

## Health Beat with Dr. Shipley

As we wind down another year, I reflect on all the health problems that I have seen and wish for a better next year. Fortunately, most of the problems that I see can be prevented with good management and good facilities. It's time to think about sanitation, isolation, vaccination, pasture rotation, facility repair/renovation, etc. to keep disease and injuries away!

First sanitation. If you think about how we are raising these animals and concentrating them in a small area, then it is important for us to keep the pens as dry as possible, avoid dirty water (and waterers), clean feeders/old feed, control birds, skunks, opossums, raccoons and other critters if possible to reduce exposure to diseases such as leptospirosis, tuberculosis, cryptosporidiosis among others. Your mother was right, cleanliness is next to Godliness!

Isolation is an important part of any health program. Sick animals should be isolated from healthy ones and all newcomers to the farm should be held away from your animals until they have been tested for appropriate diseases, dewormed and observed for a minimum of 2 weeks ( a month is better) to make sure that they don't get sick or are sick and spread something to your herd. Don't put your herd at risk if you can help it. Also make sure that all paperwork is done and correct when getting new animals. It could affect your CWD, TB or brucellosis status.

Vaccination programs will vary from herd to herd, but are becoming more necessary (I believe) if we are to raise healthy deer in semi confined areas. Consider vaccination for Fusobacterium (causes a lot of abscesses and feet and mouth problems as well as "winter wasting syndrome" /weight loss disease or other terms), EHD (epizootic hemorrhagic disease which caused significant problems this year), Clostridial disease (7 way like cattle) and leptospirosis ( the books say deer don't get this and are carriers sometimes, but I've got a bunch of necropsy reports that say otherwise).

Pasture rotation is talked about a lot when we think about cattle and sheep, but very few of us think about it when we think of deer. Having a "clean" pasture to fawn on or to put does out on with fawns helps control parasites, but also gives them better forage and allows the "old" pasture to rest/grow or undergo renovation. You may also want to think about renovation of pastures/lots with frost seeding to help with the renovation this spring/late winter to help get those pastures back in shape and growing better forage for your deer. Last but not least, think about your facility and how you handle deer. Try to think of ways that you can improve your handling facility to make it safer and easier for you and the deer. Shadecloth, drop gates or sliders, chutes, handling pens, etc all should be evaluated. Even if you are darting, evaluate your pen/pens to see if you can make it easier and safer. If you are going to be in the business long term, then perhaps spending some money on facilities will pay off in the long run by making it easier to vaccinate, deworm, deantler, etc at the appropriate time and lose fewer animals in the long run.

One final note, the EHD vaccine for Illinois should be in tomorrow (I wrote this on the 9th of Nov). It has been a long, hard process to get the new company to make this vaccine and the USDA to approve it for use in Illinois (not just in the herd it was isolated from). If you need vaccine (think ahead) then call the Hospital (217-333-7232) and leave a message and we will get it out to you as soon as we can. I can't make any guarantees, but it seems to be working or at least reducing the death loss and clinical signs in the herds that have used it.

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