Record Keeping and Analysis

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Take Home Message

Production records, including those for animal health, are used in feedlots: to keep track of current practices, monitor processes, decide where and when problems occur, and verify that corrective procedures are beneficial to the operation. Animal health records are used to monitor health, disease occurrence, and the effectiveness of treatment, preventive and control procedures, inventory management and accounting/billing. Processing, treatment, necropsy, transaction and closeout records are fundamental to a record keeping system. They can be simply kept on a handwritten card system. However, computerized record keeping systems are better than handwritten record systems, because they allow for easy entry and quick use of information on a daily basis. Records are essential for efficient operations and in the future they will also help protect feedlots from liability issues that may arise from quality assurance and food safety concerns.

Introduction

Animal health records monitor the occurrence and severity of disease, the effectiveness and cost of processing, treatment and vaccination programs, and production performance. Records can be kept manually on cards or in binders. However, to increase the likelihood that the information is used to it's fullest, the records should be computerized. There are many computer programs available that include animal health records. Information recorded should include:
- lot descriptions with purchase and sale information;
- processing records with predefined processing and implant schedules;
- drug inventories with cost analysis;
- treatment records with predefined treatments and withdrawal dates;
- deads analysis;
- pulls reports;
- cattle's transfers and movements and;
- closeout summaries.

For further information on the computer programs that are available for animal health, refer to your herd veterinarian.

To gain the most information available from records and to make correct management decisions, unique, individual, animal identification is essential. Currently, it is recommended that uniquely numbered eartags, either plastic or electronic, be given to each animal on feedlot entry to identify each animal individually and to follow its progress through the feeding period and packing plant. Electronic identification is now available and shows great promise to help trace an animal from birth to slaughter and to allow the two-way transfer of important management information. Both the feedlot manager, consulting veterinarian and nutritionist can use this information to improve production efficiency and lower costs of production.

Processing Records

Processing records are usually kept on a pen or lot basis and should show the date that animals were uniquely identified (tag), branded, vaccinated, implanted, and injected with prophylactic antimicrobials, dewormers and vitamins. Any other procedures such as dehorning, castrating, aborting, reimplanting and revaccinating should also be recorded. Additionally, the crew responsible for processing the cattle should be identified and an injection site map should be kept. An injection site map simply shows where on the animal's body products and procedures were given. This information is important to ensure that the best practices are followed and it also provides an information database for subsequent buyers.

Processing records should be standardized for certain types/ groups of cattle to avoid waste, errors in procedures and guess work, and to allow the evaluation of the effectiveness of processing regimes. Most computer programs allow the entry of predefined processing schedules for specific types of cattle that also record associated costs of procedures.

Treatment Records

Treatment records should be kept for each animal so that the treatment history of an animal and group of animals can be summarized to evaluate disease occurrence and treatment response. The records should include:
• the lot and pen number;
• animals' unique identification number;
• date(s) pulled and treated;
• disease suspected;
• rectal temperature;

- body weight;
- drugs used and dose, route of administration and site of injection;
- movement of the animal (home pen, sick pen, recovery pen, chronic pen, buller pen);
- outcome of treatment (recovery or death);
- crew who pulled and treated the animal, and;
- withdrawal dates.

Most computerized programs have withdrawal dates built-in by animal and/or lot following any treatments to avoid shipping animals to slaughter before the recommended withdrawal period. This helps prevent drug residue problems in beef.

Standard treatment protocols should be established by your consulting veterinarian to reduce guess work and the use of inappropriate and useless pharmaceuticals and to ease the evaluation of the success or failure of treatment regimes. Most computerized treatment records allow for the entry of predefined treatment protocols, costs of each treatment, and entry of an individual animal treatment. From this information one can decide the occurrence of disease by lot, pen, specific disease, cattle weight, arrival month, and days on feed. Additionally, one can figure out treatment response by disease, drug, individual, lot, pen, and feedlot. Most computer programs will also summarize the costs of treatment. This information can be used by the feedlot crew, management ,and consulting veterinarian to monitor events, decide actions to take when problems occur, and verify the health program is cost efficient. Additionally, this information is used for accounting and billing purposes in custom feedlots.

Death Records

The veterinarian who does necropsies should fill out feedlot records on the results of the necropsy and include the date the animal died, its identification, lot number, pen number, cause of death, explanatory comments, and outcome of any further laboratory analyses. From this information, one can summarize the number of deaths by disease, treatment regimes, lot, owner, age and type of cattle, days on feed, and feedlot. Death records can be used to monitor events, decide actions to take when excess losses occur, and verify the health management program is working, Another important record is a case summary record on an animal in the feedlot. The case summary includes the processing, treatment and death records of that animal. This information, along with production data, such as arrival weight, final weight, days on feed, average daily

gain, feed conversion, and costs of production are summarized by lot, cattle weight, or arrival dates in closeouts to provide the feedlot with a record of its performance. This information is required by most custom feedlots for their clients.

Summary

Animal health records are an integral part of any efficient feedlot production system. They help monitor events and processes, decide when problems occur and what corrective action to use and whether it was beneficial. They also verify that the production system is functioning as planned. Producers who utilize records effectively are efficient and produce beef of the highest quality and safety.

(NAME) FEEDLOT - PROCESSING RECORDS

LOT _____ PEN(S)# _____ HEAD _____

ANIMAL ID (TAG # -> #) _____

BRAND _____ BRAND LOCATION _____

ARRIVAL DATES _____

PROCESSING DATES _____

SEX _____ ARRIVAL WEIGHT _____ SHRINK _____

ORIGINS _____

TRUCKERS _____

Number of injection site	Product	Lot #	Dose	Route (IV, IM, SQ, oral, topical)	Initials of Processor

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS:
_____
_____
_____
_____

(NAME) FEEDLOT - TREATMENT RECORDS

LOT _____ PEN _____ SEX _____
ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION _____ WEIGHT _____

Date	Disease	Temp	Drug	Dose	Route	Injection	Comments	Crew

OTHER COMMENTS:
_____
_____
_____
_____