



“Pathological Examination of Three Selected Syndromes of Feedlot Cattle”

STUDYING UNUSUAL FEEDLOT MORTALITIES

PROJECT NO.: 0005-019

RESEARCH INSTITUTION: University of Calgary
(Faculty of Veterinary Medicine)

LEAD RESEARCHER: Dr. Eugene Janzen

Objectives: To determine if there are any serious underlying health issues that cause animals to:

1. Not appear sick, while not eating or gaining weight early in the feeding period. The post-mortem often does not find an obvious cause;
2. Have difficulties moving or getting up. A post-mortem may not find a joint injury or evidence of grain overload; or
3. Suddenly die of unusual heart failure. There may be no post-mortem evidence of infection, heart defects, or a heart attack.

Background: The beef industry tends to focus on diseases that have the greatest apparent impact on productivity and profitability. For example, since bovine respiratory disease syndrome is a leading cause of death in feedlots, post-mortem examinations of feeder cattle tend to focus on the lungs and airways. Less attention may be paid to illnesses, like the three syndromes described above, that have unusual symptoms, or post-mortems that reveal less common abnormalities.

These researchers plan to work with participating feedlots to perform detailed post-mortems on cattle dying with any of the three syndromes described above. Numerous tissue samples will be collected for detailed

microscopic and laboratory examination. Feedlot information (days on feed, sex, and treatment history) will be combined with the veterinary findings for each syndrome to help identify the most likely cause(s) of each syndrome. This project is scheduled to be completed in 2010.

Implications of the Research: If these syndromes represent the ‘tip of the iceberg’ of emerging diseases, studying and understanding them will prevent them from becoming more widespread and economically problems.



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