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00;00;17;13 - 00;00;47;17
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Welcome back to the Pasture to Profit podcast. I'm Travis Taylor. I'll be your host today for this episode. And I'm joined again by my fellow colleague in extension, Scott Stinnett, from the Kit Carson County office in Burlington, Colorado. And our topic today is something that I'm getting used to, Scott, I'm I'm getting a little older. Pain management is one of those things that getting out of bed, the Advil, the Aleve, whatever you want to give me.

00;00;47;19 - 00;01;12;19
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I may be interested in because it gets me through the day, but we're really looking at some information that you researched in regarding pain management when we're working with beef cattle as we come through. And, Scott, I think one of the things we're getting into that processing season here in eastern Colorado, and we've got some bigger calves and we may be doing things such as castrating calves.

00;01;12;26 - 00;01;35;17
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And one of the animal welfare issue is, how do we manage that pain when we're castrating these calves? So in the research study or the information that you were looking at kind of lead us down the line of how beneficial this is to calf performance? Well, pain management will back up just a little bit because you mentioned animal welfare.

00;01;35;20 - 00;02;08;22
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In the cattle industry, we know people are always watching us and they always ask questions when they find out about things like castration or horning or any other surgical procedures. We have to do is how do you manage their pain? And, you know, our, our traditions, especially here in the Western US of doing a sure enough rope and drag style branding, or even if we use calf cradles as we'll handle castration at branding time and we don't really do anything to manage pain in any, any real way.

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So the couple of research papers that I looked to, that I was visiting with our extension veterinarian, Kathy Whitman, she sent me these over to read shows that pain management is beneficial. And we'll talk a little bit about the cost effectiveness of it as well. But the University of Arkansas used some of the cattle from their school herds, and over about a three year period had some black baldy calves that came in.

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And they did a nice little research project with these calves. They had one group that were castrated within 48 hours of birth using a banding technique. So they came into this program as steers, so already castrated, and then everything else was castrated at weaning time and then put into a feedlot. And they took the ones, the bull calves that brought that were come in for the weaning process and for castration.

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They. Either surgically castrated or they banded them. And then they took those two groups, and they divided those in half. And half of the ones that were surgically castrated were given Malaysian to manage their pain, and half of the ones that were being banded were given the loss of cam to manage their pain. And the real interesting thing is, you know, some of these things that we would fully expect to see was there was definitely a minor decline that first 14 days or so after castration for the calves that were not given any pain management compared to those who were given pain management.

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But then in the end result, the control or the steers that showed up at the feedlot versus all these bull calves. The interesting thing was the surgically castrated and treated with and for pain. Those in the end had equivalent average daily gain of the steers who came there ahead of them, the ones that came in and were banded and given an experienced just a slide.

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We're talking 2 or 3 tenths of average daily gain, less than the control. But still the pain management made them better. And the ones that were either surgically or banded without any kind of pain management were the farthest behind 8 to 10% reductions in growth. So where we were at about 3.9, average daily gain, pounds of average daily gain on the controls, those ones that were banded or cut were like three six and 3.2 or excuse me, 3.6 and 3.72.

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And so they were a little bit behind. So in the scheme of things it's not a lot being behind. You're still over three and a half pounds of daily gain on all these animals. But the pain management did bring them up to being very close to the control. So obviously pain management is

something that is feasibly possible and does do a good job of helping them maintain the same growth rate as their other control caps.

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Yeah. So Scott, for those of us that like numbers, right where we're looking at this and that decreased rate of gain, if they're going to come in as a group and go out as a group and they're the same calves, that is 54 pounds at 3/10 of a pound a day. On what is now a more common 180 day feeding period, 54 pounds at over $2 a pound.

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I'm just going to round it. We're we're looking at $100 difference in terms of performance. At the market place on those steers that came in as bulls that didn't receive any pain mitigation. Right. So I think that's that's huge. And even though the others were slightly back, it's it's definitely something to talk about. So Malakian, first of all, what does it cost for that product if we if our producers were thinking about using it and how might we use it?

