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Dairy Newsletter
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Pneumonia Prevention and Treatment

Although pneumonia is more of an issue in the spring and fall it is important not to forget about it in the summer for 2 reasons:

- 1) We need to stay on top of prevention so we don't have a big problem in the fall.
- 2) Animals still do develop pneumonia in the summer and this is a busy time of year which means it is easier to miss sick cows and calves; the longer you wait to start treatment the worse the problem becomes.

So an important place to start is with the calves! The heifer calves are the future of your herd and each case of pneumonia in her life will negatively affect her future milk production. The longer a calf has pneumonia the more permanent lung damage she develops. This means that when she calves in she will have a hard time coping with the stresses of the transition period in addition to not being able to reach her full genetic potential in terms of milk production. A good preventative program takes into consideration vaccinations, environment, and nutrition more specifically:

- Vaccinating the cows before breeding with a modified live vaccine such as Bovishield Gold, Vista Once, or Express provides protection against IBR, BRSV, PI3, and BVD (as well as some bacterial pneumonias depending on the vaccine) to the cows themselves as well as to the calves through the colostrum.
- Vaccinating calves with Once PMH up the nose protects against mannheimia and pasteurella and vaccinating up the nose with Inforce protects against rhinotracheitis, PI3, and BRSV. Both of these vaccines should be given within the first week of life. Heifers should then be vaccinated with the same vaccine used in the cows starting at 3-6 months of age and again before breeding.
- Housing all animals in a well ventilated area is important to keep the pneumonia bugs from becoming too concentrated in the air. For calves, deep bedded straw is a great addition and can reduce pneumonia by up to 30%. Also housing calves with animals their own age prevents them from coming into contact with the bugs from older calves and cows.
- Feeding enough colostrum and milk to calves (even in the summer!) is also critical. Calves deficient in energy have a poorer immune system to fight off all types of diseases. Ex. 4L of colostrum to newborns and 3 feedings of milk/day to all other calves is ideal.

Once an animal develops pneumonia it is important to recognize it and treat ASAP. Fever is an excellent indication of pneumonia (temperature above 39.5 Celsius or 103 Fahrenheit) and always indicates a need for treatment. Additionally it is good to look for increased and laboured breathing, droopy ears, and decreased appetite. Treatment often consists of:

- Nuflor or Resflor at 6ml/100lb given under the skin is an excellent treatment for calves and 2 injections should be given 3 days apart. Calves that get sick a second time should be treated the same and calves that get sick a third time can be switched to something else such as Draxxin at 1.25ml/100lb under the skin (also 2 injections 3 days apart). Remember that these medications CAN NOT be used in lactating cows and Resflor has a 60 day meat withdrawal and Draxxin has a 45 day meat withdrawal.
- Excenel at 1ml/100lb in the muscle along with Anafen at 1.5ml/100lb in the muscle is a good treatment for cows with pneumonia and has no milk withdrawal. For animals not responding the addition of Trimadox or Borgal at 3ml/100lb in the muscle is necessary and has a 4 day milk withdrawal.

Remember that prevention is always better than treatment but inevitably there will be some to treat and the sooner you start treatment the better! If you have any questions please ask Rick, Phil, or myself.

Have a good month,

Rachel Poppe