH PROGRAM

Being proactive with herd health is one reason for this niche marketer's success. Lund checks his cows and calves daily to catch any potential health issues early.

"Our cows are on quality-managed pasture with their calves until we wean at 7 months of age," he says.

Lund says that offering creep feed to his calves before weaning makes their transition to grain-based rations after weaning easier. It also helps reduce stress on his cows.

"We begin feeding Bovatec® (lasalocid) in the pelleted feed as soon as possible to control coccidiosis," stresses Lund, referring to a parasitic disease that costs ranchers more than \$560 million a year. "By starting early, we're minimizing the [coccidial] oocyst pressure in our pastures for the calves."

According to published reports, two highly prolific species of microscopic protozoa parasites, *Eimeria bovis* and *Eimeria zuernii*,

are responsible for most coccidiosis cases. If left uncontrolled, the disease can cause bloody diarrhea, dehydration, depression and bad performance. Coccidiosis can also make animals more susceptible to secondary infections.

‘Many cow/calf producers underestimate the threat of coccidiosis to young calves. Even healthy-looking calves can be suffering from subclinical forms of coccidiosis.’

Cattle contract coccidiosis by ingesting oocysts, or parasitic eggs, shed by other animals in the herd. And the oocysts are difficult to miss. A single cow is capable of passing more than 50 million oocysts each summer in her manure. Calves ingesting only 0.1 percent of the cow’s production, or only 50,000 oocysts, can experience severe intestinal disease.

UNDERESTIMATED THREAT

“Many cow/calf producers underestimate the threat of coccidiosis to young calves,” explains Dr. Denny Hausmann, DVM, a technical service representative for Alpharma Inc. who has worked extensively with the disease. “Even healthy-looking calves can be suffering from subclinical forms of coccidiosis.”

In research conducted at Kansas State University, Bovatec was shown to increase ADG, decrease days to first estrus (puberty) in beef heifers on lower-energy diets, and have no negative impact on pregnancy rates.¹ This in turn helps ensure that a larger percentage of heifers reach puberty at an earlier age, making them more likely to be bred to calve in their first calving season.

“Bovatec keeps our steer and heifer calves healthy through their transition from pasture to feedlot, while improving their feed efficiency and rate of gain,” stresses Lund.

After weaning, Lund sorts his calves into groups of 15 to 20 based on size. This lets him feed a ration designed to fit the animals’ growth ability while providing a consistent supply of beef for sale. Their diet relies heavily on whole shelled corn grown on the farm. Lund continues to use Bovatec throughout the grow-out period to protect his herd and optimize weight gain and feed efficiency.

HIGH-QUALITY FEEDSTUFFS

“One of the keys to raising quality beef is in the feedstuffs,” Lund insists, “and we’re able to not only provide quality pasture, but raise our own corn and roughages as well. It’s just another aspect of product control.”

According to Lund, production records show their calves gain 3 to 4 pounds per day on this system, allowing them to produce quality beef more cost effectively. Every K-Lund beef animal receives a minimum of 120 days of corn before market at 11 months of age.

Lund believes staying ahead of herd-health problems is the key to producing quality beef. “Feeding Bovatec from calves through the feedlot allows us to keep animals in varying stages of development in close proximity with a minimum of coccidiosis pressure,” he adds.

BATTLING BRD

Lund also needs to stay ahead of bovine respiratory disease (BRD). During the tough winter months in Wisconsin, cows are brought in and over-wintered in the feed yard. With both steers and cows in confined areas, respiratory infections are more likely to occur.

“Any cough is treated right away with Aureomycin® (chlortetracycline),” explains Lund, referring to the broad-spectrum in-feed antibiotic. “It just knocks out respiratory disease before it spreads to another group of cattle. We also like the fact that we can provide that protection without resorting to needles.”



A WIN - WIN PLAN

F O R H E I F E R D E V E L O P M E N T

As K-Lund's cow herd increased to meet the growing demand for their beef, Jim and Roxanne Lund faced limited facilities for heifer development.

Enter Mike Baker, their Land O'Lakes livestock production specialist.

"On one hand, I knew Jim was short on space but had plenty of available forage for his heifers," remembers Baker. "On the other hand, I had a hobby farmer, Rich Cronk, with an aging cow herd."

Playing matchmaker, Baker engineered a win-win situation that satisfied both cattlemen. Rich sold his aged cows on a high market and Jim removed some of the stress on his facilities.

"Jim sends 50 heifers plus their forage needs to Rich, who in return for his facilities and labor, gets to keep 1 heifer for every 10 he feeds," explains Mike. "Both farms are able to retain top quality heifers for their breeding programs."



Lund: 'Bovatec keeps our steer and heifer calves healthy through their transition from pasture to feedlot, while improving their feed efficiency and rate of gain.'



Using Aureomycin for managing BRD is even easier because FDA now permits feeding it in combination with Bovatec. According to Alpharma's Hausmann, the combination lets producers optimize weight gain and feed efficiency while controlling coccidiosis, anaplasmosis and the leading causes of pneumonia.

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CALVING SCHEDULES

Of course, keeping a healthy herd isn't Lund's only trick for ensuring a steady supply of high-quality beef. Lund has also tinkered with calving schedules to meet the growing demand for his product. In order to offer beef for sale year-round, half of Lund's 140-cow herd calves in the spring and the other half calves in the fall.

Each cow is tagged and her history (along with that of her calf's) is recorded. "We're always looking to improve our herd and production

records help us identify the top producing cows so that we can add their heifers to our herd," explains Lund.

"Our customers are people who want to talk to the farmer who raised the beef," says Lund. "They care about the feeding and husbandry that animal has received."

Lund's animals are processed at a local USDA-inspected facility. Customers are able to specify the amounts and types of cuts they wish to purchase, ranging from entire animals to sides and quarters.

"Beef is very a competitive industry with a lot of variation in the way animals are raised," says the former dairyman. "We may be a small operation by today's standards, but we think our hands-on approach, attention to detail and commitment to herd health are helping our product stand out from the crowd."

¹ Corah, L., Riley J. "Effect of lasalocid of the sexual development of beef heifers," 1984 Cattleman's Day, *Report of Progress 448*, Kansas State University.

For more information about the new Aureomycin-Bovatec combination, producers should contact their feed supplier or Alpharma representative, or go to www.AlpharmaCattle.com.

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