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A little further research. And again numbers were provided to us from Doctor Cathy, who's also still a practicing large animal veterinarian beef specializing. And she said Maalox can with these little gel tablets. Gel gel capsules are about $0.20 for every 100 pounds. So if we're talking about 4 to 500 pound calves coming in there, we're talking about $1 per head.

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And so you would do the castration method, give them a dose and you put a dollar into them. Well if that dollar can equate to getting me back another 100, I'm in. Your background never ceases to amaze me how easy you would like to get that. That return on investment would be huge. In terms of the ability to get that back out of them.

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And even if it's half that, you know, on those that were banding, anyway, it's well worth the effort to go ahead and provide them with Maalox can or something to mitigate that pain as we come back there. Right standpoint. And, you know, using pain management for other reasons. Some of our cattle were still we still have a percentage of our cattle that are going to be horned and maybe may require some d horning, to go along with the castration.

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You know, we're talking about a quite a significant amount of, of stress on an animal if we're doing both or doing both at the same time. So, you know, the cost of using products like Malaysian, which are readily available from our veterinarians and easy to apply in a, in a gel

capsule, a little bit of extra time, a little bit extra labor, a little bit of extra cost.

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You know, in the scheme of things, you know, one day's worth of growth could easily take care of that $1 that you spent in pain management. Another product that's out there, the fair appease a lot of people are beginning to use it. If you're bringing calves in, let's say you're winning them and you are bringing them into feedlot, or you're going to bring them in and and dry lot, wean them and you're going to run them through a shoot or something at, you know, 4 or 500 pounds, maybe six if you got some real growers, $3 for a dose of fair peas to help with the stress that's associated on all of your calves

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that come through there doesn't really manage pain, but it does help manage stress. And we know stress is directly related to things such as gain. High cortisol levels in our calves usually are not that good for gain. So if we can maybe even talk to our veterinarian about, hey, if we're going to leave our bull calves, bull calves for a lot longer time than maybe doing it at branding time when they're anywhere from, you know, branding, you might have some as little as a week old to maybe 30, 45 days old at the branding.

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You know, I'm part of the ground crew, so I hope they're not much more than 45 days old because they get a little bit a little, a little bit on the fight for a guy like me. But, you know, if you're bringing them back in and whether you are castrating your own bull calves and you give them a little dose of therapies to help calm them down, and then you give them some locks of cam to manage their pain, and they're not getting behind on gains for you.

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We just talked to Doctor John, written the other day on our last podcast about flexing, you know, for drought times. Maybe you go out and you find a set of bull calves that are for sale, may have to put several groups of bull calves together to, you know, maybe cover a pasture. But if you can bring them in, manage their pain with a calm and castrate and turn them out, you're going to get the same growth as if you went out and bought some already castrated steers ready to go out on pasture, but you're probably going to pay, what, 10 to 20%, 10 to $0.20 back buying bulkheads than you are buying steers?

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Yeah, I think that fits in with what we've kind of seen in the markets. Right. If those bull calves are discounted a little bit because nobody wants to mess with them, nobody wants to do that. They they get sore, those kind of things. But we're managing that now. And I think that's a

huge advantage. And I think when you when you start talking about fair peas, the interesting thing to me is I've had discussion with some producers about can I use that at branding time?

00;11;23;28 - 00;11;58;12
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Well, branding time is not only a high stress time, it's also that 45 to 60 days we're redoing our ruminant compartments and we're starting to change the digestive system. And we all know when we change the digestive system, it's one of the quickest ways to upset the balance and the immune system as well. So something that, like you say, reduces stress, gets them through that time of transition as they start to get to that age where they're now not only nursing mom, but maybe they're starting to graze alongside mom and take in some of those nutrients.

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I think it's huge. The opportunity we have with some of these tools in terms of pain management and stress relief, that we can utilize those going forward in our beef cattle situation. Right. And another little bit of research I did was the Beef Cattle Research Council out of Canada had some more information on some calves that were handled at a little bit smaller size.

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So more this would fit more long. And lines of our, our branding here that some Angus cross bull calves away in about 105 pounds. They in their research here divided them into groups of about 24 head apiece. Some were, some were cut, some were banded and some were injected with medication, which is another type of pain management medication.

