

News Column for Use Week of 10/12/2020
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River Valley Extension District
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Is Your Refrigerator Running?

We have all heard the joke, “Is your refrigerator running? Then you better go catch it!” On a more serious note, I would like to focus on your garage or shed refrigerator that has your animal health products in them. Many cattle producers have a refrigerator that they use to store animal health products such as vaccines or antibiotics. Often, this refrigerator has been demoted from the house to the garage or shed. There may not be anything wrong with this refrigerator, but we need to be sure. Purchasing a cheap thermometer that records the high and low temperature is a good investment. One thing to consider is if the refrigerator will be in a climate-controlled environment. If not, then we need to be aware that it will be working overtime in the summer and potentially not keep up. Also, refrigerators do not keep things from freezing. If the room temperature outside of the refrigerator is below freezing, then we should not keep animal health products in that unit.

There have been two studies done on random refrigerators that stored animal health products. The first was done at the University of Nevada. They tested refrigerators at 20 ranches and 4 feed stores. Of the refrigerators tested, 25% of them failed to maintain vaccines in the safe zone of 35° to 45°F. The second study was done at the University of Arkansas. This study tested 180 refrigerators. Forty-five of the 180 refrigerators were only at the proper temperature 5% of the time. They determined that 76% of the refrigerators were unacceptable for storing animal health products.

One thing we need to be sure of is that we store products at the proper temperature. All products will have printed on the label what temperature they should be stored. As a rule of thumb, vaccines will typically need to be refrigerated between 35° and 45°F. Antibiotics are usually stored at room temperature between 68° and 77°F. However, do not assume one way or the other, read the label to be sure.

We spend a lot of money on our animal health products that work great for preventing and treating disease. We need to make sure that the efficacy of these products is not compromised by the way we handle them once they are in our possession. Keep them stored properly until we are ready to use them.

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