

Iowa Green and Gold Tag Preconditioning Programs and Guidelines

(Updated 2021)

The Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, in cooperation with the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, initiated and has continually updated the Iowa Preconditioning Calf Program. The program has withstood the test of time (inception in 1965) and is the "gold standard" for such programs.

The preconditioning program occurs in a series of steps. Cattle (4 mos. of age or older) are vaccinated for IBR, BVD, BRSV, PI-3, seven-way Clostridia, Mannheimia haemolytica, and Histophilus somni. They are treated for internal and external parasites and must be castrated and dehorned, if appropriate. Optional treatments include vaccination for CHV (heifers), Pasteurella multocida, other diseases, and implanted with a growth promotant.

IVMA/ICA PRECONDITIONING (PC) PROGRAMS

Green Tag Preconditioning Program:

Calves, 4 mos. and older, are inspected, vaccinated, and treated by the veterinarian per the program requirements. Serially numbered green preconditioning tags are placed in the upper middle part of the left ear by the veterinarian. Optional vaccinations and procedures such as implanting can be performed also. Cow/calf producers are urged to have these procedures performed at least 14 and preferably 21 days prior to weaning.

Green tagged calves must meet all the mandatory PC requirements including vaccinations and procedures at least 21 days previously, also weaned, feed a ration, and held at the farm of origin for at least 30 days, and have been owned for a minimum of 60 days before the veterinarian can issue a Green Tag Preconditioning Certificate. The veterinarian provides an official 4-copy Green Tag Preconditioning Certificate to the owner/producer who retains the white-colored copy for their records. The green-colored copy accompanies the calves and is given to the buyer or auction market where calves are sold. The veterinarian keeps the blue copy for their records and sends the pink copy to the office of the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association which keeps the official records of the PC program. **Green-tagged calves are not considered to be preconditioned unless they are accompanied by a completed "Green Tag Preconditioning Certificate".**

(Optional) Gold Tag PC Program:

Some Buyers have indicated a desire for a second (or boosted) vaccination series. To accomplish this, calves are re-vaccinated 14 or more days after the first vaccination. A gold tag is placed in the left ear of the calves above the green tag. A "Gold Tag Preconditioning Certificate" indicates the calves have received a second set of mandatory vaccinations which includes 2 doses of modified live virus (MLV) vaccine, have been required treatment procedures performed, and weaned and feed a ration for 60 days. The gold certificate can be issued by the veterinarian 14 days after the calves have received their second set of vaccinations and meet the other gold tag requirements. **As with the Green Tag PC certificate, both the owner/agent and the veterinarian must sign the completed document.** Requirements and optional procedures are similar to the Green Tag Preconditioning program. Many cattle feeders who buy the traditional preconditioned calves routinely re-vaccinate upon entry into the feedlot, but this is a matter of individual choice.

It is important that cattle producers and feedlot operators are aware of several important rules and procedures:

- Calves that have been green/gold-tagged but not weaned for at least 30/60 days may be sold, but they are NOT PRECONDITIONED unless they are accompanied by a proper PC certificate and must not be represented as such.
- Preconditioning certification is regarded as valid for only 'one change of ownership'!
- Owner/producer vaccination is not accepted in this program. This ensures the integrity and quality of the products used in the program.

For more information on the Preconditioning Program participation, please contact the IVMA office at 800/369-9564.