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And the rest were given a placebo. And the biggest thing was during castration. The hours immediately after the castration, the chronic pain and scrotal swelling and healing were, you know, assessed using, you know, the normal physiological behavioral measurements. And what they learned was acute pain, which is the pain at the time of castration wasn't wasn't really effective at all, because these pain management medications, they take a few 30 minutes to an hour to really kick in.

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But chronic pain, what's going to happen after, you know, the swelling and everything it happens after? It did reduce the signs of chronic pain. And as we all know, an animal that's not in pain is going to do a lot better job of taking care of themselves. So these would be 100 pounds. These are nursing cats. They're going to get back up.

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They're going to get to nursing a little bit faster. They're going to move around. They're going to find their moms faster. And these things

were documented by the Canadians that, you know, one of the hardest things about after branding is making sure everybody pared back up, right. And little, little bull calves that are just laying there in pain don't really want to go find mom at the moment.

00;14;01;27 - 00;14;24;19
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They're just laying there in pain. So we we didn't see they didn't really do anything as far as weight gains and other things like that. But they did see that the quality of life for these younger calves, when they got back up, they were much faster to get back to being a calf than the ones that were not giving any pain management.

00;14;24;22 - 00;15;13;19
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Well, and I think there again, lies at that, that time we're processing things. If they're going to go off and lay off. Mothers utter gets a little fuller at that peak lactation. They come back, they overeat, and we're starting to cause an imbalance in the digestive system again, like we've talked about. So I think it's huge. Maybe to take a look at this, particularly when you can recoup the cost of some of these things as quickly as we seem to be able to here and, you know, giving 200 pound calves at branding, something like milk scam, which is $0.40 and you save one that maybe it hurt and didn't get over eaten.

00;15;13;24 - 00;15;52;06
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You have more than paid for your milk scam for 3 or 4 years, depending on the size of your herd. So I think it's something that you could look at and definitely have the ability to manage some of these stressful situations. Beef cattle. Right. And, you know, to kind of follow along with that. You know, if we're talking about, you know, this Canadian study where 100 pound calves, you know, so branding time, branding size, calves that go out there, just the man hours that would be saved, you know, having somebody going out to ride through the herd and make sure everybody's pared back up, you know, if you can see everybody's leaving the branding area,

00;15;52;06 - 00;16;34;11
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the branding pasture already paired up, you know, they got up, they found their mama, and they're on their way. I mean, just just saving a half day's wages for a day hand with a horse could very easily save you the same cost of using or having to pay for your pain management program. So I think it's something that every producer probably should could look into visit with their veterinarian about, you know, if you're planning on having a branding here anytime soon or maybe for your branding next year, you know, we're we're adding maybe one more person to the crew, you know, the pain manager.

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You know, maybe you're going to call them doctor, feel good because that's their job. They're going to make these babies feel a little

better. But in the scheme of things, you know, if if we've got a quicker recovery on these branded calves, newly processed calves, if we've got older bull calves that are going to be steers, you know, the advantages are there to do some pain management as well as the fact when you're telling your story to somebody that's not in the ag industry and they ask that question, what do you do for pain management?

00;17;03;16 - 00;17;29;02
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You can answer, this is what we do, and this is the effects that we see and we think it's a positive thing. So I think there's a lot of positives to the idea of investigating and possibly implementing some pain management into your hurt. Well, Scott, I think those are all fantastic things to think about. And again, consulting our veterinarians is always one of those things we should do.

00;17;29;02 - 00;18;07;17
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And we recommend an extension all the time. So with that, I think that concludes this episode of our Pasture to Profit podcast. I'm Travis Taylor, livestock specialist for the Golden Plains area here in northeastern Colorado. And if you have any other ideas or comments or want any further information, you can reach out to me at the Yuma County office in Wray, Colorado at (970)332-4151 or my email is Travis.Taylor@colostate.edu and Scott, if we'd like to catch up with you on pain management, how do we catch you?

00;18;07;20 - 00;18;32;28
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I'm here at the Kit Carson County office in Burlington, Colorado, so you can reach me at area code (719)346-5571. Or if you want to contact me via email, it is my name Scott.Stinnett@colostate.edu. Well, we thank you guys for listening to our podcast and we hope to see you again on Pasture to Profit.

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