



Belmopan,
Tuesday, 7th February 2023

ADVISORY # 2 of 2023 – BLACKLEG

The Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise (MAFSE) and the Belize Livestock Producers Association (BLPA), reminds livestock producers and other stakeholders to vaccinate their animals against Blackleg. There has been a steady increase in animals dying from the disease.

Blackleg is a highly fatal disease of cattle and sheep affecting mainly young animals. It is caused by the bacteria *Clostridium chauvoei* that is found naturally in the soil. The main signs observed are: swelling in large muscles that feel like bubble wrap, bleeding from the nose, lameness, loss of appetite, rapid breathing, depression and high fever. The animal usually dies within 12 to 48 hours thus farmers usually find the animals dead without seeing the signs of illness.

The occurrence is very likely after heavy rainfall, disturbance of the soil (ploughing/harrowing) and/or the onset of the dry season. Blackleg is preventable by using the Clostridial vaccine. Farmers are encouraged to use only **registered or approved** vaccines available at most **registered** farm supply stores. It is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions or the veterinarian's instructions paying key attention to maintaining the *cold chain*. The disease has been diagnosed in vaccinated animals.

Animals may also be infected with more than one disease at the same time. Sustainable vaccination is the key to prevention. Suspect cases are investigated at no cost to the Farmer.

Additional information can be obtained from Livestock Officers and Extension Officers of the Department of Agriculture in the districts, BAHA animal health personnel, Belize Livestock Producers Association and Registered Veterinarians.

You can also call 824 4872/73 or 302 1388.

End.