**Summer vacation does not apply to the pasture**

Summer vacation is still a highlight for many families. Whether the vacation is your days at the fair, or travel to see some of the country or far-away relatives, it signifies getting away from the routine.

With the return of good pasture growth, many cattle have changed their "routine" and are out on pasture. However, now is not the time to take a vacation from them!

Careful attention to your cattle herd will assure that they are productive now and in the future.

**Cows and heifers**

A critical part of productivity is making sure that cows get pregnant early in the breeding season. Cows and heifers that get pregnant early in the breeding season are more likely to consistently get bred and stay in herd. These females will be able to wean more pounds of calf than herd mates that calve later.

At present, there is little that can be done to change the potential for a female to get pregnant. However, monitoring your cows during the breeding season can help identify potential problems before productivity is severely hampered.

Watch for signs that cows are cycling more than they should as the breeding season progresses. Diagnosing why cows did not get bred is very difficult to determine three to six months after the breeding season has ended.

**Calves and pinkeye**

Another area to pay attention to through the summer is calf health. Regular observation can identify health issues before calves are severely affected.

Although the cool spring kept the flies down early, warm summer temperatures can promote a heavy fly season and potential for pinkeye problems.

Pinkeye can cause significant loss of weight gain if not treated early because calves in pain will not eat very well. Early identification and treatment of calves will insure that calves can recover without detrimental effects. Additionally, calves that have had a severe case of pinkeye lesion will get penalized at sale if the scar is visible.

**Calves and respiratory issues**

Although summer pneumonia may not affect as many calves as pinkeye or other diseases, its impact can be tremendous.

It is not uncommon that the first recognition of a respiratory disease problem is finding a dead calf. Early signs of pneumonia in young calves can be very subtle. If you are not carefully checking your calves every day, it can be easy to miss the early signs of disease.

Unlike calves in confinement, calves on pasture are harder to evaluate. Calves that are not feeling well have lots of hiding places and can easily be overlooked among the mature cows.

Diligent observation and treatment will decrease the chance that respiratory disease negatively impacts your herd this summer.

Finally, schedule your preconditioning vaccinations as early as possible. Having calves ready for weaning allows you the flexibility to market calves at the best opportunity. Environmental conditions change regularly and forage supplies can disappear. Having the ability to market calves instead of managing feeding pairs could be a huge advantage.