

## OCTOBER 2003 - LARGE ANIMAL NEWS

**New vaccine alert!** Many farms will be receiving a mass mailing regarding Trep Shield HW®. This new product is a vaccine being marketed for prevention of hairy heel warts in cattle. Such vaccines have been available for a number of years, but with only provisional approval (meaning effectiveness was still being evaluated). Novartis Animal Health now has USDA approval for their product.

Currently Trep Shield HW® is the only product approved for prevention of hairy heel warts. This product is proven most effective when introduced in animals prior to infection. Heifers receiving vaccination prior to exposure had cases reduced by 63% compared to unvaccinated animals. Animals already infected with hairy heel warts often see a reduction in the severity of their disease, though they do remain infected carriers. It is expected that maintained use of Trep Shield HW® in dairy herds will reduce the number of infected cattle over time, and will reduce the incidence and severity of hairy heel warts over the course of a number of years in vaccinated herds.

The disadvantages to this vaccine use are two-fold, including dosing and cost. Trep Shield HW® recommendation is for three initial doses at 21 day intervals. We haven't seen the vaccine yet but I suspect that the dose will be SQ (2ml under the skin). Follow-up recommendations surprisingly aren't provided. Rather the literature you will see says to follow your veterinarian's recommendation. Since we have no basis for such recommendations, I contacted Novartis for their experience. Their trials used the 3 initial doses, followed by boosters every 6 months. Further discussion found that even better protection was provided by 3 initial doses, followed by a dose 4 months later, followed by doses at 4-6 month intervals. As you can see, this vaccine use is quite a burden on top of many already detailed though necessary vaccination programs.

The second disadvantage I mention is cost. I project that this vaccine will cost nearly \$3.00 per dose. Per cow this amounts to \$12 - \$15 per animal for the first year, and \$6 - \$9 per animal for each subsequent year. You do the math for your herd, considering your herd's incidence of hairy heel warts, culls or injuries directly due to lameness associated with this disease, reduced milk production and reproduction from lameness, and costs associated with treatment. Research shows that 60% of cows 'successfully' treated for hairy warts have a recurrence within 7 to 15 weeks. I have no doubt that some herds will find an advantage to this vaccine use, but certainly not everyone. Look critically at your herd to determine how young you should begin vaccine use should you choose to do so. Don't begin too late!

We currently do not have this vaccine in stock, but can have it available quickly for herds interested in its use. We will be happy to answer any questions you might have regarding the use of this vaccine or any other product.

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