# Potential and Benefits for Statewide BVD Control Programs

-Dr. Jim Kennedy

# Why establish a single control program?

- Consistency
  - Guidelines are laid out for all to see the purchaser can better predict outcomes, adding value to cattle being sold
- Easier to monitor disease control impact
  - Management strategies to minimize disease and increase production can be more readily evaluated.

# Who should administer BVD Control Programs?

- Administration of control programs
  - Administered by state cattle organizations
  - Administered by breed associations
  - Administered by universities and/or cooperative extension
  - Administered by pharmaceutical/biological companies
  - Administered by state and/or federal government

# What are the necessary components of BVD control?

- Education
  - Sources of BVD virus
    - Transient or acutely infected animals are less efficient sources for the spread of BVD.
    - **Persistently infected animals are highly efficient at spreading BVD.**
      - **Persistently infected animals are the result of the cow/heifer being exposed during early gestation.**
    - The role of wildlife in spread of BVD is uncertain, some even theorize that cattle may be the source of BVD in wildlife.

# Second component of BVD control

- Biosecurity plan
  - Minimize exposure through quarantines and testing of herd additions.
  - Vaccinations (studies to evaluate the efficacy of vaccines in field conditions need to be done), and should be considered only as a component not the answer.
  - Record keeping
  - Address health problems

# Third necessary component

- Testing that is both affordable and reliable
  - Animals should be tested for Persistent Infections.
  - Available tests
    - Tissue tests IHC, AC-ELISA, Virus isolation, RT-PCR individual and pools.
    - Serological tests
      - Confusing results due to vaccinations
      - Indicate exposure still leave the source to be identified

# Measurable return for investing in a control program….BENEFIT….

- Benefit is the most important component, if the producer doesn't benefit why do it?
  - Better performance through increased pregnancy rates and calf crop
  - Decreased medicine costs and death loss
  - Premium paid for tested animals or a dock for untested animals.
  - A less apparent benefit of a BVD control program is the biosecurity we have created for BVD control will carry over to other diseases, resulting in a healthier herd of cattle.

# How do we achieve the benefits of control

- Third party verification, and then the question is, who should verify the participation and compliance with any control program?
- Can the industry police itself or will it require outside influence?
  - Does the beef cattle industry still wear a white hat?
  - Should the cattlemen take on the task of verification?
- Colorado has taken the task on through a cooperative effort of the State and University, but only to bring the need to the attention of the industry.

# In summary

- Uniformity in how we approach BVD control is a must. Uniformity/Consistency will:
  - Establish a minimum set of standards
  - Will allow for evaluation of BVD's impact on production and economics
- The four required components for BVD control
  - Education we all must tell the same story
  - Biosecurity minimal standards must be consistent between operations
  - Testing must be affordable and reliable, test should allow outcomes be predicted.
  - The program must benefit the producer.

# Four Simple Steps to BVD Control

- Test all your cattle for BVD persistent infections.
- Vaccinate your cattle annually with a modified live vaccine.
- Test all herd additions for BVD persistent infections.
- Test each years calf crop for BVD persistent infections.