

MARCH 2000 – NEWS LETTER

CLIENT MEETING - For those of you who did not attend, this year's client meeting was perhaps the best we have ever had. We certainly received the most positive comments from it! Topics in which the speaker addressed were two areas where your cows can readily make or break you; fresh cow monitoring and efficient breeding.

Dr. Neubauer talked about fresh cows. We discussed common mastitis problems in those cows and monitoring for metabolic and infectious problems in those cows. Three simple tests can be done quickly and easily on fresh cows. These include ketosis testing, temperature taking and CMT paddling. What to do with the results is the next step, and we can help with that. Our practice definitely encourages clients to learn about dealing with problems in their cows. To that end we have put together a 'treatment protocol' for handling questionable cows. It includes a decision tree for evaluating a sick cow and also treatment guidelines. We are very willing to help you learn to handle sick cows, including intravenous treatment.

Mastitis in fresh cows can be from a variety of infectious 'bugs'. One fact seems to be prevalent; most mastitis occurs during the period immediately before calving, through the early post-calving period. Some culture work on mastitis cases can determine your most common mastitis 'bugs' and the most effective methods of treatment or prevention. Hot coliform mastitis is a very common problem in these cows. They become infected and very sick. Sadly they may appear more like a milk fever in a cow just fresh. That is why we tend to check udders on fresh cows. Even with immediate treatment it is easy to have any coliform cow die. J5 vaccination can help prevent the majority of those cases of mastitis. A single case of coliform mastitis can cost \$150 to \$200 in medications, lost milk, etc. Compared to that cost of mastitis, we find the use of J5 vaccine to be a cost savings in most herds of any size. If you're not familiar with J5 vaccine, just ask. We can help you get started with that product and make recommendations on how to best maintain its use in your herd setup. J5 vaccine will pay for itself!

Breeding cows can be a constant frustration. Statistically in the Midwest only one cow of three in heat is detected. Of those cows detected and bred, only one in three will conceive. These numbers, when combined, form what is called a pregnancy rate. The average Midwest dairy has a 13% pregnancy rate. The easiest way to improve on this rate is to increase heat detection rate. The use of various breeding programs can automatically increase heat detection rate easily to 100 percent. Basically a protocol is followed for all cows between 60 and 100 days in milk. If they don't show you a natural heat in that time, steps can easily be taken to insure that all cows get a timed breeding. In this way 'heat detection' increases to 100 percent. If still only one in three cows bred becomes pregnant, than pregnancy rate increases to 33% - a very substantial improvement. If this sounds too easy to be true, it isn't. We can help you establish such a program in your herd. It only requires vigilance and some degree of record keeping. Too much work? Your level of commitment is for you to decide. Cows do need to be on a good adequate nutrition program to conceive properly under any circumstances. Don't forget about that.

NUTRITION – Now more than ever is the time to use a nutritionist. With low milk prices, cows need to be fed for requirements and production. Guessing at feeding could cause you to waste protein by over feeding, or to limit feed-which leads to reduced production and fertility. Cows need an optimal balance of fiber, starch, and protein to function best. Considering not feeding protein? Soy 44 costs 9 cents per pound. Ten pounds of milk is worth \$1.00. It takes roughly 2# of additional dietary protein for each 10# increase of milk. Feeding protein properly pays. Not feeding protein will cost the cow and you in the long run.

GVS STAFF

Mike Strobush DVM
Jeff Engrav DVM
Tammy Zickert Recpt

Al Harmening DVM
Kevin Ratka DVM
Wendy Esselman CVT

Jean Liljegren DVM
Jeannette Bymers Off Mgr
Ginny Mesar VA