PC PROGRAM GUIDELINES

(Updated 2021 - These guidelines supersede any previous guidelines)

1. The **Green/Gold Tag Preconditioning (PC) Programs** were designed to increase animal health & performance as well as bolster economic value & financial return to cattle producers. Only IVMA member veterinarians have access to the PC program.
2. The preconditioning certificates are reviewed yearly and are valid for a two-year period ending on a June 30th date. All other certificates are obsolete and should be discarded. New certificates may be ordered by calling the IVMA at 800/369-9564 or on our website: www.iowavma.org
3. The green tag placed in the calf's left ear indicates that the animal is appropriately processed, and the health products were properly handled and administered by a veterinarian, so the tagged calves have met the program initial requirements. The presence of a green tag alone does not indicate "preconditioned" unless the calves are accompanied by a valid Green Tag Preconditioning Certificate.
4. Castration/dehorning – The PC certificate provides a line to indicate if castration/dehorning was performed by the owner. If so, there is a line to designate the date the veterinarian checked those procedures were properly completed.
5. Calves that have been green/gold-tagged but not weaned for at least 30/60 days may be sold, but they are NOT PRECONDITIONED and must not be represented as such unless accompanied by a valid PC certificate. The preconditioning certificate is not provided to the owner until 30/60 days after weaning ...and the calves have been owned for a minimum of 60 days.
6. Preconditioning Certificates are valid for 'one change of ownership'. If the second owner has owned the preconditioned calves for 60 days, and the tag numbers have been verified by a veterinarian, a new Green/Gold Tag Preconditioning Certificate can be issued.
7. A gold tag placed in the left ear indicates the calf has had **two doses of the required vaccines and that both sets of vaccines were administered by a veterinarian**. The calves are preconditioned only if accompanied by a Gold Tag PC Certificate.
8. If the double vaccination/Gold Tag PC program is definitely going to be used, one gold tag will suffice. Keep in mind, if the calves are moved prior to the second set of vaccines and gold-tagging, there is no visual proof that the calves have been vaccinated initially without a green tag.
9. The Gold tag should not be placed until the second set of vaccines is administered.
10. Gold/Green Tag Preconditioning Certificates **must** be signed by both the owner or their agent and the veterinarian. The veterinarian or clinic staff can be the 'agent' but are held accountable for the owner's information on the certificate.
11. All green tag and gold tag numbers must be recorded on the certificates. Tag numbers can be traced back to the member veterinarian through the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association office. It is the veterinarian's responsibility to trace a number to a herd/producer. Green and gold tags are available only through the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association to member veterinarians only. The green and gold tags are patented by the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association (IVMA) and must be applied to cattle by a member veterinarian. A detailed procedure for handling any complaints associated with the program has been established and is rigorously enforced.
12. Owner/producer vaccination is not accepted in this program. This ensures the integrity, care and quality of the products used in the PC program.

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PRECONDITIONING - Green and Gold Tag PC Program guideline summaries

Green:

- 1) Vaccinations must be administered by a veterinarian or under direct supervision of clinic staff and follow BQA guidelines.
- 2) Calves must be at least four months of age before first vaccination and treatment of internal and external parasites (they can be vaccinated and other treatments earlier but that would not count as part of the PC program).
- 3) First vaccination and mandatory procedures required at least 3 weeks prior to shipment and issuing a PC certificate.
- 4) Calves must be weaned for 30 days and owned for 60 days minimum before a Green Tag Preconditioning Certificate can be issued.
- 5) Vaccination and mandatory procedures must be done a minimum of 21 days prior to shipment and issuing a PC certificate (mandatory procedures include internal and external parasite control, castration and dehorning, if necessary).
- 6) The **Green Tag Preconditioning Certificate** must be properly completed including signed by both the owner or his agent and the veterinarian.

Gold:

- 1) Vaccinations must be administered by a veterinarian or under direct supervision of clinic staff and follow BQA guidelines.
- 2) Calves must be at least 4 months of age before first vaccinations (same as Green).
- 3) There must be a minimum of 14 days between first and second vaccine (from there it is at the discretion of the attending veterinarian).
- 4) Calves must be weaned and owned for a minimum of 60 days and last vaccinations given at least 14 days before a Gold Tag Preconditioning Certificate can be issued.
- 5) Mandatory procedures must be done at least 21 days before cattle are sold.
- 6) The **Gold Tag Preconditioning Certificate** must be properly completed including signed by both the owner or their agent and the veterinarian.