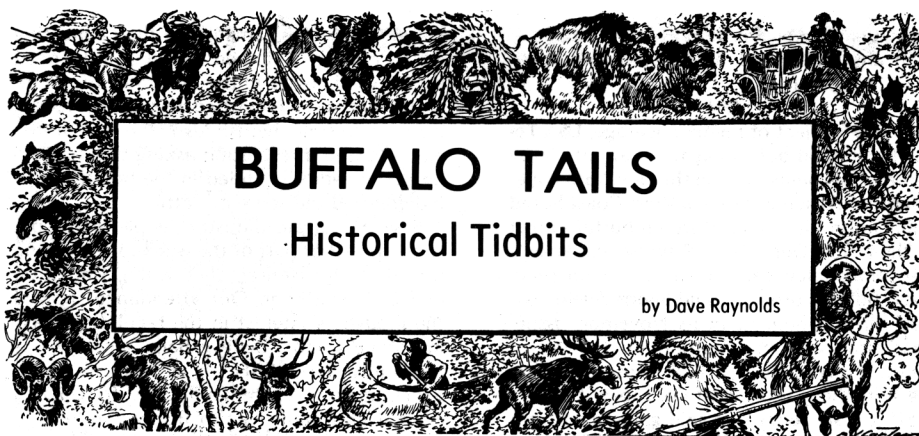




BUFFALO TAILS

Historical Tidbits

by Dave Raynolds

Hunting for Hides

Vermonters Homer W. Wheeler, then nineteen, moved west to Fort Wallace, Kansas in 1868, and became post trader at that location. This was the last in a string of forts (Riley, Harker, Hays, Wallace) on the westward route to Denver. After a number of adventures he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Cavalry in 1875, spent much of his career in frontier posts, served in the Spanish American War, and retired as a Colonel in 1911.

His early days on the restless post-Civil War frontier threw him in with many well-known characters, both Indian and white. The train he took west also carried General Grant, en route to Denver; Wheeler met him shortly before the train ran out of tracks in mid-Kansas and the General transferred to a stage to complete his trip. Buffalo Bill, a few years

older than Wheeler, was also in the area at the time.

Western Kansas was prime buffalo country, and Wheeler was an alert observer. Here is his description of the hide hunting days:

"Millions of buffalo were slaughtered for the hides and meat, principally for the hide. Some of the expert hunters made considerable money at that occupation. I knew one hunter whom we called 'Kentuck,' he presumably being a native of Kentucky. I never knew his real name and it was not considered polite, in those days, to ask a man what state he hailed from.

"'Kentuck,' in less than one year, made about ten thousand dollars hunting buffalo. He had a camp on Punished Woman's Fork, a stream south of Wallace, where he killed three thousand seven hundred buffalo. It was known as 'the slaughter pen.' This killing was

done when thousands of the animals were going north. In order that the buffalo might not scent him, the hunter would slip quietly up on the windward side of a herd while they were grazing. They were hunted so much that after a while they seemed to anticipate this, and at the first crack of a rifle off they would go like the wind, although the shooter would usually get two or three before they withdrew from range.

"The large outfits employed the aid of horses in removing the hide. The skinner would slit the hide from the head down between the legs to the tail and also skin the legs and loosen the hide around the head. A rope was then attached to the skin near the head, and the skin pulled off by the horse. The hides were then taken to camp and pegged out until they were perfectly dry, when they became as hard as flint. The average prices paid by the hide buyers were two dollars for cowskins, three dollars for bull and seventy-five cents for calf hides. Buffalo hides did not make good leather, as they were too spongy. Very few were made into robes.

"Unlike the Indian women, the white man did not know how to treat the hides properly to make good robes. The squaws would peg out the skin, stretching it as much as possible, clean off all the fat and meat with an instrument made of one of the large horns of the elk and used like an adze. The skin was then stretched upright in a frame and scraped down until it was the desired thickness. It was then worked with the hands until the robe was soft and pliable."

NOTE: Quotations from Wheeler, Homer W.: *Buffalo Days* (London: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1927), pp. 80-1.

Parasites & Ivomec

EDITOR'S NOTE: At the risk of appearing to be a one person bandwagon for the parasite control product Ivermectin sold under the label, Ivomec, I want to pass onto you some bits and pieces gleaned on the subject at the Pierre meeting. Everyone using the product not only fully endorses it but raves on and on about its virtues, the most notable being its 30 day residual effect which breaks that vicious cycle. Ivomec is the most effective, complete parasite control product on the market for both external and internal pests. It is reputed to be completely safe and the only negative comment I have heard is it is expensive—roughly \$5 per dose. Those who expound on the virtues of this product however, say that in the long run the product is much cheaper than other methods of control as once you break that cycle, provided you move the herd to clean pasture, your problems should be over. Even if your management policies restrict moving to clean ground, Ivomec is a bargain as you need to worm less often and therefore handle less often and that means less wear and tear on your facilities, your nerves and your animals.

The following is excerpted from the October issue of the *South Dakota Stockgrower*. Though a commercial for Ivomec, it explains the cycle of one common parasite and how to break that cycle. As Charlie Tucker once put it, "Unless you understand the worm cycle you will never develop an effective control program." Charlie learned the hard way, through loss of animals. We'd like to spare you that loss.

Time to Treat Inhibited Ostertagia

Parasitologists consider the brown stomach worm one of the most damaging of all cattle parasites, and until now one of the most difficult to control. With the introduction of Ivomec (ivermectin) 1% Injection, cattle producers can control not only the adult, but the inhibited and developing larvae of this deadly parasite.

Heavy infestations can cause not only reduced efficiency, but diarrhea, rapid weight loss, anemia and even death if not controlled.

The inhibited, or dormant, larval stage makes the brown stomach worm difficult to control. If larvae infect cattle shortly before extreme weather conditions set in—a hot, dry summer, for example, or a particularly cold winter in northern climates—the larvae burrow into the gastric glands of the stomach and "hibernate" for weeks or months until weather conditions become more favorable to their continued development. During this period of interrupted growth, the larvae are effected by very few standard worming products.

The effectiveness of most wormers against the brown stomach worm depends upon the parasite following a normal life cycle instead of the inhibited cycle. In the normal cycle, the larvae continue to develop while burrowed in the gastric glands; upon emerging, they become adults, mate and lay eggs that are deposited on pasture in the feces. The eggs hatch into larvae to begin the cycle all over

again when they are eaten by grazing cattle.

However, it is the gap in the cycle, when then the larvae go dormant, that most wormers miss. When the inhibited larvae resume development and emerge all at once, their damage to digestive tissue is massive. Although wormers are effective if administered at the time larval growth is resumed, no one can predict when that will happen. Larvae do not give advance notice of their emergence; all of them may not even mature and emerge at the same time, thus presenting an extending period of active infection.

Ivomec eliminates the guesswork and the need for several treatments by paralyzing and ultimately killing all stages, including inhibited larvae, of the brown stomach worm. In addition, Ivomec controls other commonly occurring roundworms, lungworms, and many external parasites such as grubs, lice and mange mites with a single injection.

Veterinary specialists recommend treating with Ivomec at least twice a year in the spring/early summer, and in the fall.

The goal of such a program is to prevent the build-up of severe parasite infections. To accomplish this, avoid grazing young, susceptible stock on contaminated pastures. Levels of contamination can be reduced by keeping stock off the pasture, and using the land to harvest hay, alternating grazing with row crops and grazing older, dry cows on contaminated pastures.