

Iowa Preconditioning Calf Program Steps and Guidelines

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 and is the gold standard for such programs.

The preconditioning program occurs in a series of steps. Calves 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 Pasteurella multocida, other diseases and implanted with a growth promotant. All vaccinations and health procedures must be performed by a veterinarian.

IVMA/ICA PRECONDITIONING PROGRAM STEPS

Step 1:

Feeder calves are inspected, vaccinated and treated by the veterinarian. Serially numbered green preconditioning tags are placed in the upper part of the left ear by the veterinarian. Optional vaccinations and procedures such as implanting are performed by the veterinarian. Cow/calf producers are urged to have these procedures performed at least 14 and preferably 21 days prior to weaning.

Step 2:

The calves are weaned and held at the farm of origin for at least 30 days. After the calves are weaned for 30 days, the veterinarian provides an official preconditioning certificate to the producer. The producer provides a copy to the buyer or auction market where calves are sold. The auction market, in turn, provides a copy to the buyer. The veterinarian keeps one copy and sends another to the office of the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, which keeps the official records of the program. Feeder calves are not considered to be preconditioned until they have been weaned for 30 days and accompanied by an official preconditioning certificate.

Step 3 (Optional program):

Buyers in some areas have indicated a desire for a second vaccination. 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" is signed by the veterinarian and producer/owner after the calves have been weaned for 45 days. The gold tag indicates the calves have received a second set of vaccinations and have been weaned for 45 days. Requirements and optional procedures are similar to the green tag preconditioning program. Many cattle feeders who buy the traditional green-tagged Iowa Preconditioned Calves routinely re-vaccinate upon entry into the feedlot, but this is a matter of individual choice. Some feeders have requested that re-vaccination be performed in the herd of origin well in advance of sale and movement. The gold tag and "gold certificate" certify that this has been done.

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 30/45 days may be sold, but they are NOT PRECONDITIONED and must not be represented as such. The preconditioning certificate is not provided to the owner until 30/45 days after weaning.

Preconditioning 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.

<p style="text-align: center;">IVMA/ICA PRECONDITIONING PROGRAM GUIDELINES Updated 2017</p>

(These guidelines supersede any previous guidelines)

1. The Green/Gold Tag Preconditioning Programs were designed to increase animal health & performance as well as bolster economic value & financial return to cattle producers.
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 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 Green Tag Preconditioning Certificate.
4. Castration/dehorning – The 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 30/45 days may be sold, but they are NOT PRECONDITIONED and must not be represented as such. The preconditioning certificate is not provided to the owner until 30/45 days after weaning.
6. Preconditioning Certificate is 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 certificate.
8. If the double vaccination 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 and the veterinarian.

11. All green tag and gold tag numbers must be recorded. The tag number 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.
13. *Mannheimia haemolytica* (formerly *Pasteurella haemolytica*) is a mandatory vaccination, started in 2013. *Pasteurella multocida* is not required for either the Green or Gold Tag Preconditioning programs.

PRECONDITIONING - Green and Gold Tag guidelines

Green:

- Vaccinations must be administered by a veterinarian and follow BQA guidelines.
- Calves must be at least four months of age before first vaccination and treatment of internal parasites, grubs and lice (they can be vaccinated and other treatments earlier but that would not count as part of the PC program).
- First vaccination and mandatory procedures required at least 3 weeks prior to shipment and issuing PC certificate.
- Calves must be weaned for 30 days before a green tag preconditioning certificate can be issued.
- Vaccination and mandatory procedures must be done a minimum of 21 days prior to shipment and issuing PC certificate (mandatory procedures include internal and external parasite control, castration and dehorning, if necessary).
- Calves must have been owned by the producer for a least 60 before receiving the Green Tag Preconditioning Certificate. The Green Tag Preconditioning Certificate must be signed by both the owner and the veterinarian.

Gold:

- Vaccinations must be administered by a veterinarian and follow BQA guidelines.
- Calves must be at least 4 months of age before first vaccine.
- There must be a minimum of 14 days between first and second vaccine (from there it is at the discretion of the attending veterinarian).
- Calves must be weaned for a minimum of 45 days before a Gold Tag Preconditioning Certificate can be issued.
- Mandatory procedures must be done at least 21 days before cattle are sold.
- Calves must have been owned by the producer for at least 60 days before receiving the Gold Tag Preconditioning Certificate.
- There must be at least 14 days between the first and second vaccinations. The Gold Tag Preconditioning Certificate must be signed by both the owner and the veterinarian.